

The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Federal Member for Flinders
Minister for Health and Aged Care

The Hon. David Coleman MP
Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and
Suicide Prevention

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

20 April 2022

\$30 in million leadership, research and training grants to reduce suicides

Australia's leading suicide prevention and mental health organisations are among the recipients of \$30 million in funding for workforce training, research and national leadership initiatives aiming to reduce the tragic toll of suicide in Australia.

Funded through the 2021-21 Budget's expansion of the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Support grant programme, leading mental health groups will receive funding for national advocacy, research translation, and evidence-based training for communities and organisations, with programs to be delivered across Australia.

Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, said the program was an important part of the Government's commitment to suicide prevention.

"In 2020, there was a 5.4 per cent reduction in the number of suicides compared to 2019, with the national rate of 12.1 per 100,000 being the lowest recorded since 2016.

"While the reduction in the rate is encouraging, still far too many people die by suicide every year. Our Government is committed to working towards zero suicides, recognising the immense value of each and every life."

The funding includes investment in Suicide Prevention Australia's work to deliver national leadership by informing, influencing and building capacity in the suicide prevention sector.

The University of Melbourne will receive funding to strengthen the evidence of suicide prevention models and translate it into policy and practice.

Training is an important focus of the new investments. headspace National will receive funding to help university staff identify mental health issues, and Mental Health First Aid International and Wesley Community Services - Lifeforce Suicide Prevention Training will receive support to increase the reach of their respective training programs.

Wesley Lifeforce will also continue their work through the Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention network, building the capacity of communities to respond to and support those at risk within their region. Black Dog Institute will deliver evidence-based suicide prevention support services to Primary Health Networks, to increase reach and support for at-risk communities.

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, David Coleman, said the new funding ensures the future of existing and successful programs and invests in innovative, new and emerging projects or strategies.

“Through record investments, the Morrison Government continues to transform the mental health and suicide prevention system to ensure that it delivers innovative, effective and person-centered care when and where it is needed,” Assistant Minister Coleman said.

“The program reflects our multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which aims to ensure that every Australian can be supported in the way that works best for them,” Assistant Minister Coleman said.

Funding for these projects forms part of the Morrison Government’s latest round of the newly expanded National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program, an investment of over \$114 million through the 2021-22 Budget.

Suicide prevention is a key pillar of the Government’s landmark National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan.

The Plan recognises Australians deserve a system that acts early to help people before mental health conditions and suicidal distress worsen, and that whole-of-government and whole-of-community changes are needed to deliver preventative, effective and compassionate care.

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

This is in stark contrast to Mr Albanese’s time in Cabinet, where Labor cut funding for mental health.

In the 2011-12 Budget, Labor announced a \$580 million cut to Medicare subsidised mental health services, including a reduction in the number of Medicare sessions available under Better Access from 18 to 10 per year and a reduction in Medicare rebate for preparation of mental health treatment plans by GPs.

Anyone experiencing distress can seek immediate advice and support through Lifeline (13 11 14), Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800), or the Government’s digital mental health gateway, Head to Health.

If you are concerned about suicide, living with someone who is considering suicide, or bereaved by suicide, the Suicide Call Back Service is available at 1300 659 467 or www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au.

-END-