

Craig Hamilton

Leading mental health advocate, keynote presenter, author

Craig Hamilton was a high-profile sports broadcaster for the ABC when, in September 2000, on the eve of his assignment for the Sydney Olympic Games, he experienced a major psychotic episode in public that led to him being diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Craig spent 12 days in hospital and once he recovered, set out to create awareness of mental health and also break down the stigma that surrounds those that suffer from mental health issues. He has since become one of Australia's most high profile and most sought-after speakers on mental health awareness, lifestyle, overcoming adversity and work/life balance.

Today Craig leads a very busy and fulfilling life. As well his role as the presenter of Saturday Morning Breakfast for ABC Newcastle Radio, he travels widely, telling his story in the hope that others will open up and tell theirs. He has made around 400 appearances as a mental health advocate in front of audiences from big city executives to desperate rural survivors in dusty townships. In sharing his story and experiences he offers hope to others.

Craig is just one of the 800,000 Australians who each year suffers from the insidious illness, depression. His goal is to encourage sufferers (particularly men) and their families to break the conspiracy of silence, step forward and seek help.

Craig's acclaimed memoir *Broken Open* published in 2004 gives a very personal account of living with Bipolar Disorder and was chosen by SANE Australia as its 2005 book of the year.

In July 2012, Craig's second book, *A Better Life*, co-written with Will Swanton, was published. It acknowledges his own illness and how he manages it, but also tells how other public figures like Andrew Johns, Garry McDonald, Jessica Rowe and Wally Lewis are dealing with mental illness to live as normal and fulfilling a life as possible.

Craig Hamilton has covered Rugby League, Rugby Union and cricket at international level as a commentator. He is a well-known member of the Grandstand Rugby League commentary and has worked on the past 17 Grand Finals, State of Origin series and a number of Test Matches.



Client testimonials

“ Craig was a real gift to us yesterday. What a great and powerful speaker. He was wonderful, fantastic, educative, funny, I can't say enough. I have had a huge response from people, lots of emails expressing their gratitude at hearing his story. He spoke from his heart and the audience was riveted.

- *St Vincent's Hospital*

“ Because Craig deals with his illness openly and publicly, we asked him to become an Ambassador for beyondblue some 3 years ago. Craig travels the country speaking at public meetings and to the media, helping to raise awareness of depression. By speaking out, Craig is helping others, particularly in encouraging them to seek help.

- *The Hon. Jeff Kennett AC, beyondblue*

“ When Craig starts telling his story, you don't want him to stop. It is honest, insightful and spoken with great passion and conviction. Craig spoke to a room full of journalism and public relation academics, local media and staff working in mental health. His presentation had something in it for everyone ... Our national guests were talking about his insights long after that evening and reflecting on both their personal and professional roles. It was a great reminder about how powerful the personal story can be in motivating people.

- *Hunter Institute of Mental Health*

“ Craig's down to earth style, and honest explanation of his encounters with the disorder, and how it affected all aspects of his life, encouraged good interaction from his audience, and certainly got people talking - some even relating their own story. Craig's presentation has been motivational in encouraging staff to seek more information, and largely responsible for a big increase in demand for training on mental health first aid, at IP Australia. This in turn, is helping us to foster a supportive culture among our staff towards mental illness.

- *IP Australia*

“ Craig Hamilton's story is one of pure courage and iron will to break through the bonds of darkness that mental illness can bring.

- *Paul Harragon*

“ Craig spoke to our workforce of over 350 people over five sessions as part of our commitment to mental health awareness and support, and the feedback from our people has been exceptional. Craig's experience with mental illness provides a compelling story, and his willingness to share his experiences and advice has helped raise awareness and discussion on



the subject by our employees, the majority of them men. Employees are now coming forward and speaking about their own experiences, or those of families and friends. We can't commend Craig highly enough for his honesty and insight into confronting, understanding and managing this illness and its complexities.

- Xstrata Coal Ravensworth

“ One of Craig's key strengths is understanding exactly what's required of him from event organisers, panel/guest speakers and his audience - then working towards achieving these outcomes to help produce a successful end-of-event result. It helps that Craig is an extremely generous, grounded and all-round nice bloke with endless anecdotes of his personal experience to share. It is not surprising he has become a sought after Keynote Speaker across the country impressing and engaging audiences ranging across corporate and community sectors. I have worked with Craig at a number of presentations over the years and cannot recommend his services highly enough. Your event will be in extremely good hands.

- Purser Corporate Communication

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