

Commonwealth Government names Suicide Prevention Australia as Lead for National Research Fund

Australia, 20 June 2017: At a meeting of the Parliamentary Friends of Suicide Prevention today, Minister for Health The Hon. Greg Hunt MP announced Suicide Prevention Australia as lead agency for a new national Suicide Prevention Research Fund.

The \$12m Fund was promised in the Federal Election campaign following calls from Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) and its members for increased, dedicated investment in suicide prevention research.

In commenting on the announcement, Suicide Prevention Australia CEO, Sue Murray, said that “We are proud to be named the independent leadership body tasked with facilitating a research environment that improves the way we map gaps in current knowledge and strengthen Australia’s research capability.”

“Prioritising research and establishing pathways to move research findings into policy and practice, in a timely manner, is integral to achieving a downward trajectory in suicides. This concept, in other health areas such as breast cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes has clearly demonstrated the power of coordinated research in Australia.”

“We will work with our members, lived experience representatives and those with research interests to ensure that the research is strategically targeted to nationally agreed priorities.”

National Coalition for Suicide Prevention Chair, Matthew Tukaki, agrees and says “With mental health and suicide prevention reform a priority, we are seeing movement in the right direction in terms of practice, based on collaboration, with a solid evidence base. This is complementary to regionally based planning and innovative population based trials.

Making change in our research settings to ensure we also efficiently direct those efforts is another logical step change in suicide prevention.”

About the Suicide Prevention Research Fund (SPRF)

- Suicide Prevention Australia has long advocated for an independent research plan, as set out in the [National Research Action Plan](#). This Plan was developed through a series of workshops with SPA members, lived experience representatives, researchers, service providers, policy makers, funders and community leaders.
- The fund announced today will comprise a Commonwealth contribution (initially \$12 million over four years).
- As fund manager, SPA will build strategic partnerships across the suicide prevention including Primary Health Networks, private, philanthropic and community organisations, academic institutions and governments. Such partnerships are crucial to supporting a national approach to reducing the impact of suicide on individuals and Australian families.
- Suicide Prevention Australia will invite contributions from the corporate sector, philanthropic and community organisations as well as individual donations.
- Suicide Prevention Australia will work with their Lived Experience Network, the NHMRC for scientific peer-review of applications, and work in partnership with other recipients of leadership funding including the University of Melbourne and UWA Centre for Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention.
- Grant distribution will be administered by SPA with the support of clinical and scientific advisory committees which will guide and assist in determining research priorities. Applications for 2018 grants will open later in 2017.

Suicide Prevention Australia has also been tasked with developing a Best Practice Hub, an online resource to facilitate knowledge sharing of the best available evidence on which to base the development of suicide prevention programs and services. The **Best Practice Hub** will be a user-friendly online tool of evidence-based suicide prevention resources that will support and inform PHNs and other providers involved in the regional approach to service planning and commissioning of suicide prevention activities.

About Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA): SPA provides national leadership for the suicide prevention sector in Australia. SPA works collaboratively to develop a community that knows how to ask for help and how to give help. As the lead agency of the National Suicide Prevention Coalition, we build and facilitate partnerships to change attitudes to mental illness and suicidal behaviours, and seek to harness the voices of professionals and those with lived experience of suicide attempts and suicide. www.suicidepreventionaust.org