



# Kevin Humphries MP

## Minister for Mental Health

## Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

## Minister for Western NSW

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### HELPING SMALL COMMUNITIES OVERCOME SUICIDE

Communities in NSW affected by suicide will be helped to develop suicide prevention strategies following the launch of a new resource today by the Minister for Mental Health, Kevin Humphries.

Mr Humphries launched *Communities Matter: A toolkit for community-driven suicide prevention*, which supports people living in small communities to work together to combat suicide as well as break the stigma surrounding suicide by encouraging people to reach out to one another.

“There would be few people in regional NSW that haven’t been touched by suicide or attempted suicide in some way,” Mr Humphries said.

“Like many people who have lived in regional communities all their life, I know too many families who have tragically lost loved ones to suicide.

“With 550 lives lost to suicide in NSW every year it is important to break the stigma surrounding suicide and to help small communities to both work to prevent acts of self-harm and suicide, as well as deal with the impacts when they occur.”

Mr Humphries said the toolkit – which will be trialled in the communities of Hay and Walgett – was developed by the NSW Mental Health Commission and Suicide Prevention Australia.

“Upon coming into Government the NSW Liberals & Nationals held suicide prevention forums in communities across the state to help shape the Government’s response to suicide prevention,” Mr Humphries said.

“One of the strongest messages we heard was that small communities with a history of suicide wanted to be able to work together as a community to tackle the impacts of suicide, but didn’t know where to begin or who to turn to.

“We have listened to these communities and through *Communities Matter: A toolkit for community-driven suicide prevention*, we will give community leaders and local residents the ability to develop evidence-based suicide prevention strategies that will meet their local needs.

“Suicide and suicide prevention are community issues which require everyone to work together to support those at risk around us.

“Through improved understanding, resilience and support, we can together make a difference, and this toolkit is a vital step towards turning the tide on this extremely important issue.”

Suicide Prevention Australia CEO, Susan Murray, said the toolkit would provide communities with the ability to respond to suicide more effectively.

“Suicide prevention requires the collective efforts of business, government and community organisations to promote the physical, social and emotional well-being of all community members,” Mrs Murray said.

“The Toolkit is designed to provide practical tools as a starting point for building strong, healthy and resilient communities.”

The *Communities Matter* resource will be complimented by *Conversations Matter*, an online resource which will provide support for communities across NSW to have safe and effective conversations about suicide and which will be launched later this year.