

# National Suicide Prevention Implementation Strategy

## Proposed areas of focus and priority actions for the first three years of the Strategy

Suicide is one of the greatest preventable public health and social challenges of our time. Community support to prevent suicides is strong, especially from people that have a lived experience of suicide. All governments have made suicide prevention a priority, committing significant funding towards reducing suicide rates. As one part of making suicide prevention a priority, all governments have committed to drafting a new national suicide prevention strategy for Australia – the National Suicide Prevention Implementation Strategy. This Strategy will embody the collective aspiration of all governments that fewer lives are lost to suicide and will be supported by every Health Minister in Australia.

Your feedback is sought as to whether the 21 priority actions proposed for implementation over the first three years of this new strategy are the right ones. These are summarised below and in more detail at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/suicide-prevention-strategy>. This feedback will help shape the drafting of the Strategy. Please provide your feedback by 1 May 2019.

Proposed Priority Areas	Suggested Priority Actions <sup>1</sup>	What positive change will implementation achieve?
 <p><b>Building individual and community resilience</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to fund awareness raising campaigns to improve Australians' understanding of the warning signs for suicide, how to help and how to seek help</li> <li>Using the workplace as a setting for suicide prevention</li> <li>Training more community gatekeepers, including Indigenous Elders and community leaders, to support individuals and communities</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More Australians will understand the warning signs for suicide, know how to start a positive conversation with someone who is struggling and how to access help</li> <li>More community members, including Indigenous Elders and community leaders, will be trained and supported to have conversations with people at risk or experiencing suicidal behaviours and support them to seek help</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Supporting people in suicidal distress to access the care they need</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving access to services to better prevent suicidal behaviours and, when they do occur, providing effective care               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing access to high-quality mental health services</li> <li>Strengthening the support and care provided by suicide crisis helplines</li> <li>Supporting general practitioners to provide assessment, treatment and timely referral</li> <li>Strengthening the assessment and care of people who present to emergency departments in suicidal distress by training every emergency department clinician</li> </ol> </li> <li>Establishing a range of options to support people in suicidal distress</li> <li>Digital technology that enables suicide prevention</li> <li>Preventing the suicides of people receiving treatment from a public health service</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More Australians will be able to access evidence-informed help, treatment and care to prevent and address suicidal behaviours</li> <li>When Australians do present at Emergency Departments for help, they will be treated compassionately and be provided with evidence-informed assessment, care and referral</li> <li>For Australians that do not need immediate medical attention but need help to prevent or address suicidal behaviours, there will be safe, evidence-informed alternatives to the Emergency Department</li> <li>When people are being cared for in a hospital, they will be kept safe</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Enabling recovery through post-crisis aftercare and postvention</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making evidence-informed, person-centred aftercare following a suicide attempt universally available</li> <li>Increasing the coverage of postvention bereavement services to support individuals and communities to recover</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every person that attempts suicide and is in contact with the health system will be offered evidence-informed aftercare to assist them to recover</li> <li>More individuals, families and communities will be offered evidence informed postvention services following a suicide</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Community-driven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new national plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention</li> <li>Culturally safe post suicide attempt aftercare services</li> <li>A culturally appropriate risk assessment tool for assessing risk of suicide in Indigenous people</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be a dedicated focus on reducing suicides rates amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a new National Plan which will set the direction and coordinate action</li> <li>The assessment and care pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing suicidal behaviours will be strengthened and when a suicide attempt does occur, culturally safe aftercare programs will be available</li> </ul>
Proposed Priority Enablers	Suggested Priority Actions <sup>1</sup>	What positive change will implementation achieve?
 <p><b>Building and maintaining a competent, compassionate workforce</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building suicide prevention competency throughout peoples' careers:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-quality suicide prevention curricula in tertiary education</li> <li>Leveraging continuing professional development programs</li> <li>Promoting existing professional development opportunities</li> <li>Supporting the alcohol and other drugs workforce</li> </ol> </li> <li>Supporting Primary Health Networks to commission effective suicide prevention activities</li> <li>Co-designing and delivering with people with a lived experience of suicide</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throughout their career, clinicians and health professionals will be better supported to provide effective, compassionate care for people with suicidal behaviours</li> <li>Primary Health Networks will be better supported to undertake their important role in commissioning local suicide prevention activities, meaning that more Australians will receive effective help</li> <li>The role that people with a lived experience of suicide can have in working alongside others to co-design and co-deliver suicide prevention activities will be legitimised and valued and included in workforce</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Better use of data, information and evidence to improve outcomes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening research and evaluation to guide efforts to reduce suicides</li> <li>Establishing a national monitoring system for suicides and suicide attempts</li> <li>When a death occurs, using the data to ensure we learn from it:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving suicide registers as key data sources for understanding suicides</li> <li>Learning from the suicides of mental health clients in the community</li> <li>Improving care by linking data to understand how people that took their own lives sought help from the health system</li> </ol> </li> <li>Harnessing data to better understand suicidal behaviour and target investments:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using population health surveys to understand directly from Australians</li> <li>Publicly reporting suicide attempts</li> <li>Using localised data on suicidal behaviours to better target investments</li> <li>Using data to understand suicidal behaviours seen in primary care settings</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will know more than ever about suicidal behaviour in Australia and what is working to prevent and reduce it, as well as having good systems in place to understand changes overtime and track progress in reducing suicide rates</li> <li>Investments in research and evaluation will be focused and coordinated around agreed priorities, with different forms of evidence valued, including lived experience</li> <li>Access to existing data and how it is used to improve prevention, early intervention and treatment efforts will be strengthened, as well as new data collected and reported to increase our understanding of suicidal behaviours</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Government leadership that drives structures and partnerships to deliver better outcomes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing the structures needed to strengthen Australia's suicide prevention approach:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening partnerships between health ministers to achieve more</li> <li>Strengthening partnerships across the many sectors that have a role to play in preventing suicide</li> <li>Bringing health departments together with the suicide prevention sector, to share knowledge, foster collaboration and accelerate best practice and innovation</li> </ol> </li> <li>Establishing a suicide prevention digital gateway to centrally capture research and evidence, best practice programs and innovation</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Ministers and their departments are enabled to work together to increase the collective impact of suicide prevention activities across Australia</li> <li>Health Ministers are supported to lead Australia's suicide prevention efforts, in partnership with their Ministerial colleagues</li> <li>The suicide prevention sector is better connected, with clearer roles and responsibilities to build areas of expertise, maximise investments and the rapid transfer of knowledge and evidence</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Note that the suggested Priority Actions are not meant to comprehensively capture everything that should be done to reduce suicide rates under each Priority Area and Priority Enabler. Rather they focus on high priority actions that are best progressed through the remit of this Strategy, in the context of this strategy being only one part of the suicide prevention effort in Australia.