

29 March 2022

Budget 2022 misses key priorities for suicide prevention

Suicide Prevention Australia welcomes additional funding in the 2022 Federal Budget but urges further investment for those most at-risk and across key whole-of-government priorities.

Key budget highlights for suicide prevention:

- \$4 million to Suicide Prevention Australia over two years to extend the National Suicide Prevention Research Fund
- \$30.2 million to deploy regional community-based suicide prevention systems in all Primary Health Networks (PHNs)
- \$10.4 million to establish a Suicide Prevention Regional Response Leader to coordinate early intervention and suicide prevention activities in all PHNs
- \$52.3 million in funding for Lifeline Australia over four years to provide additional support services, maintain and improve infrastructure and responsiveness, innovation in crisis, surge capacity and models of care
- \$206.5 million over three years to ensure continued access to services for young people with severe and complex mental illness
- \$3.9 million over three years for innovative, evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention research activities through the Thompson Institute
- \$3.5 million over four years to continue the Australian Public Service Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Unit

Suicide Prevention Australia CEO, Nieves Murray, said “Investment in local responses, suicide prevention research and young people at risk will help save lives.

“Unfortunately, this is a missed opportunity for other priority populations including men, LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“We need to see extra support for those in distress, those who have attempted suicide and the loved ones of those touched by suicide.

“Greater investment is needed to ensure people with lived experience are integrated in all parts of suicide prevention and a comprehensive suicide prevention workforce strategy.

Support. Collaborate. Advocate.

Suicide Prevention Australia is the peak body for suicide prevention in Australia. We work to build a stronger suicide prevention sector, a more aware and engaged community, and a more effective regulatory and funding environment. Together we can achieve our shared vision of a world without suicide.



"We need to build on the significant reform momentum following the Final Advice of the Prime Minister's Suicide Prevention Adviser, the Productivity Commission Inquiry, and a new National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention National Agreement."

"We cannot take the foot off the pedal. At this critical time, we need to double-down on recent investments in suicide prevention."

"The Federal Government has proved that investing in social supports does work as suicide rates have remained relatively stable over the past two years throughout the pandemic. We can't ignore that it's two to three years post-disaster that rates of suicide can increase, and now is the time for proactive investment."

"Investments in treatment and crisis response are critical but we also need to invest earlier in preventative measures like social welfare and housing. We'll never turn the trend towards zero suicides without greater investments in the social determinants of health."

"More is needed to strengthen protective factors in our community by supporting adequate social security payments, tackling housing insecurity and addressing social isolation and loneliness."

"Now is not the time to slow down. It is critical that we continue to deliver on national, structural, and much-needed reform at a time our community needs it most."

"Recent investments have benefited suicide prevention in many ways, but the distress in communities can't be solved without a lasting whole-of-government approach," said Ms Murray.

Suicide Prevention Australia calls for the establishment of a Suicide Prevention Act to ensure a whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention and drive accountability across government.

This would legislate a Suicide Prevention Plan, governance arrangements for reporting and lived experience and require agencies to consider suicide risks and prevention in their work.

Ms Murray said, "The Federal Government's investment in suicide prevention to date has been welcome and necessary but we need to keep going."

"We must continue making smart and timely decisions that will make a meaningful difference to the lives of people across our communities."

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"We can never underestimate the impact that every life lost to suicide has on family, friends, workplaces and the broader community," said Ms Murray.

To get help 24/7, phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467. If you or someone you know are in immediate danger, phone 000 for emergency services.

Help to report about suicide safely is available online: Go to <https://mindframe.org.au/>

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About Suicide Prevention Australia

Suicide Prevention Australia is the national peak body and we've been providing support for Australia's suicide prevention sector for more than 25 years. We support and advocate for our members to drive continual improvement in suicide prevention policy, programs and services. Our reach is broad, including member organisations, governments, businesses, researchers, practitioners and those with lived experience. We are focused on an integrated approach to suicide prevention encompassing mental health, social, economic and community factors. We believe that through collaborative effort and shared purpose, we can achieve our vision of a world without suicide.

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