



February 2026

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# 2026-27 Queensland Pre-Budget Submission

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# Time to Act: Suicide Prevention Australia's Pre-Budget Priorities.

| MEASURE  | DESCRIPTION  | ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE    |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Identify suicide prevention specific funding                      | Suicide prevention funding be distinct and delineated in the 2026-27 Budget and ongoing to allow for transparent and identifiable funding allocations.   | Budgetary process change |
| 2. Draft and implement and evaluate the Suicide Prevention Act       | Implementation of the Suicide Prevention Act through Departments to deliver tangible and measurable reductions to suicide and suicidal distress across New South Wales, with ongoing monitoring of progress and evaluation.  | \$0.5M over two years    |
| 3. Consultation on embedding lived experience in government          | Undertake a review across government to establish areas of good practice in embedding suicide prevention lived experience, with the review conducted by an appropriate lived experience led body.  | \$1.5M over 2026-28      |
| 4. Suicide Prevention workforce initiative                           | Develop a Suicide Prevention Workforce Initiative, articulating regional, and local strategies for accessibility, capability, skills, supply, retention, sustainability, support and workforce safety, with dedicated funding allocations for implementation.                      | \$1M over two years      |
| 5. Doing it Tough platform for men and boys                          | Suicide Prevention Australia is calling on the Government to invest in the Doing it Tough program to assist men and boys in suicidal distress.   | \$1.6M over four years   |
| 6. Equip the community to respond effectively to suicidal behaviours | Make evidence-based "first aid" suicide prevention training more easily accessible to key members of the community who commonly encounter people at risk by establishing a community training fund for 10,000 people per year.   | \$6.2M over four years   |
| 7. Review funding processes to strengthen community organisations    | Improve funding arrangements to improve workforce and service continuity through longer contracts, timely commencement/renewal of contracts, indexation and paid participation for people with lived experience of suicide.  | Funding process changes  |
| 8. Providing consistent and compassionate ED Guidelines              | Implement hospital guidelines to compassionately and consistently deal with patients presenting in suicidal distress.  | \$3M over 2026-28        |
| 9. Increase sites and accessibility of Safe Spaces                   | Increase the number and accessibility of Safe Spaces to provide effective non-clinical care for people in distress and reduce the burden on emergency departments.   | \$15M over four years    |
| 10. Introduce competency frameworks in public-facing agencies        | Government to fund the development of competency frameworks in industries related to socio-economic and environmental determinants of suicide, to provide a tailored approach to build on the evidence of 'what works' regarding the knowledge and skills required for workforces. | \$2M over three years    |
| 11. Improving access to Aftercare                                    | Suicide Prevention Australia urges the Government to invest in improving access to aftercare immediately to ensure people receive the appropriate support following an attempt.  | \$2M per year            |
| 12. Funding Postvention reach to more of those bereaved              | Suicide Prevention Australia urges the Government to provide additional funding to \$5 million to postvention services to allow more people bereaved by suicide to access vital support.   | \$f2.5M per year         |
| 13. Peak body funding  | Suicide Prevention Australia seeks the establishment of dedicated peak body funding for suicide prevention   | \$2M over four years     |

|   |  |                        |
|---|--|------------------------|
| 14. Accreditation                       | Funding to assist 50 smaller and regional organisations annually to complete accreditation to ensure the highest quality and effectiveness of their programs, and to ensure their access to funding opportunities. | \$0.6M over four years |
| 15. Building networks and collaboration | Enhancing coordination between services through establishing a collaboration hub to enable networking and joint tendering.   | \$2M over two years    |

## Introduction

Suicide Prevention Australia is the national peak body for the suicide prevention sector. We exist to provide a clear, collective voice for suicide prevention, so that together we can save lives. We support and advocate for more than 350 members ranging from national household name agencies to small community-based organisations and local collaboratives in every State and Territory; as well as individual service providers, practitioners, researchers, students and people with lived experience. This represents more than 140,000 staff and volunteers across Australia. We aim to drive continual improvement in suicide prevention policy, programs and services. We believe that through collaboration and shared purpose, we can work towards our ambition of a world without suicide.

Suicide Prevention Australia has 46 members based in Queensland, as well as a number of national organisations who provide services in the State.

## The Impact of Suicide

The impact of suicide in Australia is far-reaching. More than 3,300 people died by suicide in 2024; 790 of those in Queensland,<sup>1</sup> and the effect of each loss is felt by around 135 people throughout families, workplaces, and communities.<sup>2</sup> Queensland has the equal second highest rate of death by suicide of all jurisdictions in Australia.

Suicidal distress accounts for more than 6,900 hospitalisations across Queensland each year,<sup>3</sup> the highest number in any jurisdiction, adding to the burden on emergency health services.

Queensland also records the highest average monthly rate of ambulance attendances for suicidal ideation are recorded each month with 36 people per 100,000, numbering around 2,000 people, and more than 900 each month for suicide attempts.<sup>4</sup> And this brings with it a cost of \$30B a year nationally, more than six billion dollars annually for Queensland.<sup>5</sup> It impacts health systems, productivity, and communities.

Risk factors extend far beyond the health system, with the socio-economic and environmental determinants encompassing trauma, financial and housing instability, climate change, social isolation and loneliness, and relationship and family breakdown among others.<sup>6</sup>

Suicide disproportionately affects particular demographics. Three-quarters of suicide deaths are men.<sup>7</sup> Rural and regional Australia impacted by a rate up to twice that of metropolitan areas.<sup>8</sup> Serving personnel and Veterans face increased death rates of up to twice the national average.<sup>9</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience twice the rates

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Causes of Death, Australia." *ABS*, 2025, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/causes-death-australia/latest-release>.

<sup>2</sup> Cerel, J., Brown, M.M., Maple, M., Singleton, M., Van De Venne, J., Moore, M. & Flaherty, C. (2019). How many people are exposed to suicide? Not six, *The American Association of Suicidology*, 49(2).

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welbeing. (accessed November 2025) *Suicide and Self-Harm Monitoring Hospitalisations by states and territories*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/service-use/hospitalisations/hospitalisations-by-states-and-territories>

<sup>4</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welbeing. (accessed November 2025) *Ambulance Attendances for suicidality and self-harm* <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/service-use/ambulance-attendances>

<sup>5</sup> Productivity Commission. (2020). *Mental Health, Report No. 95. Supporting Material (Appendices B-K)*; Productivity Commission: Canberra, Australia

<sup>6</sup> Suicide Prevention Australia (2023). *Socio-economic and environmental determinants of suicide: A background paper*. Sydney.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024).

<sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welbeing. (2025) *Suicide and intentional self-harm hospitalisations among regional and remote communities* <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/population-groups/regional-remote-communities>

<sup>9</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welbeing. (2025) *Suicide and intentional self-harm hospitalisations among Australian Defence Force members* <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/population-groups/adf-members>

of death by suicide in Queensland compared to non-Indigenous populations, with 28.1 deaths per 100,000 people and 14.0 per 100,000 in non-Indigenous peoples.

This means the approach to suicide needs to be comprehensive and strategic, and backed by meaningful investment.

## The Cost of Suicide

We urgently need funded, implemented, whole-of-Government action, to tackle the causes of distress and suicidal risk. The costs of inaction are clear:

- Each year, suicide and self-harm cost Australia \$30.5 billion, more than six billion dollars for Queensland.<sup>10</sup>
- Each year, 55,000 people attempt suicide.<sup>11</sup>
- Each year, more than 3,000 lives are lost to suicide.<sup>12</sup> Nine lives a day. More than 15 lives every week in Queensland.
- The Causes of Death preliminary data identified increasing rates of death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.<sup>13</sup>

Suicide is a complex and multi-factorial issue. We need to view it with a lens that is more than clinical – one that takes into account the social, environmental, and economic risk factors and responses to suicidality. Suicide impacts the whole community, but the risk is felt particularly acutely among specific groups of Australians:<sup>14</sup>

- More than seventy-five per cent of deaths from suicide are men.
- Males had the highest rate of death by suicide in the 40-44 year age group, while for females it was within the 25-29 year age group.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged 15-44 years, and the second leading cause of death for children.
- Regional and rural communities throughout Australia have a higher rate of death.<sup>15</sup>
- The rate of death by suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is twice the non-Indigenous rate and increasing.
- Ex-serving male Defence personnel experience suicide rates 26 per cent above average male rates.<sup>16</sup>
- LGBTIQ+ communities experience higher rates of mental health issues and suicidal behaviours.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Productivity Commission. (2020). *Mental Health*. Report no 95, Canberra.

<sup>11</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2020-2022). *National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing*. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/latest-release>.

<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024)

<sup>13</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024)

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). *Suicide and self-harm monitoring data*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/data/geography/suicide-by-remoteness-areas>

<sup>16</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). Web release: *Serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members who have served since 1985: suicide monitoring 1997 to 2022*, Report editions - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Canberra

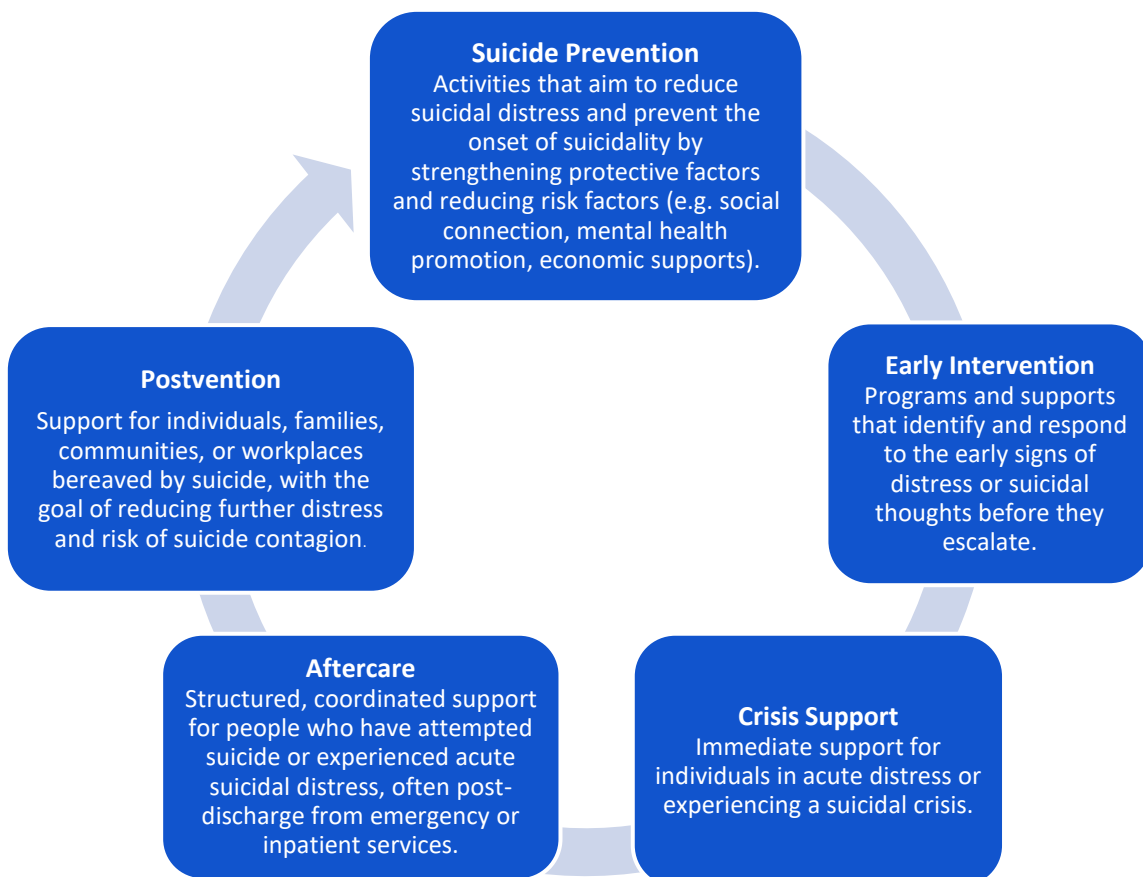
<sup>17</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). Suicide and self-harm Monitoring Web release: *LGBTIQ+ Australians: suicidal thoughts and behaviours and self-harm* - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Canberra

## Distress in the Community

Suicide Prevention Australia's Community Tracker looks at causes of suicidal distress in the community. An examination of results from the Queensland July 2025 shows:<sup>18</sup>

- Over the past three years, more than seven in ten residents of Queensland experienced elevated distress beyond normal levels compared to the same time last year due to social and economic circumstances.
- Distress peaked during the June 2023 quarter, affecting close to four in five Queensland residents. Cost-of-living and personal debt distress remained the top stressor for 12 quarters in a row with between 45 per cent and 50 per cent of respondents consistently citing it, while housing access and affordability distress was consistently in the top two causes of distress. Family and relationship breakdown overtook housing distress in June 2024.
- Social factors maintain their ranking with family and relationship breakdown and social isolation continuing to record high rankings.

## Components of suicide prevention



<sup>18</sup> Suicide Prevention Australia. (2025) Suicide Prevention Australia Community Tracker Queensland July 2025. <https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/July-QLD-The-Suicide-Prevention-Australia-Community-Tracker.pdf>

## The priorities for the 2026-27 Budget

Queensland has established important strategies and grant programs, including the *Every Life* suicide prevention plan and the overarching *Shifting Minds* strategy, as well as grant programs supporting lived experience workforce in suicide prevention and strengthening suicide prevention for men and boys.

These frameworks and programs are valuable and would be reinforced by the introduction of foundations and suicide prevention-specific allocations.

### 1. Identify suicide prevention specific funding Budgetary process change

The ongoing enhancement of Queensland's *Every Life* suicide prevention strategy, alongside other developments including the review of the National Agreement of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention provide an opportunity to separate and delineate suicide prevention as a distinct area of investment.

Suicide rates remain stubbornly high in Queensland, and delineated specific suicide prevention funding in the Budget will better equip analysis and evaluation, as well as streamlining cross-departmental allocations.

The Interim report of the Productivity Commission has recognised the need for distinction from mental health, both in recognition and practice.

*“Many of the factors that affect mental ill health and suicide can be similar, such as trauma and disadvantage. But there are also issues unique to suicide prevention policy, such as the availability of supports for people following a suicide attempt.”<sup>19</sup>*

Half of those whose lives are lost to suicide each year are not interacting with mental health services at the time.<sup>20</sup> Socio-economic and environmental determinants of suicide range from cost-of-living and housing affordability to social isolation and traumatic events. Suicide prevention needs to be viewed, and funded, from a scope that recognises the complexity and broad reach of suicidal risks and behaviours. Having Budgetary measures inseparably merging mental health and suicide prevention measures hides causes and outcomes, and makes targeting, transparency, and evaluation impossible.

At a minimum this delineated suicide prevention funding would include all funding for suicide aftercare services, suicide postvention services, Distress Brief Intervention, and other programs targeting suicide prevention specifically. Ideally it would also include funding for services with a significant role in suicidal crisis such as safe spaces.

**Suicide Prevention Australia asks that suicide prevention funding be distinct and delineated in the 2026-27 Budget and ongoing to allow for transparent and identifiable funding allocations.**

<sup>19</sup> Productivity Commission (2025.) *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement Review, Interim report*, Canberra, June  
<sup>20</sup> J Svetlicic, A Milner, & D De Leo, (2012). Contacts with mental health services before suicide: a comparison of Indigenous with non-Indigenous Australians. *General hospital psychiatry*, 34(2), 185-191

## 2. Draft and implement suicide prevention legislation \$0.5M over 2026-27 for drafting and consultation

“No single government portfolio can undertake the breadth of actions that are required to reduce suicides, reduce suicide attempts and respond effectively to distress”.<sup>21</sup>

Suicide prevention legislation is a key lever to ensure a whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention.

A Suicide Prevention Act would provide a foundation for the principles and actions of Queensland’s Suicide Prevention strategy and ensure decision-makers across Government are united in working to prevent suicides. Legislation can ensure clear shared and individual accountability and focus agencies on practical and measurable steps to reduce and prevent suicide. Suicide Prevention Acts have proven successful overseas in legislating whole-of-government prevention priorities, and have now been introduced in South Australia and New South Wales.

A Suicide Prevention Act would embed lived experience in governance, with the guiding efficiency of agency suicide prevention plans, and establish ongoing monitoring and outcome frameworks. This can include mandating that Departments and Agencies consider how to reduce the risk of suicide in their activities by having suicide prevention plans, such a requirement might have prevented activities that have place people at risk of suicide. Legislation can also create a suicide prevention lived experience council to advise government and embed the voice of lived experience across government decision-making.

This legislative foundation will be an effective measure to enhance coordination across portfolios, and deliver tangible and measurable reductions to suicide and suicidal distress across Queensland.

The coordination provided by an Act would offset duplication and unconnected initiatives, allowing more effective and targeted investment in suicide prevention.

**Suicide Prevention Australia asks the Government to undertake consultations with the suicide prevention sector and people with lived and living experience of suicide with the aim of drafting a Suicide Prevention Act.**

## 3. Consultation on embedding lived experience in government decision-making \$1.5M over 2026-28

A number of government agencies already have effective methods to incorporate the voice of lived experience into the planning and actions. However, suicide is impacted by a range of factors including financial distress, environmental disasters, gambling, and food insecurity.<sup>22</sup>

This means that lived experience of suicide needs to be embedded across government portfolios and includes a number of departments and agencies who may not have significant expertise in this area. One method for enhancing the contributions of suicide lived

<sup>21</sup> National Suicide Prevention Taskforce. (2020). Interim Advice Report: Towards a national whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention. Canberra; August 2020, p 8. Accessed online at <[https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/CBD1A157EC292D9FCA2584700028CC75/\\$File/3.%20Interim%20Advice%20Report.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/CBD1A157EC292D9FCA2584700028CC75/$File/3.%20Interim%20Advice%20Report.pdf)>.

<sup>22</sup> Suicide Prevention Australia. (2023). Socio-economic and Environmental Determinants of Suicide. <http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SPA-SEDS-Bacjground-Paper-August-2023-Designed.pdf>.

experience would be to undertake a review across government to establish areas of good practice and how these could be applied to other areas. Where applicable the review could also consider good practice in other jurisdictions that could be relevant. Such a review should be conducted by an appropriate lived experience led body selected by an open tender process with lived experience representatives included in the process.

**Suicide Prevention Australia asks the Government to fund a consultation process across those with lived experience of suicide to establish what mechanisms, such as a funded peak body, would further develop leadership in suicide lived experience.**

#### **4. A Queensland Suicide Prevention Workforce Initiative \$1M over two years**

The mental health and suicide prevention workforces share many principles, including a holistic, compassionate, trauma-informed, and evidence-based approach. However, while there are substantial overlaps between the workforces, there are roles specific to the broader suicide prevention workforce, including targeted peer workers, postvention workers, and those working in aftercare.

With greater understanding of the socio-economic and environmental determinants of suicide, we also know that agencies responsible for housing, communities and justice, education and health all play a role within the suicide prevention workforce's ecosystem. The core functions of a suicide prevention workforce are inherently unique and require different skills, training, and experience.

Current models include a focus on student placements and early career staff to build a workforce, which benefits the development, skilling, and growth of the sector workforce.

A suicide prevention workforce initiative would lead the application of sufficient suicide literacy and applied intervention skills, alongside appropriate training and experience in safety planning that is unique to suicide risk and the capacity to recognise the appropriate and relevant avenues for escalation that are deeply person-centred.

**In collaboration with sector peak bodies, and community-led organisations, Suicide Prevention Australia is calling on the Queensland Government to develop a Suicide Prevention Workforce Initiative, articulating regional, and local strategies for accessibility, capability, skills, supply, retention, sustainability, support and workforce safety, with dedicated funding allocations for implementation.**

#### **5. Doing It Tough platform for men and boys \$1.6M over 4 years**

Males represent more than three-quarters of all suicide deaths across Australia. And yet they are often underrepresented in support services; less likely to get the support they need.

Queensland importantly has grants targets for men and boys, but an essential feature needed is reaching men and boys in a positive and meaningful way, and enabling connections. Making sure those who need support are connected with the supports that exist can be a key challenge. The *Doing It Tough* initiative is collaborative website which connects men who are looking for support, to existing local groups and community organisations.

Many of these local groups and services struggle to reach men and boys, and this initiative ensures they are connected with these existing supports, meaning that resources of government and the community are used more effectively.

Created by people with lived experience and experts in the suicide prevention sector, *Doing It Tough* bridges the gap between males in need and support services.

The connection provided by the website becomes particularly important in regional areas, where rate of suicide and self-harm increase with remoteness. In major cities, the rates of suicide have ranged from 9.2 deaths per 100,000 people to 11.7 over the last twenty years.<sup>23</sup> In inner and outer regional areas, this range increases to 11.4 persons to 20.1, while in very remote areas the rate increases again to between 21 and 29.1 persons.<sup>24</sup>

In 2022, Suicide Prevention Australia worked with over thirty experts in male suicide prevention, including lived experience, academic and service provision perspectives to produce a report on Male Suicide Prevention Principles.<sup>25</sup> A key recommendation of that report was on the need to support men and boys in all their diversity by taking a co-design approach to the creation, implementation and evaluation of initiatives and supports.

**Suicide Prevention Australia is calling on the Government to implement the *Doing It Tough* initiative to provide targeted connections for men and boys in distress.**

## **6. Equip the community to help prevent suicides through training \$6.2M over 4 years**

People experiencing suicidal distress interact with diverse sectors of the community. It is a critical moment when a person discloses their distress or suicidal thoughts for the first time, so it is vital to build suicide prevention skills and knowledge throughout the community. This can include everyone from clinicians to frontline service workers and teachers, along with members of the broader community who often provide informal support, such as pharmacists or barbers.

With appropriate evidence-based suicide prevention training, these connectors within communities are capable of having a conversation with a patient, customer, student or neighbour and provide vital assistance to help reduce their risk of suicide. “First aid training” in suicide prevention equips recipients with the capacity to detect the signs someone may be experiencing a mental health or wellbeing issue, the confidence to refer them to external support, and the capacity to secure crisis support for someone who may be at risk of suicide. A range of such evidence-based short training courses exist.

Suicide Prevention Australia is calling on the Government to fund training in community, to ensure the support is there for people in distress when they need it. To facilitate this, Suicide Prevention Australia has designed and piloted an online suicide prevention learning platform that brings together a range of existing evidence-based resources to help upskill and equip the community: Learnlinc.

Learnlinc is an ongoing and supported learning-based platform for individuals to identify learning needs, fulfil learning goals, and apply that learning to suicide prevention. It was

<sup>23</sup> AIHW Suicide and Self-Harm Monitoring. (Accessed 2025). Suicide and Intentional Self-Harm Hospitalisations among regional and remote communities. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/population-groups/regional-remote-communities>

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> Suicide Prevention Australia. Male Suicide Prevention Principles. [https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SPA\\_Male-Suicide-Prevention-Report\\_2022\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SPA_Male-Suicide-Prevention-Report_2022_FINAL.pdf)

created in collaboration with experts in suicide prevention and suicide prevention training to provide a space for individuals and organisations to identify and access a variety of existing learning resources. Learnlinc already provides subscribers with links to a range of existing courses, as well as providing learning structures to help embed course content, and a large library of free resources drawn from organisations with specialist expertise.

Providing \$1.55 million annually over 4 years would upskill 10,000 community connectors each year. This would include free access to Learnlinc to key community members along with “credit” to undertake their choice of existing evidence-based suicide prevention course. This would provide 40,000 trained points of contact within the New South Wales community, from barbers to sports coaches, to effectively deal with initial disclosures. This would offset the impost on emergency services and departments through early intervention.

**Suicide Prevention Australia is seeking a commitment to funding in-community training to recognise and effectively refer suicidal distress at the earliest opportunity.**

## **7. Review funding processes to strengthen community organisations**

### **Funding process changes**

Key to the strengthening of the suicide prevention sector and the roll-out of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy is the sustainability of organisations and workforces. Funding arrangements should not create uncertainty and obstacles to the efficient operation of the sector, but that’s exactly what is occurring.

Short-term contracts, delays in renewed funding, lack of indexation, and overdue payments are creating an environment where certainty and sustainability are undermined, alongside continuity of workforces and services.

Transparency around government funding decisions should be improved. Long-term contracts and indexation wherever possible provide a level of certainty and security which may help suicide prevention organisations attract, support and retain the suicide prevention workforce and will ensure that organisations can continue to provide high-quality services to vulnerable members of the community. These improvements will ensure that suicide prevention organisations can plan accordingly and have the right set of resources to meet the needs of the community.

Additionally, the funding and discontinuation of pilot projects results in waste of resources and results. Transparent and timely evaluation is needed alongside a commitment to continued funding contingent on evaluation. This would enable continuity of work, innovation, retention of workforce, and continued connection in the community instead of winding up programs before they have been evaluated.

Findings from our 2025 State of the Nation survey show that 27 per cent of respondents reported government funding had arrived late in the past 12 months.<sup>26</sup> Short-term funding remained dominant, with close to half (48%) receiving funding that lasts two years or less. This uncertain funding environment meant that funding was not predictable, stable or sustainable, temporary funding resulted in temporary roles which affected recruitment.

**Suicide Prevention Australia seeks Government funding frameworks where five-year contracts become standard, especially for established services running evidence-**

<sup>26</sup> Suicide Prevention Australia (2024). State of the Nation in Suicide Prevention 2025. [SPA-State-of-the-Nation-Report-2025.pdf](#)

based continuing programs. Contracts should be finalised 12 months prior to the start or renewal of a program, and funds provided in advance.

## 8. Providing consistent and compassionate Emergency Department Guidelines

**\$3M over 2026-28**

Hospital Emergency Departments are often the first point of contact for someone in suicidal crisis, and the support and treatment provided has a significant impact on their risk of attempting or dying by suicide in the future.

Suicide prevention guidelines can help Emergency Departments to deal more effectively and compassionately with suicidal behaviours.

These Guidelines can build a strong and consistent process, assisting both staff and patients in Emergency Departments. Two examples of such Guidelines are the recently released Black Dog Institute update of best-practice guidelines for use around Australia,<sup>27</sup> and the Suicide Prevention Competency Framework for the Health Sector.<sup>28</sup>

These Guidelines provide the health system with tools to better equip and support staff, ensuring adequacy of care that is compassionate and respectful to every person in suicidal crisis who presents to the emergency department and other acute settings.

**Suicide Prevention Australia is seeking implementation of guidelines for presentations of people in suicidal distress in the Emergency Department to provide consistent, clear, and compassionate best-practice.**

## 9. Increase sites and accessibility of Safe Spaces

**\$15M over four years**

Safe Spaces are a vital part of non-clinical suicide prevention. Emergency Departments are often unsuitable environments for people in distress, with escalation of distress in these environments, through retraumatisation, wait times, inadequate or inappropriate treatments.

Safe spaces are equipped to provide the calm, privacy, and time required to de-escalate distress and provide connection. They also offset the burden on Emergency Departments.

However, to operate at peak efficiency, Safe Spaces need to be accessible to people where and when they need them. This means more Safe Spaces are needed across New South Wales, and they need to provide 24 hour a day access to ensure they are accessible as people need them. As walk-in services with after hour availability, Safe Spaces provide a unique and inclusive environment. Studies on existing Safe Spaces identified an immediate reduction in distress in 86 per cent of attendees.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/news/new-sp-guidelines-for-ed-launched/>

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2300905-SPA\\_Compentency-Framework-Healthcare\\_v2.pdf](https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2300905-SPA_Compentency-Framework-Healthcare_v2.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Nous Group (2020) Safe Space Evaluation Summary Brisbane North PHN. [Shttps://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Safe-Spaces.pdf](https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Safe-Spaces.pdf)

Additionally, the method of support equips attendees with skills to address their distress and greater self-efficacy.

**Suicide Prevention Australia calls on the Government to expand the number and operation of Safe Spaces, with three new services to open over the next four years.**

## **10. Introduce competency frameworks in public-facing agencies and specific industries**

**\$2M over 3 years**

Throughout the State Public Service, many roles are public-facing, particularly in areas where distress can be encountered on a regular basis, including Justice, Health, Ageing, Police and Emergency Services, Community and Multicultural Affairs, and Veterans' Affairs. The impacts of this work, affect both the public, and public sector employees. It is critical to ensure these workers are embedding suicide prevention practices into their dealings with members of the public and in their own workplaces.

In collaboration with members and stakeholders, Suicide Prevention Australia developed *Suicide Prevention: A competency framework* to enhance and build capacity, and capability of the non-clinical suicide prevention workforce to respond to people experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours. The Framework is informed by, and brings together, knowledge experts in workplace suicide prevention and suicide prevention training. The Framework provides a starting point for employers and staff to consider what they need to know to promote wellbeing and intervene effectively to reduce distress and suicidal behaviour in their workplace.

This framework is general and can be applied to any organisation or workplace. Using this as a basis, a number of industry specific frameworks have been created across Australia, including for universities, the health sector, mining, and volunteer firefighting.

Targeting industries with correlation to known socio-economic and environmental determinants of suicide, including areas such as housing, family violence, and justice, will enable reduction of suicidal distress in key areas.

**To support efforts to build capacity on responding to suicide risk, Suicide Prevention Australia asks the Government to fund the development of industry-specific competency frameworks in high risk areas of government services, such as policing and emergency services, health, community services, and the justice system.**

## **11. Improving access to Aftercare**

**\$2M per year**

A suicide attempt is the strongest risk factor for subsequent suicide. The risk for suicide after an attempt is between 20 to 40 times higher than in the general population.<sup>30</sup> However, attempts to provide universal access to aftercare have not been realised, with the National Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention failing to provide adequate actions.

<sup>30</sup> Shand, F., Woodward, A., McGill, K., Larsen, M. & Torok, M. (2019). Suicide aftercare services: an Evidence Check rapid review. brokered by the Sax Institute for the NSW Ministry of Health

While the Productivity Commission review into this agreement addresses this need for post-2027, there needs to be action to start implementing better access immediately. One of the key themes highlighted in the Productivity Interim report states:

“Aftercare following a suicide attempt is sometimes only available to those who have presented to a hospital emergency department. People should be able to seek aftercare directly and not via a hospital. Many people attending emergency departments following suicide attempts do not receive any ongoing support. There is insufficient suicide prevention support for people in a suicide crisis.”<sup>31</sup>

**Suicide Prevention Australia urges the Government to invest in improving access to aftercare immediately to ensure people receive the appropriate support following an attempt.**

## **12. Funding Postvention reach to more of those bereaved \$2.5M per year**

Each suicide has a significant impact in a community, with up to 135 people affected by the loss.<sup>32</sup>

Postvention offers support for people who have been bereaved or impacted by suicide, including individuals, families, friends, witnesses, first responders, and service providers. Through free face-to face and/or telephone support, the program helps people through the distress of the loss and offers resources and connection for up to two years.

Postvention services are funded through cost-sharing between the Commonwealth and States and Territories via bilateral schedules. For 2026/27, StandBy’s total funding requirement in Queensland is approximately \$5 million. Under the assumption that the current cost-sharing arrangement remains in place, the funding request to the Queensland Government is \$2.5 million, representing an increase of \$1 million. This additional funding will support the growth of peer support and StandBy’s reach to approximately 15% of the projected postvention demand in Queensland. The majority of the funding will be directed to service delivery via local partner organisations, Social Futures and Uniting Care, who deliver the StandBy program in Queensland.

**Suicide Prevention Australia urges the Government to provide additional funding to \$2.5 million, and increase of \$1 million, to postvention services to allow more people bereaved by suicide to access vital support.**

## **13. Peak Body funding for suicide prevention \$2M over four years**

Suicide Prevention Australia is seeking suicide prevention specific peak body funding through the Queensland Government Budget.

As a peak body both federally as well as in each State and Territory, Suicide Prevention Australia is active on issues unique to Queensland, and has a deep understanding of

<sup>31</sup> Productivity Commission (2025.) *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement Review, Interim report*, Canberra

<sup>32</sup> Cerel, J., Brown, M.M, Maple, M., Singleton, M., Van De Venne, J., Moore, M. & Flaherty, C. (2019). How many people are exposed to suicide? Not six, *The American Association of Suicidology*, 49(2).

suicidal risks, behaviours, loss, and services within the State, as well as effective and best-practice translational research and policy.

Suicide Prevention Australia currently provides advice to the Queensland Government alongside other funded State peak bodies through submissions to government inquiries.

The breadth of experience through Suicide Prevention, our members, and our lived experience advice, will be valuable in directing the focus of these plans to best-practice and efficacy.

Queensland's commitment to suicide prevention is evident through various initiatives and strategies, and Suicide Prevention Australia would like to be able to support the valuable work underway.

**Suicide Prevention Australia is seeking peak body funding to provide in-depth support and expertise to New South Wales agencies in preventing suicide across the State.**

#### **14. Assist suicide prevention organisations to achieve program accreditation**

**\$0.6M/4 years**

Accreditation ensures that all accredited programs meet the highest standards of quality and effectiveness, giving assurance and accountability to funding agencies that the programs are evidence-based and of the highest quality. Through this, accreditation also promotes a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in the field of suicide prevention, ensuring the best outcomes for our community, as well as ensuring best use of Government funds

**To maximise the efficiency of Government investment in the sector, Suicide Prevention Australia is seeking funding to assist 50 smaller and regional organisations annually to complete accreditation to ensure the highest quality and effectiveness of their programs, and to ensure their access to funding opportunities.**

This would include covering both the process of accreditation and resourcing roles that can assist smaller organisations with the actions required to become accredited, and is estimated to require \$0.6 million over four years.

The Suicide Prevention Accreditation Program is a vital initiative that supports organisations in implementing safe, high-quality, and effective suicide prevention and postvention programs in Australia. This program is governed by the Suicide Prevention Australia Standards for Quality Improvement, which have been precisely developed in collaboration with individuals who have lived experience of suicide, help-seekers, clinicians, service providers, and accreditation experts.

The process of accreditation is necessarily onerous, but this can mean that smaller organisations find the impost difficult. These are the organisations that most require assistance to complete accreditation in order to collaborate with Governments and larger organisations.

Once a program is undertaken or has achieved accreditation, it is then listed in our [Accreditation Directory](#). PHNs and Coordinators have been encouraged to consider whether programs are accredited or working towards accreditation under the national standards when undertaking commissioning processes. This also provides the Government with a

strong level of assurance as to which programs and organisations offer quality and fit-for-purpose when making funding decisions.

## 15. Building networks and collaboration

### \$2M over 2 years

Networks and collaboration are increasingly utilised to ensure best possible reach and expenditure of investment. As well as increasing cooperation and maximising spread of skills throughout regions, it will allow partnerships between large organisations with the infrastructure to take on significant projects, with smaller organisations who have specialist knowledge of a particular locality or of a priority population. This potentially can lead to highly effective delivery of contracted services, but it is not without difficulties including diverse foci, sizes, and experience of participating organisations.

It also leads to increased networking, allowing for greater streamlining between services, shared knowledge and experience, and strengthened workforces, all of which benefit the community.

This together with facilitated collaborations can assist when tendering processes often do not give sufficient time for building coalitions between organisations. Rushed preparations can lead to miscommunications between the organisations that hinder efficient delivery of the grant. A lack of experience with partnering for staff on either or both sides can exacerbate these difficulties.

**Suicide Prevention Australia is seeking investment in a suicide prevention collaborative hub to allow for project guidance on collaborations, including training and expertise-sharing to build the capabilities of organisations both within projects and longer term, as well as facilitation of networking and community-building.**

## For more information

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## **Acknowledgements Statement**

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As the national peak body for suicide prevention, our members are central to all that we do. Advice from our members, including the largest and many of the smallest organisations working in suicide prevention, as well as practitioners, researchers and community leaders is key to the development of our policy positions. Suicide Prevention Australia thanks all involved in the development of this submission.

**If you or someone you know require 24/7 crisis support, please contact:**

**Lifeline: 13 11 14**

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

**Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467**

[www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

**For general enquiries**

02 9262 1130 | [policy@suicidepreventionaust.org](mailto:policy@suicidepreventionaust.org) | [www.suicidepreventionaust.org](http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org)