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Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

Today is World Suicide Prevention Day, a day that is about bringing together governments, communities and individuals to raise awareness and reducing the incidence of suicide in Australia.

The Rudd Government is committed to suicide prevention and remains concerned about groups at high risk of suicide, including Indigenous Australians, people in rural areas, youth, men, those bereaved by suicide, people who have attempted suicide or self-harm, and people with mental illness. That is why the Government is funding programs that work to prevent suicide every day of the year.

Australian Government funding for suicide initiatives has more than doubled from \$8.6m in 2005-06 to \$22.1m in 2009-10. The National Suicide Prevention Program will receive a total of \$127 million between 2006-07 and 2011-12.

Today I am launching the RU OK? Initiative which aims to lower Australia's suicide rates. The project's message is to communicate and connect with people by simply asking "Are you ok?".

The program will hold the inaugural RU OK? Day on November 29. The project will engage with GPs and health professionals, and raising the awareness of the various support organisations that are on offer for those in need of assistance.

Reducing the rate of suicide is best achieved by a coordinated response across the community, which is exactly what the RUOK initiative and Government programs seek to do.

Asking this simple question really can save a life, so I encourage all Australians to think about friends, family, colleagues and even acquaintances, and ask – "Are you ok?" There is support available for someone who may not be ok. They can contact one of the many support organisations or go online to seek help.

Also under the NSPP the Australian Government has established a National Centre of Excellence in Suicide Prevention based at Griffith University. The Centre provides the Government with advice to ensure that suicide prevention initiatives are evidence based and is supporting population groups who are at highest risk within the community.

World Suicide Prevention Day gives everyone the chance to think about those at risk or affected by suicide and to be reminded that there are a range of services available to help.

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220.