



# Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Networks

Suicide is a significant concern in Australia, claiming the lives of 3,320 people in 2019. Community-based suicide prevention approaches have been recognised as an important component of broader suicide prevention strategies.

**Community networks (or community coalitions) can mobilise and coordinate local community services. This is achieved through establishing whole of community approaches to address relevant local health and social issues.**

Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Networks provide meaningful avenues to harness and nourish the value of lived experience in suicide prevention.

Wesley Mission, through its Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Networks (Wesley LifeForce Networks), has been working with the community to support the development of local community suicide prevention networks since 2007. Wesley LifeForce Networks program is the only (nationally operating) community-based suicide prevention networks program in Australia and internationally.

Longitudinal analyses of national suicide data showed that on average, the introduction of Wesley LifeForce Networks reduced the suicide rate by seven per cent. This pattern of effects was most pronounced nine months following Network establishment, with a significant reduction of 17 per cent in suicide rates.\*

## What the program does for individuals:

- builds confidence in those with a lived experience of suicide with members describing the ability to share one's lived experience and have a voice as empowering
- builds confidence in community members to develop community resilience activities
- develops community connections and networks
- provides a source of support and avenues for capacity building, alongside opportunities to support community members through volunteering
- provides an avenue of access to support programs and services to members
- facilitates a sense of healing and connection for those with a lived experience
- provides opportunities for individuals to make a difference in their community and act as change agents, offering a highly rewarding experience
- empowers members to share one's experience and assists in building connections with community.

## What the program achieves for communities:

- coordinates local suicide prevention efforts strengthening a whole-of-community approach
- fosters connection in the community and brings people together
- connects people with services in the area and facilitates local service provision
- facilitates help seeking within the local area by raising awareness and willingness to speak about suicide and other mental health challenges people face
- contributes to reducing the stigma of suicide and mental health
- streamlines access to health care through grassroots support to community members who are in direct need of services and support.

Wesley LifeForce is unique in the Australian suicide prevention sector because it comprises a vast network of local community grassroots initiatives, which are structurally supported through an overarching national program. Wesley LifeForce Networks are supportive of a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to suicide prevention.

## For more information and where to find your local Network, search: Wesley Lifeforce Networks.

\* Reference: Reifels L, Williamson M, Schlichthorst M, Too T, Morgan A, Roberts R, Mercer P, Munkara-Murray K, Jordan H (2021). Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Networks Evaluation: Final Phase 1 & 2 Report. Centre for Mental Health, The University of Melbourne.

## How to get involved?

**Join a Wesley LifeForce Network**, which brings together people and organisations in local communities to raise awareness about suicide, while empowering members to develop suicide prevention strategies at a grassroots level.

**Call 1800 100 024 or email [lifeforce@wesleymission.org.au](mailto:lifeforce@wesleymission.org.au)**

**Book suicide prevention training** with Wesley LifeForce Training, which aims to educate and equip Australians with the tools to recognise and help someone who is at risk of suicide.

**Visit [wesleymission.org.au/suicide-prevention-training](https://wesleymission.org.au/suicide-prevention-training)**

Wesley LifeForce is not a crisis service.

**If you need assistance immediately call emergency services on 000 or Lifeline on 13 11 14**

**Do all the good you can because every life matters**