



Finley High School Newsletter

Principal: Mr J Ward

Deputy Principal: Mrs P Jackson

27th March 2020

KEY DATES

March

30 Year 12 Half Yearly Exams begin

April

9 Last Day Term 1
27 Staff Development Day
28 First Day Term 2

May

13 P & C Meeting

June

30 School photos

July

1 School photos – catchup day

Principal's Report

COVID – 19

I've been giving some thought to what has transpired this term and the effect COVID -19 has had on all our lives here in Finley, in Australia and globally. We are currently navigating an unprecedented situation not only in how we manage students' education but also in keeping people safe. I want to thank the community, teachers and students for their patience, understanding and thoughtful and proactive approach to current health issues. Your willingness to adapt at short notice is commendable.

Our staff have been working hard to develop a suite of learning resources and options for students to undertake from home. The Department of Education has developed, and will continue to develop, resources and offer professional learning to help teachers with this task.

Whether your child is at school or at home, the aim is for all students to access the consistent learning content provided by our school. This may mean sending work home, either with physical materials or by email, or by making use of one of our online platforms at our school.

Student Emails

Please remind students to check their emails in the Student Portal at least daily as work is regularly being added and will be marked.

I encourage you to access the [Learning from Home](#) resource which provides practical advice to parents and carers on how to best create and support a productive learning environment in the home.

Three days into our new world of learning and from all reports it is going very well. If you have any concerns please communicate with the school.

Forensics Day

On Friday the 13th March, Finley High School held another successful Forensic Science Day. This day is a wonderful experience for Year 6 students from our feeder schools and is also a great advertisement for the school and for science. I walked around a couple of times and there was fantastic engagement and our Year 9 students did a great job as lab assistants. We thank Mr O'Leary and his staff for the work they did in preparing and running the day.



Year 6 students participating in Forensic Day activities

Primary school visits

Prior to lockdowns in schools, Jodi Brown, Mrs Dempster, Mrs O'Bryan and I ventured to a number of our feeder schools to meet Year 6 students and answer questions. We thank the Principals, staff and students at Finley Public School, St Joseph's Finley, Jerilderie Public School, St Joseph's Jerilderie, Berrigan Public School and Tocumwal Public School. We were very impressed with the questions put to us and the positive interactions we had. It was fantastic to learn that many students are looking to attend Finley High School in 2021.

Harmony day activities

On the 20th March we celebrated Harmony Day and Anti-Bullying Day together. The school was a sea of orange as STOMP and the SRC worked together to deliver key messages and activities that supported the themes of the day. The students versus staff soccer game went the way of the students 1 – 0. The large mural celebrating Harmony Day was unveiled in the afternoon. Well done on a great day.

Craig Burdon

I would like to welcome Mr Burdon back to Finley High School as a casual staff member. Since he left us, he has taught in Tamworth, Moree, Lake Cargelligo and recently Numurkah.

Staff Development Day Term 2

Recently I advertised that there were some changes to the Staff Development Days for 2020. Due to the current climate of uncertainty, we have cancelled our plans and are moving back to Staff Development Days on day one Term 2 (27th April) and day one Term 3 (20th July). Therefore students will return on 28th April and 21st July.

Food allergy protocols in schools

Finley High School endeavours to provide a safe environment where all students' needs are catered for equally without further discrimination and fear. The number of children with food allergies in Australia is increasing and it is estimated that 1 in 20 have a food allergy and 1 in 50 have a peanut allergy.

The most common food allergies are peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, cashews etc) cow's milk, soy, seafood and eggs. Many children will 'outgrow' their food allergies however reactions to nuts, seeds and seafood tend to be life long. The health and wellbeing of students at this school is carefully considered in all activities.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you require assistance.

Accessing wellbeing staff

Due to the COVID-19 isolation precautions for the remainder of the school term, and whilst schools remain open, the following support staff can be contacted if needed via these details;

Karen Andrews- School Counsellor
Deniliquin North Public School 03 5881 1042
karen.andrews20@det.nsw.edu.au

Jodi Brown- Student Support Officer
Finley High School 03 5883 1344
jodie.brown29@det.nsw.edu.au

Alternatively students can access Kids Helpline- 1800 551 800, or for emergencies please call 000.

Please read two further information at the end of this newsletter for more specific advice about caring for your children and yourself during the COVID 19 outbreak.

NAPLAN

Naplan has been cancelled this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Learning Support

Minimum Standards

By the time this goes to press, all students in Year 10 should have completed a practice exam in reading, writing and numeracy for Minimum Standards. They will have their first opportunity to complete the actual exams next term.

Year 11 and Year 12 are provided with opportunities to complete the exams each term. A Level 4 is required to pass the Minimum Standard.

Learning Support

There are online spelling and comprehension programs running whilst students are working from home. These can be accessed by invitation through an email or using the codes on their booklets. Booklets have been posted to families who notified the school that they weren't able to pick them up before Friday 27th March.

Miss Coates
LaST teacher

Forensics Day

Year 6 students from Berrigan, Finley, Jerilderie, Blighty, Tocumwal and Barooga, attended a Forensics Day at Finley High School on Friday the 13th of March.

The students were broken into smaller groups to work in the science laboratories, under the guidance of Year 9 students from Finley High School. The Year 9 students helped the visiting students to take fingerprints and to dust and lift fingerprints from an object. They also used some simple chemistry to identify an unknown powder and used microscopes to analyze fibers.

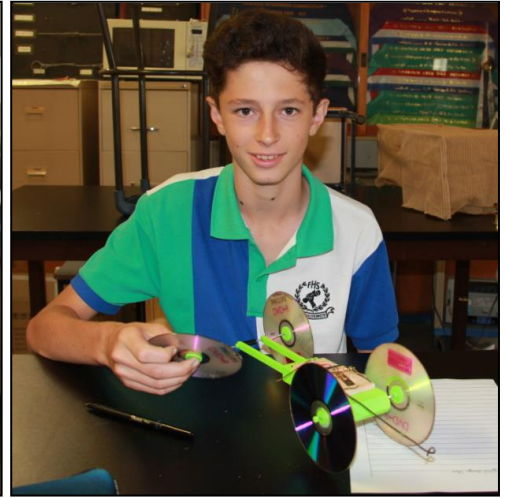
It was successful day that was made even more enjoyable by the exceptional behavior and manners displayed by the students from Year 6.

Michael O'Leary



Year 8 Technology Mandatory

Mr O'Leary's Year 8 Tech class have been designing and constructing mouse trap powered cars. The design brief was to either construct a car for maximum speed or a car for maximum distance.



Pictured: CJ Somera, Sarah Bauer and Marco Bonic with their mouse trap powered cars.

Canteen Roster and Community News

CANTEEN ROSTER

Canteen Phone Number
0473 946 683

The canteen will be closed
until further notice.

Finley High School P&C

*Due to COVID -19 restrictions,
the April meeting has been postponed.*

Next meeting: Wednesday 13th May, 2020
at 7pm in the Staff Common Room
(Admin Building)

subject to Government restrictions

The P&C meet the second Wednesday
of the month.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

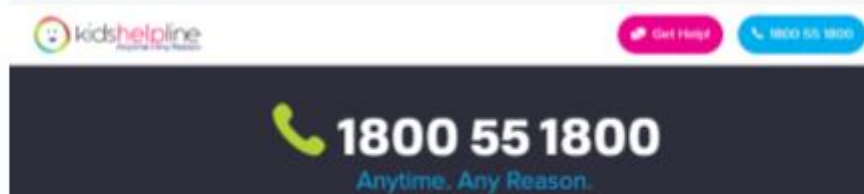
fhspandcassociation@gmail.com

Online counselling and information that can be accessed from home providing information and support via the web and phone.

Kids Help Line

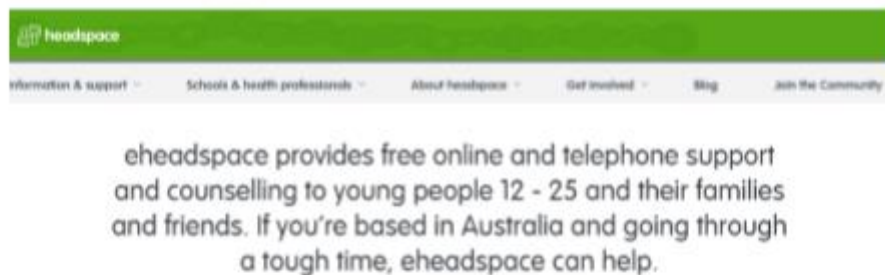
Online webchat and phone counselling

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>



eheadspace

<https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/>



Reachout

<https://au.reachout.com/>



Parent Line

<http://www.parentline.org.au/>



February 29, 2020

Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus) A Parent Resource

A new type of coronavirus, abbreviated COVID-19, is causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. It was first detected in China and has now been detected internationally. While the immediate health risk in the United States is low, it is important to plan for any possible outbreaks if the risk level increases in the future.

Concern over this new virus can make children and families anxious. While we don't know where and to what extent the disease may spread here in the United States, we do know that it is contagious, that the severity of illness can vary from individual to individual, and that there are steps we can take to prevent the spread of infection. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness. Helping children cope with anxiety requires providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. However, children also need factual, age appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and spread of disease. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety.

Specific Guidelines

Remain calm and reassuring.

- Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- What you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your children's anxiety.
- If true, emphasize to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.

Make yourself available.

- Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions.
- It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.
- Tell them you love them and give them plenty of affection.

Avoid excessive blaming.

- When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone.
- It is important to avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
- Bullying or negative comments made toward others should be stopped and reported to the school.
- Be aware of any comments that other adults are having around your family. You may have to explain what comments mean if they are different than the values that you have at home.

Monitor television viewing and social media.

- Limit television viewing or access to information on the Internet and through social media. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.
- Speak to your child about how many stories about COVID-19 on the Internet may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- Talk to your child about factual information of this disease—this can help reduce anxiety.
- Constantly watching updates on the status of COVID-19 can increase anxiety—avoid this.
- Be aware that developmentally inappropriate information (i.e., information designed for adults) can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children.
- Engage your child in games or other interesting activities instead.

Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.

- Keep to a regular schedule, as this can be reassuring and promotes physical health.
- Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

Be honest and accurate.

- In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- Don't ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.
- Children can be told this disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It is also thought it can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it is so important to protect yourself.
- For additional factual information contact your school nurse, ask your doctor, or check the <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> website.

Know the symptoms of COVID-19.

- The CDC believes these symptoms appear in a few days after being exposed to someone with the disease or as long as 14 days after exposure:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness for breath
- For some people the symptoms are like having a cold; for others they are quite severe or even life threatening. In either case it is important to check with your child's healthcare provider (or yours) and follow instructions about staying home or away from public spaces to prevent the spread of the virus.

Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection.

- Encourage your child to practice every day good hygiene—simple steps to prevent spread of illness:
 - Wash hands multiple times a day for at least 20 seconds (singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star slowly takes about 20 seconds).
 - Cover their mouths with a tissue when they sneeze or cough and throw away the tissue immediately, or sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow. Do not share food or drinks.

- Practice giving fist or elbow bumps instead of handshakes. Fewer germs are spread this way.
- Giving children guidance on what they can do to prevent infection gives them a greater sense of control over disease spread and will help to reduce their anxiety.
- Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a strong immune system to fight off illness.

Discuss new rules or practices at school.

- Many schools already enforce illness prevention habits, including frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand cleansers.
- Your school nurse or principal will send information home about any new rules or practices.
- Be sure to discuss this with your child.
- Contact your school nurse with any specific questions.

Communicate with your school.

- Let your school know if your child is sick and keep them home. Your school may ask if your child has a fever or not. This information will help the school to know why your child was kept home. If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19, let the school know so they can communicate with and get guidance from local health authorities.
- Talk to your school nurse, school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker if your child is having difficulties as a result of anxiety or stress related to COVID-19. They can give guidance and support to your child at school.
- *Make sure to follow all instructions from your school.*

Take Time to Talk

You know your children best. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. However, don't avoid giving them the information that health experts identify as critical to ensuring your children's health. Be patient; children and youth do not always talk about their concerns readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. It is very typical for younger children to ask a few questions, return to playing, then come back to ask more questions.

When sharing information, it is important make sure to provide facts without promoting a high level of stress, remind children that adults are working to address this concern, and give children actions they can take to protect themselves.

Information is rapidly changing about this new virus—to have the most correct information stay informed by accessing <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Keep Explanations Age Appropriate

- Early elementary school children need brief, simple information that should balance COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that their schools and homes are safe and that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps people take every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as "adults are working hard to keep you safe."
- Upper elementary and early middle school children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 comes to their school or community. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and

3

community leaders to prevent germs from spreading.

- Upper middle school and high school students are able to discuss the issue in a more in-depth (adult-like) fashion and can be referred directly to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children

- Adults at home and school are taking care of your health and safety. If you have concerns, please talk to an adult you trust.
- Not everyone will get the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease. School and health officials are being especially careful to make sure as few people as possible get sick.
- It is important that all students treat each other with respect and not jump to conclusions about who may or may not have COVID-19.
- There are things you can do to stay healthy and avoid spreading the disease:
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay home when you are sick.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Wash hands often with soap and water (20 seconds).
 - If you don't have soap, use hand sanitizer (60–95% alcohol based).
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Additional Resources

Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks, <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/SMA14-4886>

Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks, <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885>

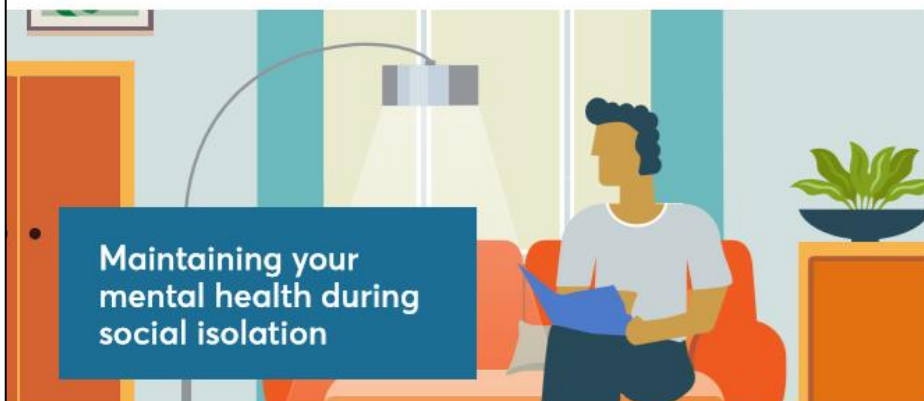
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use at Home, at Play, and Out and About, <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf>

For more information related to schools and physical and mental health, visit www.nasponline.org and www.nasn.org.

© 2020, National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301-657-0270

4



Maintaining your mental health during social isolation

To help control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) across the country, all Australians have been asked to practise social distancing. In some cases people are required to, or may choose to, self-isolate. Understandably, the challenges associated with social distancing and isolation, including separation from loved ones, loss of freedom and reduced income, are leading some people to experience feelings of anxiety, boredom, frustration and fear.

This information sheet outlines some useful strategies you can use to maintain good mental health during this unprecedented time of social distancing and isolation.

Stay connected

Positive social connections are essential for our mental health and can help us cope in times of stress. In the current crisis, we are being asked to distance ourselves from others so it is important that we maintain our social networks using available methods of communication. This can be as simple as phoning a friend to share your experience, using videoconferencing technology to check in with a family member, or spending quality time with the people you live with.

The information in this tip sheet is current as at 20 March 2020.

psychology.org.au

1

Avoid difficult situations

At times, people will be required to self-isolate with others in their household. While this will provide opportunities for social connections, living with someone 24/7 with little or no time away from each other may give rise to arguments and/or tension. There are a number of things you can do to limit conflict with those you are isolated with, including:

- creating a roster to help you distribute chores equally and fairly
- identifying and taking part in activities you like doing together such as movies, board games, jigsaws, gardening
- sharing positive emotions and experiences, rather than anger, frustration and disappointment
- communicating about your worries and concerns, and seeking support from one another
- maintaining your sense of fun and positive humour
- remaining respectful of each other in times of conflict – walk away and take time to calm yourselves, returning to the discussion later and repairing any hurt caused.

Structure your day

While in isolation it is beneficial to plan out your days to restore a sense of purpose and normality to your daily life. Schedule tasks such as cooking and laundry, as well as activities you enjoy to help you stick to your routine. Structuring activities around mealtimes and bedtime can also help you keep to your schedule while ensuring you eat regularly and get enough sleep.

Given the current need to practise social distancing and isolation, many people are also being encouraged to work from home where possible. Working from home can bring a whole new set of challenges and the need to provide structure to your day is even more important.

Some tips to help you have a sense of normality and work effectively from home are listed below.

- **Change out of your pyjamas each morning** – While you don't have to dress as formally as you might when going into the office, getting out of your pyjamas can help you get in the right headspace to start your day.
- **Set up a dedicated workspace** – Choose a space away from noise and with adequate lighting to set up your work desk. If possible, use an adjustable desk chair so you can work comfortably. Visit Worksafe Victoria for tips on setting up a safe workspace (bit.ly/2Wz2yJL).
- **Set a strict schedule** – It can be hard to switch-off from work, so it is important to clearly define your working hours, ensuring you have regular breaks. Disconnect from all work-related accounts (e.g., remote desktops, email) at the end of your working day to help maintain a clear boundary between your work and home life.
- **Limit distractions** – Being at home can mean you can be easily distracted by other people or tasks (e.g., household chores). Schedule set times where you can take a break from work to complete these tasks, rather than completing them randomly throughout the day where you can lose track of time.
- **Keep in touch** – Maintain regular contact with your manager/colleagues (via phone, email or videoconferencing) to ensure you are each aware of your tasks, workload and timelines.

Tips to cope with self-isolation

Maintain a positive outlook during periods of self-isolation by:

- reminding yourself that this period of self-isolation is temporary
- thinking of the benefits of self-isolation to the wider society, including slowing the spread of the virus and protecting those most vulnerable in your community
- remaining mindful that medical and scientific experts are following strict protocols to contain the virus and treat those affected
- ensuring you have access to accurate, reliable and up-to-date information that communicates what is expected from you if you are in isolation
- maintaining relationships with family, friends and colleagues (e.g., via telephone or video technologies)
- not overusing social media as you are likely to be exposed to negative news and get drawn into doomsday discussions – try to keep your mind busy with activities you enjoy such as reading, watching movies, exercising and even spring-cleaning the house
- structuring your day when working from home – allocate specific work hours, schedule breaks and set-up a dedicated workspace where distractions are limited.

Helping your child through self-isolation

While most schools in Australia have not yet closed as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, many children are spending significantly more time at home, not taking part in out-of-school activities, and some are even required to self-isolate with their families. Below are some ideas on how parents can help their child cope with periods of social distancing or isolation.

- **Set a daily routine** – Routines can help children cope with change and help them understand what is expected of them. Work with your child to develop a routine that suits the whole family and includes a range of activities, for example,

schoolwork (literacy and numeracy), physical activity, creative play, family time and limited amounts of screen time.

- **Maintain social relationships** – Use technologies (such as FaceTime, Zoom or Skype) to help your child maintain contact with friends and other family members, such as grandparents. For older children and teenagers, it is important to monitor their use of social media accounts as excessive use can lead to increased levels of anxiety.
- **Have fun** – For many children, their out of school activities (e.g., swimming, football) have been cancelled but it is important for them to stay active. Harness their interests and have fun with them at home (e.g., play cricket in the backyard or dance to music inside). You can also take this opportunity to spend quality time with your child by teaching them a new skill or game, read with them, or research a new topic together.

Seek additional support when needed

If you feel that the stress or anxiety you experience as a result of self-isolation is getting too much, a psychologist may be able to help. Psychologists are highly trained and qualified professionals skilled in providing effective interventions for a range of mental health concerns, including stress. A psychologist can help you manage your stress and anxiety using techniques based on the best available research.

If you are referred to a psychologist by your GP, you might be eligible for a Medicare rebate. You may also be eligible to receive psychology services via telehealth so that you do not need to travel to see a psychologist. Ask your psychologist or GP for details.

There are number of ways to access a psychologist. You can:

- use the Australia-wide Find a Psychologist™ service. Go to findapsychologist.com.au or call 1800 333 497
- ask your GP or another health professional to refer you.

More information

Australian Government Department of Health

The Department of Health has developed a collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about coronavirus (COVID-19), including translated resources.

bit.ly/38OOw1e

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides reliable information about the coronavirus such as its symptoms, steps you can take to protect yourself, and what to do if you are affected.

bit.ly/39Mfm18

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization provides information and guidance regarding the current outbreak of coronavirus disease.

bit.ly/3cQUwCw

The Australian Psychological Society Limited

PO Box 38, Flinders Lane, VIC, 8009

Telephone: (03) 8662 3300 or 1800 333 497

Fax: (03) 9663 6177

Email: membership@psychology.org.au

Web: psychology.org.au

Find us on social media

ABN 23 000 543 788 © 2020

psychology.org.au

2