

Towards Zero Suicides initiatives

Suicide prevention in NSW

The NSW Government has invested \$87 million over the next three years in new suicide prevention initiatives. The Towards Zero Suicides initiatives seek to provide best practice crisis care and support, build local community resilience and improve systems and practices to reduce the suicide rate in NSW.

The Towards Zero Suicides initiatives support the goals and priorities of the *Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018 – 2023*. They contribute to achieving the NSW Premier's Priority goal of reducing the suicide rate by 20 per cent by 2023.

The initiatives will be developed and delivered with a major focus on the involvement of people with lived experience of suicide and all key stakeholders. Together these initiatives will support communities around NSW to start the journey towards zero suicides.

Redirection from Emergency Departments (Safe Havens)

This initiative will deliver twenty new services across the state that provide an alternative to presenting to an emergency department during a crisis. The café staff will support guests and link them with other appropriate services. These services will be derived from the United Kingdom's Safe Haven café model that has shown a 33% reduction in admissions to mental health inpatient units in their catchments. Safe Havens are a safe, nonmedical space staffed by peer support workers and other professionals. Twenty new services will be delivered across NSW with local health districts working with people with lived experience of suicide to co-design local models.

Suicide Prevention Outreach Teams

This initiative will be co-designed by people with lived experience of suicide, clinicians and community organisations to deliver a new model of care. The initiative will provide assertive outreach and follow up for people experiencing a suicidal crisis in the community. New teams will be formed in every local health district to expand the existing suicide prevention workforce so that more people who are in distress can be supported more quickly. The co-design will take place with local stakeholders to design teams that respond to local needs and integrate with existing services.

Aftercare

This initiative will match Commonwealth Government funding to expand beyondblue's The Way Back Support Service, which provides aftercare to people after discharge from hospital following a suicide attempt. The Way Back provides three months of follow up and psychosocial, peer-based support in the community. Evaluation has found subsequent suicide attempts of less than 1% among The Way Back participants during this critical three month period. Under this initiative, The Way Back will be maintained in its current locations and expanded to several new sites in coordination with Primary Health Networks.

NSW Youth Aftercare Pilot

Suicide remains the leading cause of death among young people. While the causes of suicide and suicide attempts are complex and generally influenced by a combination of individual, social, cultural, environmental and contextual factors. A suicide attempt is the strongest risk factor for subsequent suicide in the general population. A new Youth Aftercare service will be piloted in two NSW locations to provide intensive, community-based support services for young people following self-harm, suicidal ideation, or suicide attempt. The Pilot is made possible through a contribution under the Commonwealth Health Innovation Fund across three years.

Enhancement to Rural Counselling

This initiative has provided new counsellors in rural areas across NSW. Given the higher rate of suicide among people living in rural and regional NSW, expanding the workforce available to support people experiencing hardship and distress is critical. These counsellors will increase the psychological and emotional support available to people, communities and workplaces in rural areas so they can better cope with natural disasters, economic changes and severe adversity. This will include providing dedicated support to people experiencing suicidal ideation or recovering from a suicide attempt.

Community Gatekeeper Training

'Gatekeepers' are key leaders or popular people in communities that may come in contact with people who are experiencing suicidal thinking or behaviour. Gatekeeper training, that builds skills in responding to and supporting people at risk of suicide to get the help they need, is regarded as one of the most effective and critical elements of suicide prevention. In this initiative, community networks, organisations, services and workplaces have been provided with funds to purchase evidence-based training for gatekeepers, supported by related activities such as health promotion, social media content or local community campaigns.

Building on Resilience in Aboriginal Communities

This initiative will provide additional staffing and resources to twelve Aboriginal community controlled health organisations (ACCHOs) across NSW. Together with their local Aboriginal community they will develop and lead activities that build resilience, strengthen identity and promote culture. Aboriginal communities experience a higher rate of suicide and self-harm, requiring urgent and culturally appropriate action. This project will support communities to generate their own solutions for their local context.

Community Response Packages for Priority Groups

There are many groups at particularly high risk of suicide that require their own community strategies to ensure that people receive the help they need. Priority groups include bushfire victims, bushfire response workers, first responders, men, young people, older people, LGBTI communities, Aboriginal communities, workers in key industries (mining, construction, veterinarians, doctors/nurses, etc.) and others. This initiative will provide resources to priority groups at risk of suicide to run community campaigns, produce social media content, raise awareness, hold safe community discussions, better support people at risk, establish improved links with services and other strategies.

Supporting Suicide Prevention Collaboratives

This initiative will provide support to existing local suicide prevention collaboratives and help to establish new collaboratives in areas of NSW with especially high rates of suicides. In recent years, collaboratives have formed in regions across NSW involving a range of stakeholders including people with lived experience of suicide, community members, local councils, health organisations, industry, police, and emergency services. Local and statewide staff will support these collaboratives to develop and implement evidence-based activities in their communities.

Suicide Prevention Alert System

An alert system to quickly mobilise services for people at high risk of suicide. It will ensure that all agencies involved in the care of a person can quickly share relevant information. This initiative will trial a suicide risk alert system in local communities that can ensure a rapid response to people at high risk of suicide. The system will be trialled in locations where there are already developed suicide prevention collaboratives (that is, where services and community institutions are already well linked into a local network that can share information easily).

Post Suicide Support

This initiative will provide people who are bereaved or impacted by suicide with counselling, peer support, and practical assistance in dealing with police, coroners' investigations, media reports and other matters. Support can include counselling, peer support, and assistance with dealing with police, coroners' investigations, family issues, media reporting and other matters. In this initiative, new services will be co-designed by people with lived experience of suicide and experts to deliver essential new services for people bereaved by suicide. The developed service model will then be tendered to community managed organisations in rural, regional and metropolitan areas.

Expanding Peer Support and Peer Led Initiatives

People with lived experience of a suicide attempt or suicidal thinking have unique insights that can help others who are experiencing suicidal ideation and/or have attempted suicide. New innovative, evidence based peer support and peer led initiatives will be trialled or expanded that provide appropriate support for people experiencing suicidal thinking or have attempted suicide by peers who have relevant lived experience of suicide. Two currently available evidence-based models under consideration are Eclipse and Alternatives to Suicide.

Zero Suicides in Care

This initiative will support staff in the mental health system to redesign procedures, reduce risks and build skills to prevent suicide deaths and attempts in acute and community mental health settings. In line with national and international best practice, Zero Suicides in Care will foster a just and restorative organisational culture and strong service leadership to promote safety for patients and staff. A blame-free working environment will be upheld where excellent health care ensures that people with mental health conditions and their family are active participants in their care and are supported to recover and protected from self-harm. Global experts in Zero Suicides will work with local health districts to plan and implement the initiative. Additional staffing will be made available in every local health district to deliver local strategies in partnership with people with lived experience of suicide that support the cultural and practical changes necessary to improve safety.

Training in Non-Mental Health and Non-Health Systems

Approximately 40 per cent of people who die by suicide have no recent contact with the health system. People in crisis are often seen by other non-mental health or non-health services but can receive responses that may not identify that they are at risk of suicide or may escalate their risk. NSW Health is training thousands of staff across NSW government and non-government services so that people in crisis receive a compassionate response and immediate support to keep them safe.

NSW Suicide Register

This initiative will reform the management of suicide data in NSW. It will address the fragmentation, confusion and lack of accessibility that characterises the current system. Following the NSW Suicide Prevention Data Forums in 2018 and 2019, development has commenced on NSW's first register of suicide fatalities. The register will provide authoritative and easily reached information to support communities, local organisations and government agencies to respond to suicide faster and more effectively.

Suicide Prevention Fund

The NSW Government introduced the NSW Suicide Prevention Fund in 2016 to provide opportunities for non-government organisations and community based services to deliver local suicide prevention services and activities.

Further information

More information about the Towards Zero Suicides initiatives can be found at:

- [Towards Zero Suicides initiatives](#)
- [Towards Zero Suicides Premier's Priority](#)

Help is available

If you, or someone you know, is thinking about suicide or experiencing a personal crisis or distress, help is available. Tell someone about what you are thinking, even at the earliest signs. Please contact one of these services or speak to your General Practitioner:

Lifeline 13 11 14 lifeline.org.au	Provides all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services
Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467 Suicidecallbackservice.org.au	A nationwide service that provides professional 24/7 telephone and online counselling to people who are affected by suicide
NSW Mental Health Line 1800 011 511	A single number, state-wide 24-hour mental health telephone access service
Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 beyondblue.org.au	Provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health
Kids Helpline 1800 551 800 Kidshelpline.com.au	A free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25
MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78 Mensline.org.au	A telephone and online support, information and referral service for men
QLife 1800 184 527 Qlife.org.au	A nationally-oriented counselling and referral service for LGBTI people operating from 3pm to Midnight, every day

If you, or someone you know, are in **immediate danger**, please call **000** or go to your nearest hospital **Emergency Department**.