

Hon Stephen Wade MLC
Minister for Health and Wellbeing

Dan Cregan MP
Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention and Community
Resilience

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New Suicide Prevention Program to Support State's Most Vulnerable

South Australia's most vulnerable now have better access to support services thanks to a new pilot program to help survivors of attempted suicide.

Minister for Health and Wellbeing Stephen Wade said *The Way Back Support Service*, a Beyondblue initiative delivered in collaboration between AnglicareSA and Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN), provides one-on-one support to survivors after they leave hospital.

"We are committed to tackling our suicide rate through offering appropriate services to those who need support and ensuring that people at increased risk of suicide don't fall through the gaps, Minister Wade said.

"Suicide is a complex issue, however we know raising awareness, breaking down stigma and encouraging help-seeking behaviours can save lives.

"2020 was a challenging and uncertain year for many of us, so it's more vital than ever that we continue to have comprehensive support services available for people during times of need."

Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention and Community Resilience Dan Cregan said: "By ensuring people discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt have access to appropriate follow-up care and support, we can significantly enhance their recovery."

The Marshall Liberal Government has already boosted funding for mental health by almost \$20 million since the 2018 election and spends 10 per cent more than the national average on mental health services.

The Way Back Support Service supports people who are at greater risk of suicide discharged from the Royal Adelaide Hospital and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The program provides individuals with practical measures like finding the best support for their specific issues.

Support coordinators assist the service users to stay safe and well by supporting their discharge from hospital, creating an individualised safety plan, and providing connections to financial counselling and community-based support services as needed.

Adjunct Professor John Mendoza, CALHN Executive Director for Mental Health, said the program will initially be trialled at the Royal Adelaide Hospital's emergency department (ED) and mental

health unit, with plans to expand to The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and community mental health teams.

“This program will help us to provide improved continuity of care to around 10 per cent of emergency department mental health presentations at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital with suicidal behaviour or assessed as high risk of suicide, Mr Mendoza said.

“That’s around 700 people a year who will benefit from this specialist support, in addition to a range of ED avoidance and community care programs CALHN has implemented over the past year.”

Michael Traynor, Anglicare SA Suicide Prevention and Grief Support Manager said the new program will bolster AnglicareSA’s established suicide support services.

“We already provide significant specialist support to people across South Australia via our Living Beyond Suicide program and Suicide Prevention Service, but with our team working over capacity, we’ve been in desperate need for more funding and resources, he said.

“In welcoming a team of five support workers, the new program will more than double our capacity to support people who have had a recent suicide attempt.

The Way Back Support Service is co-funded by the Commonwealth Government and SA Health through Adelaide Primary Health Network and the Office for the Chief Psychiatrist.

Operating between 9am–5pm Monday to Friday, the service can be accessed by calling 1300 077 798.