

Wayne Schwass

Former Australian Rules football player, Mental Health Advocate

Widely regarded as one of Australia's leading mental health advocates and keynote speakers, known for combining the raw honesty of personal experience with a professional approach that inspires lasting change.

Wayne Schwass is a former AFL champion with a remarkable 14-year career at North Melbourne and the Sydney Swans, Wayne achieved great success on the



field. Yet, behind his triumphs, he privately battled depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. His lived experience has shaped him into a unique and compelling voice who speaks with both authority and compassion.

After retiring from the AFL, Wayne courageously shared his story, becoming a trailblazer in normalising mental health conversations in corporate and community settings. His commitment to advocacy is further highlighted by his pivotal role as the lead witness in the 2019 Royal Commission into the Victorian Mental Health Sector, where he used his journey to spotlight systemic gaps and advocate for urgent reforms. He also contributed as a panel member in the review of the Victorian Mental Health Act, helping shape the future of mental health care in the state.

Wayne's involvement in these key initiatives underscores his influence and dedication to improving mental health outcomes across Australia. His message is personal, powerful, and deeply relatable, making him one of the most sought-after mental health presenters for corporate events, leadership forums, and conferences across the country.

Testimonials

We were privileged to have Wayne present a webinar to our entire client base, friends and family about mental health and emotional wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wayne speaks with incredible passion and energy and is highly engaging and captivating. Wayne had a profound impact on each and every person that dialed in to the webinar. Grimsey Wealth couldn't be any prouder to be supporters and sponsors of Wayne and Puka Up.

- Grimsey Wealth Pty Ltd

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Give yourself the permission to feel your emotions and to express them. A simple yet often underestimated concept that has re-energised our Wellbeing Team! Thank you, Wayne. Your words have empowered us to acknowledge, validate and express our thoughts and emotions; encouraged us to self-regulate and to implement wellbeing strategies to reduce fear or anxiety. Your energy, spirit and genuineness is positively infectious and thank you for lifting us up at a time where we have needed it the most! Thank you for sharing your knowledge, your lived experience and your learnings with Us. We look forward to our next session.

- Hospital Social Work and Wellbeing Program

- Wayne was able to deliver a powerful and impactful presentation that received a lot of positive feedback from the community. The delivery itself was online and had the audience captivated from the beginning. Even though we all weren't in the same room, it felt like we were, highly recommended.
- Suicide Prevention Project Officer

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