



The Hon. David Coleman MP

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide
Prevention

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New national approach to local suicide prevention

The Morrison Government is reforming the way suicide prevention activities are undertaken across the country, with \$46.7 million in the 2022-23 Budget to strengthen suicide prevention at the local level.

For the first time, every region in Australia will have a local leader focused on suicide prevention, ensuring early intervention and suicide prevention activities are better coordinated and right for the local area.

Suicide Prevention Response Leaders will work within their community to bring together service providers, local councils, emergency services, schools and community groups. They will also have funding to back local approaches and services to reduce suicide.

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, David Coleman, said the Morrison Government recognises the devastating impact suicide has on individuals, families and communities, and is committed to working towards zero suicides.

“Every suicide is a tragedy. While the rate of suicide declined by 6.2 per cent in 2020, 3,139 Australians lost their lives,” Assistant Minister Coleman said.

“As we work towards our goal of zero suicides, we are building upon our record investment in suicide prevention.”

To continue to drive the suicide rate towards zero, the Morrison Government is investing through the 2022-23 Budget:

- **\$10.4 million** to establish a Suicide Prevention Regional Response Leader in each of Australia’s 31 Primary Health Networks (PHN), to lead engagement, coordination, and integration of early intervention and suicide prevention activities in their region.
- **\$30.2 million** to strengthen the ability of PHNs to implement regional and community-based suicide prevention responses nationally, delivering initiatives tailored for local communities. These may include developing services for at-risk groups in the community, improving care coordination by mapping local service pathways for those at risk of suicide or who are bereaved by suicide, or building the capacity and capability of the local workforce through activities such as scholarship and training programs.

- **\$4 million** to boost suicide prevention research, by providing a further two years of funding for the Suicide Prevention Research Fund delivered by Suicide Prevention Australia.

“These new initiatives were informed by strong evidence for new approaches to suicide prevention, gained through the National Suicide Prevention Trials.

“The trials highlighted the importance of localised approaches and having dedicated response leaders in each PHN. We’re now using the lessons from these trials to deliver services and suicide prevention initiatives across the country that are tailored to meet the needs of local communities.”

Assistant Minister Coleman said the Suicide Prevention Regional Response Leaders will be located in all areas of Australia, ensuring regional, rural and remote communities are fully included.

“Every single PHN area that covers regional and remote Australia has a higher suicide rate than those that cover metropolitan areas.

“It’s imperative that suicide prevention initiatives reach into communities that have historically been hard to reach and where services may have been limited.

“Key to this is the fact that the new Suicide Prevention Regional Response Leaders will not be bound to a desk, they will be out in the community building relationships, determining where the gaps are and working to address these in partnership with the community.”

These new suicide prevention initiatives are a key part of the *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan*, with the Morrison Government investing almost \$3 billion towards its implementation since 2021-22.

More than \$344 million is for specific suicide prevention measures, which includes working with the states and territories to deliver universal aftercare for all Australians discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt, funding national postvention services to support those bereaved or impacted by suicide, and the establishment of a National Suicide Prevention Office to lead cross government work.

As part of the Plan, the Government is also investing more than \$96 million into mental health and suicide prevention measures for Indigenous Australians whose suicide rate is more than double that of non-Indigenous Australians.

This includes funding to establish regional suicide prevention networks in each jurisdiction, implement culturally sensitive, co-designed aftercare services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations being the preferred service providers, and to create a culturally appropriate 24/7 crisis line that is governed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Anyone experiencing distress can also 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

Young Australians needing support can access free services through Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800), their local headspace or online through eheadspace (<https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/>).

Australians needing support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic can access the Beyond Blue Coronavirus Wellbeing Support Service any time via telephone at 1800 512 348 or online at coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

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