



## Prioritising Mental Health and Suicide Prevention – Suicide Prevention (Pillar 2)

The Australian Government is committed to working towards zero suicides and is investing \$46.7 million in suicide prevention programs and research as part of the *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan - Stage 2*.

This investment builds on the \$2.3 billion initial phase of the Plan, announced in the 2021–22 Budget. Together with other mental health and suicide prevention commitments worth \$648.6 million in the 2022–23 Budget, it takes the total value of the plan to nearly \$3 billion.

Since 2012–13, the Australian Government’s investment through the Health portfolio in mental health and suicide prevention has more than doubled (106% increase), growing from \$3.3 billion to an estimated \$6.8 billion in the 2022–23 Budget.

Since 2012–13, the Australian Government has driven significant developments in suicide prevention including:

- establishing the National Suicide Prevention Office in the National Mental Health Commission
- establishing a National Suicide and Self-harm Monitoring System through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and
- funding aftercare services in partnership with states and territories for people who are discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt.

### Regional initiatives for suicide prevention

The Government will invest \$42.7 million to build on the success of the National Suicide Prevention Trial and support regional initiatives for suicide prevention in every Primary Health Network (PHN), strengthening the capacity for communities to implement system wide responses to reduce the risk of suicide in their region. This includes:

- \$10.4 million to fund a Suicide Prevention Regional Response Leader in each of Australia’s 31 PHNs. The Regional Response Leader will be responsible for engagement, coordination, and integration of early intervention and suicide prevention activities across in their region, ensuring that communities have access to proactive and seamless support
- \$30.2 million to build on the lessons from the National Suicide Prevention Trials of 2016–17 to 2021–22 and invest in regional and community-based suicide prevention

- systems across all regions through initiatives responding to specific risk factors in each community, and
- \$934,000 for data development and reporting and \$700,000 for an evaluation of the rollout.

### **Expanding suicide prevention research**

The Government is also investing \$4 million to expand on the existing research in suicide prevention, by providing a further two years of funding for the Suicide Prevention Research Fund delivered by Suicide Prevention Australia. This measure is targeted to specifically address suicide prevention research priorities and flexibly respond to emerging research needs, such as transitioning out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Why is this important?**

Suicide continues to be a tragedy for many Australian families, with 3,139 deaths recorded as suicides in Australia in 2020. Data has also shown an increase in population rates of psychological distress and self-harm since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The Government is committed to working towards zero suicides and ensuring appropriate supports are in place for those who are at risk.

From 2016–17 to 2021–22, the Government supported 11 PHNs to participate in the National Suicide Prevention Trial. The Trial demonstrated the importance of localised approaches, dedicated response leaders in each PHN, and strengthened skills and capacities of the workforce.

These new measures will leverage the lessons learned from the National Suicide Prevention Trial to deliver services and suicide prevention initiatives which are designed in consultation with, and tailored for, local communities.

Funding to expand suicide prevention research will build on existing research and translate findings into improved suicide prevention models and practices that support individuals, families and communities.

### **Who will benefit?**

These investments will benefit individuals, families, workplaces and communities at risk of, and impacted by, suicide and will provide increased funding and initiatives towards suicide prevention.

The National Suicide Prevention Trial has helped identify the most effective approaches to tailor suicide prevention support for the needs of groups at risk of suicide.

PHNs will take a central role in implementing a system wide approach to suicide prevention, ensuring services and supports are integrated, coordinated and appropriate for local populations.

A national approach, deploying resources to each of Australia's 31 PHNs is central to developing locally focused programs which address the unique risk factors in each region. This initiative will particularly benefit those living in regional, rural and remote communities where services may have been limited in the past.

### **How much will this cost?**

The Australian Government is investing an additional \$46.7 million over two years from 2022–23 to 2023–24.