

Every life

The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019–2029

Phase One progress report



Queensland
Mental Health
Commission

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Feedback

We value the views of our readers and invite
your feedback on this report.

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Translation

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This icon is from an original artwork by Kullili-Lardil-Yuggera
First Nation artist Ailsa Walsh of Wulkuraka Designs, titled
'Harmony through Songlines'.

Acknowledgment of Country

We respectfully acknowledge Traditional Owners of the lands
and waters across Queensland. We pay our respect to Elders
past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the important
role played by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
as the First Nations people, as well as their traditions,
cultures and customs.

Recognition of lived experience

We acknowledge those lost to suicide, and their families,
friends, loved ones and others affected by their deaths.

We acknowledge that suicide disproportionately affects
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and
recognise the right to self-determination and the need
for community-led approaches to support healing and
strengthen resilience.

We acknowledge all people living with mental illness,
problematic alcohol and other drug use, and all who
are impacted by suicide. We commend your resilience
and courage, and we welcome your feedback and views
about what works and what needs to change.

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Every life Phase One

This report details the progress of Phase One of *Every life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019–2029 (Every life)* in the three years from 2019 to 2022.

Suicide is a far-reaching tragedy that impacts all age groups and walks of life. Each suicide reverberates across the lives of families, kinship groups, friends, colleagues, classmates, and the broader community. A multitude of complex factors can lead to a person ending their life; however, suicide is preventable and must be comprehensively addressed and prioritised. Together we can work towards preventing suicide in Queensland.

About the plan

Every life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan 2019–2029 represents the Queensland Government's commitment to reduce and prevent suicide within our community. It focuses on creating and supporting a healthy and inclusive Queensland where everyone can access the support they need, achieve positive mental health and wellbeing, and live their lives with meaning and purpose.

It is a whole-of-government plan that sits under the *Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018–2023 (Shifting minds)*. The *Every life* plan supports a systemic and integrated approach to suicide prevention across government departments and agencies, public and private sectors, and the general community.

A phased approach

The plan was designed to have three phases over the plan's 10-year lifespan, with the plan being reviewed and refreshed after each phase, to build on the achievements and learnings of the previous phase. Phase One of *Every life* concluded at the end of 2022, with this report leading into the development of Phase Two (2023–2026).

Phase One of *Every life* detailed the critical shifts needed to reduce suicide in Queensland through partnerships with government and non-government agencies, as well as the community and private sectors.

Phase One of *Every life* outlined 60 actions across the following four key areas:

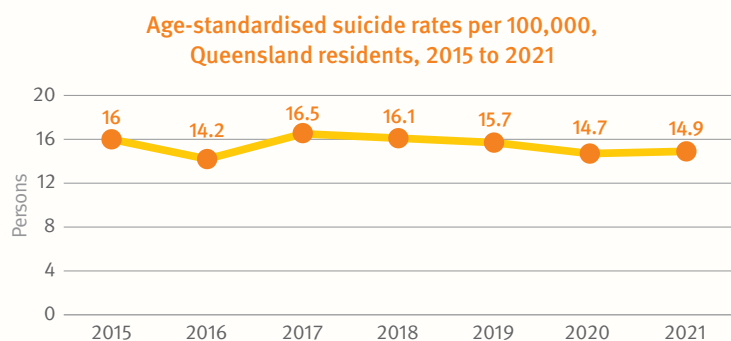
1. Building resilience across the whole population
2. Reducing vulnerability by targeting support for specific groups disproportionately affected by suicide
3. Enhancing responsiveness across all services and systems for people experiencing distress or in crisis
4. Working together at a whole-of-government and whole-of-community level to achieve change.

Many of these actions have been completed as originally intended, completed through other reforms, or are being progressed as business as usual activities. Some actions will continue through to Phase Two of *Every life*.

Reducing suicide

Every life lost to suicide is one too many. Over the past decade, an average of more than 700 Queenslanders each year have tragically died by suicide.

Suicide statistics are influenced by many factors and can fluctuate from year-to-year. However, since 2015 Queensland's suicide rate has been trending slightly down.



Cross-government action

Queensland has been a leader in whole-of-government approaches to suicide prevention since the late 1990s, and *Every life* Phase One has embedded the foundational principle across government and the wider service sectors that suicide prevention is everyone's business.

The health system continues to play a critical role in suicide prevention, however equally important roles are played by a wide range of social and human services, law enforcement agencies, industry bodies, education providers, private and non-government service providers, community services and workplaces.



Progress snapshot 2019–2022

Crisis Support Spaces

Short-term crisis support delivered by peer workers and mental health clinicians

\$10.8 million
over four years

8 crisis support services
established

1,526 presentations
between July 2021 and May 2022

The Way Back Support Service

Proactive follow-up support to people who have attempted suicide or are in a suicidal crisis

\$7.5 million
over four years

7 locations
across the state

4,111 presentations
to services between
July 2020 and May 2022

Crisis Stabilisation Service

An alternative to emergency department care for people experiencing a mental health crisis

\$11.3 million
over three years

**Robina Hospital's
Yalburro' angabah unit**
opened in August 2021

From August 2021 to January 2023,
4,090 people have attended, with
over 80% discharged home
without an inpatient stay

Guidance Officers and Mental Health Coaches in schools

Providing additional support to students with complex mental health needs

\$10 million
over four years
plus \$2.5 million
annually ongoing

**8 Specialist Guidance Officer
– Mental Health positions**
recruited permanently
and commenced in 2020 school year

**All Principal Advisor
– Mental Health positions**
extended and made permanent
to provide leadership and support regarding the
mental health and wellbeing needs of all students

Right@home

Proactive home visiting program to support new parents with parental care, parent-child attachment and creation of a nurturing home environment

Pilot expanded and available in 6 new locations

at Caboolture, Logan, Beenleigh, Browns Plains, Northlakes and Pine Rivers

470 families enrolled

in the program during the 12-month period from July 2020 to June 2021

88% of parents and carers report greater enablement

regarding parenting ability, confidence and coping, as a result of their Right@home visits

Student Wellbeing Package

Access to a wellbeing professional at school for every Queensland primary and secondary state school student

\$106.7 million

over three years to employ up to

464 additional wellbeing professionals

Over 200 wellbeing professionals employed

as at 31 December 2022

27 schools

participating in the GPs in Schools Pilot had commenced a GP service as at 31 December 2022



Gold Coast Crisis Stabilisation Service (Yalburro' angabah unit at Robina Hospital)

In 2021, Gold Coast Health opened a new crisis stabilisation unit at Robina Hospital designed to divert patients in acute mental health crisis away from the emergency department and into a comfortable, therapeutic and home-like environment to ease their crisis.

Gold Coast Health is one of the first health services in Australia to introduce such a unit, offering a more suitable environment for crisis care than the emergency department.

The unit is transforming the experience of people experiencing crisis. It has 12 lounge chairs and access to eight short stay beds, where clinicians and peer workers can provide support to people in crisis and their families. Peer workers are an important part of the team—they greet people as they arrive and support them throughout their stay.

The service includes a telephone helpline and a care coordination service where nursing and allied health staff work collaboratively to deliver support, triage patients and organise their recovery journey.

Since the crisis stabilisation unit opened in August 2021, 3,055 visitors have attended, with over 80 per cent discharged home without an inpatient stay. Fifty per cent of visitors to the unit by-pass the emergency department entirely, while those that attend emergency have a significantly reduced length of stay.

A service user said, *“A mental health crisis can be life-threatening, and it is very important for people in crisis and their families to know there is a dedicated team of caring people waiting to support them”.*

Source: Gold Coast Health



“An integral part of the team in the unit is the peer workers. They come from a lived experience perspective and can support people from a place of true empathy.”

Service user

Queensland Government investment

Student Wellbeing Package

In 2021, the Queensland Government committed to a three-year, \$106.7 million Student Wellbeing Package to employ up to 464 additional wellbeing professionals to ensure all Queensland state school students can access a wellbeing professional at school. The package also included a commitment to pilot the placement of general practitioners (GPs) in 50 state schools with secondary-aged students, for one day a week.

At 31 December 2022, over 200 wellbeing professionals were employed to support student mental health in schools, and 27 schools participating in the GPs in Schools Pilot had commenced a GP service.

Budget 2022–2023

The Queensland Government committed a record \$1.645 billion in funding through the 2022–2023 State Budget to improve mental health, alcohol and other drug services, and for a range of initiatives to support suicide prevention.

More than \$260 million will be invested in mental health and suicide prevention support and services in Queensland over the next five years, following the signing of a landmark bilateral agreement between the Australian and Queensland Governments.

This includes:

- \$39.3 million to expand and enhance existing universal aftercare services (The Way Back Support Service) to support individuals following a suicide attempt and/or suicidal crisis.
- \$15.8 million to establish a network of new Head to Health adult mental health centres and satellites across Queensland with five new Head to Health centres and seven satellites. These new services will address gaps in the mental health system, particularly between primary and specialised care.
- \$2.4 million to co-fund and establish two Distress Intervention Trial sites in Queensland to prevent and reduce suicidal behaviour through early intervention.
- \$4.7 million to co-fund postvention support based on the StandBy Support After Suicide Program to support people in Queensland who are bereaved or impacted by suicide.



Building resilience

Improve wellbeing in our people and communities

Resilience describes the ability to positively recover after a difficult or stressful event or a traumatic experience. Resilience relates to both individuals and communities. The places where people live, work and learn have a significant role in supporting good mental health and building resilience.

Personal resilience, social connectedness and positive wellbeing can be protective factors against a wide range of adverse issues, including vulnerability and risk. Community connectedness can strengthen resilience through fostering social cohesion, understanding and embracing diversity, reducing stigma and discrimination, and providing safe environments.

Giving children a great start to life sets a foundation for resilience, good mental health, positive social and emotional outcomes and reduces the risk of suicide throughout their lives.

Evidence shows that schools that create inclusive, safe and supportive environments, significantly reduce the risk of suicide, and produce better social and educational outcomes among students.

Wellbeing and mental health awareness programs have been implemented in workplaces, schools, sport and community settings. This ensures people have access to support at every touchpoint with the system, and supports suicide prevention efforts by promoting mental health practices, encouraging early intervention, and supporting recovery.

Progress

Enabling Queensland children and families to thrive

- **Queensland Health** has expanded the Right@home home visiting program to Caboolture, Logan, Beenleigh, Browns Plains, North Lakes and Pine Rivers region.
- The **Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts** Local Thriving Communities (LTC) Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) program has supported a range of initiatives to improve mental health and social and emotional wellbeing outcomes, respond to alcohol and other drug-related harm, and reduce rates of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes providing support to the Cherbourg Wellbeing Indigenous Corporation for the community-driven Suicide Prevention Action Plan.
- The **Queensland Family and Child Commission** delivered the successful Talking Families, Families are First, and Out of the Dark public education programs.

Supporting First Nations children to thrive

The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health's culturally tailored Early Childhood Wellbeing Program has been funded to support First Nations children to reach their developmental milestones as a protective factor against social and emotional wellbeing problems later in life.





Right@home

Right@home recognises that becoming parents to a new baby is an exciting and rewarding experience, but one that can leave parents feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

The program gives extra help to families with new babies through home visits from a child health nurse and a social worker or psychologist, who provide guidance and support around bonding, care and creating a nurturing home environment. It enhances the wellbeing of parents and baby by guiding families through the various growth and development stages and talking through any concerns.

The program, run by **Children's Health Queensland**, focuses on building a relationship between families and their Right@home nurse, so they feel comfortable and engaged with them. Visits start during pregnancy or shortly after birthing and can continue until infants reach two years of age.

Nurses can also recommend other health professionals to support baby and parent health and wellbeing.

Child health nurses can address diverse topics including:

- feeding support (e.g. breastfeeding and/or bottle feeding)
- sleep and settling (what to do when baby cries)
- how baby is growing and developing
- when and how to introduce solid food
- immunisation
- parenting support (e.g. parenting groups and playgroups)
- talking through parental emotions
- looking after babies as they grow into toddlers.

The program has demonstrated positive outcomes and is in the process of further expansion to support more families in South East Queensland.

Source: Children's Health Queensland



Strengthening school-based mental health supports

Equipping schools with skills and tools to build mental health literacy and respond effectively to at-risk students is essential.

- The work of the **Department of Education's** Principal Advisor – Mental Health (formerly Mental Health Coach) has been incorporated into student wellbeing strategies and will support the mental health and wellbeing needs of students.
- Eight Specialist Guidance Officer – Mental Health positions in the **Department of Education** have been recruited permanently and their functions have been integrated into student wellbeing strategies.

School-based wellbeing

Schools play a significant role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their students.

The Queensland Government's \$106.7 million Student Wellbeing Package seeks to ensure every Queensland primary and secondary state school student has access to a wellbeing professional at school.

Additional wellbeing professionals provided through the Student Wellbeing Package complement and add to the support already provided to students in Queensland state schools by guidance officers, school-based youth health nurses, youth support coordinators and other wellbeing support staff.

The Principal Advisor – Mental Health roles in each region ensure schools can access advice and assistance to implement and strengthen their whole-of-school approach to supporting students across the mental health continuum—through curriculum delivery, enhancements to policy and procedures, building staff capability, and providing targeted programs and support for students.

The Specialist Guidance Officer – Mental Health positions in each region support those students experiencing complex mental health challenges to maintain education and social connections as they transition between school and specialised treatment programs.

The GPs in Schools Pilot is placing general practitioners (GPs) in 50 Queensland state schools with secondary students. The service provides students with free access to a GP at school one day a week, providing positive impacts for students' health and wellbeing.

Source: Department of Education

“More learning occurs in a joyous classroom where children feel safe, secure and accepted, and where they feel the teacher sees them for who they really are.”

Diamond, 2010¹

Build mentally healthy workplaces

Workplaces can play a vital role in suicide prevention by promoting positive mental health practices, intervening early for employees who may be experiencing poor mental health or suicidality, and supporting recovery.

- The **Office of Industrial Relations** held workshops and other activities in collaboration with social and industry partners to promote the Mentally Healthy Workplaces Toolkit.
- The **Office of Industrial Relations** is working to build and monitor the capacity of Queensland workplaces to meet their obligations to provide mentally healthy and safe workplaces. The office is adopting this initiative as part of its ongoing business as usual approach as the primary workplace health and safety regulator and workers compensation provider.
- In collaboration with universities and other organisations, **Workplace Health and Safety Queensland** has developed a free and validated online psychosocial risk assessment tool called People at Work. The tool includes resources for workplaces that can assist with managing work-related psychosocial hazards or risks by following a step-by-step process. It is now funded and promoted by all Australian workplace health and safety regulators and Safe Work Australia to workplaces as a tool to improve psychological health and safety at work and decrease the impact of work-related factors on workers' mental health.
- **WorkSafe Queensland** has also developed a code of practice for managing psychological injury claims, as well as new presumptive compensation laws for first responders and other employees diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, designed to improve the claims experience.

Mentally Healthy Workplaces Toolkit

The **Office of Industrial Relations** has collaborated with social and industry partners to promote mental health in Queensland workplaces.

The office has developed the Mentally Healthy Workplaces Toolkit that provides practical tools and resources to help employers, managers and leaders eliminate or minimise risks to psychological health—and create and maintain mentally healthy workplaces.

The toolkit is structured around a four-part model for creating a mentally healthy workplace, that includes promoting positive practices, preventing psychological harm, intervening early, and supporting recovery from injury. The kit covers the positive characteristics of work, as well as addressing the work characteristics that increase vulnerability, and responses and support for employees experiencing mental health challenges.

Virtual workshops and forums have promoted the toolkit across a wide range of sectors and industries.



Building resilience

Public sector leadership

As the state's largest employer, the Queensland Government leads by example by applying best practice in workplace mental health promotion and suicide prevention.

- The **Public Sector Commission** has developed the sector-wide leadership capability program, Everyday conversations for healthy minds, and incorporated it into the suite of leadership capacity development resources for the public sector.
- The **Public Sector Commission** has incorporated measuring, monitoring and reporting on mental health and wellbeing across the public service as a business-as-usual activity and an important part of the annual Working for Queensland survey.

Creating safer public spaces

Lives can be saved by making means-restriction a component of urban design, and providing clear messaging on where and how to get help in a crisis in public spaces.

- **Queensland Rail** has delivered self-harm recognition, intervention and awareness training to key rail staff as part of its *Suicide and threatened self-harm prevention plan*. This included partnering with Roses in the Ocean to deliver staff training, positive mental health engagement activities at several railway stations, improved environmental design factors, and ongoing promotion of help-seeking options to passengers.

Build inclusive, resilient and mentally healthy communities

Connection to community and social inclusion are strong protective factors against suicide. Creating communities that are informed about suicide prevention, and are respectful, inclusive, and celebrate diversity can help prevent suicide.

- The **Queensland Human Rights Commission** has co-designed and implemented several initiatives to create positive community attitudes and improve inclusivity and support to LGBTIQA+ Queenslanders. These include 'Gender identity and the law' training to workplaces where employees are gender transitioning; education for health and education staff, young people, families and the broader community on discrimination and human rights, with a focus on education and health settings; an online training series on diversity and LGBTIQA+ inclusion; and updated Trans@Work resources.





Supporting multicultural communities

The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts has continued to fund the Community Action for a Multicultural Society Program to support community-based organisations to deliver social and economic inclusion outcomes for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experiencing barriers to participation. There are currently 19 community organisations contracted over three years providing services across 17 local government areas.

Additionally, the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program continued to support people (particularly vulnerable people seeking asylum and people with temporary protection visas) to enhance accessibility of culturally appropriate support services, including mental health support.

Reducing vulnerability

Strengthen support to vulnerable people

Some people, groups and communities are disproportionately impacted by suicide. Risk is known to increase in the presence of adverse experiences in childhood or adulthood, vulnerabilities due to economic and social factors, community attitudes, stigma, health status and exposure to suicidal behaviour.

Queensland Government agencies are delivering a range of programs and activities to reduce vulnerability among individuals and groups. Men, First Nations people, LGBTIQ+ people, people who live in rural and remote areas, and people who work in some high-risk industries are disproportionately impacted by suicide.



Progress

Making men's suicide prevention a priority

Men make up approximately three quarters of all deaths by suicide. A meaningful reduction in suicide cannot be achieved without a significant reduction in suicides among young and middle-aged men.

- The **Queensland Mental Health Commission** has completed a systemic review of male suicide in Queensland in partnership with the **Coroners Court of Queensland**, to better understand risk factors among men who die by suicide and how these deaths can be prevented. The outcomes of the review have informed the development of Phase Two of *Every life*, with a focus on male suicide prevention.
- The **Office of Industrial Relations** is progressing initiatives to maintain and extend partnerships addressing suicide in male-dominated and higher risk workforces and industries as 'business-as-usual'. It has also established peer networking through the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities Psychological Health Community of Practice to respond to psychological health and safety, including distress.
- The **Queensland Mental Health Commission** supported a landmark research project between MATES in Construction, The University of Queensland and Central Queensland University to examine the incidence of suicide crises in the construction industry. By linking data about demographics, health services utilisation and outcomes for individuals, this level of analysis can provide valuable information about the touchpoints between people in distress and the wider service system.

Support the most vulnerable Queenslanders

People who experience multiple adverse life events have greater vulnerability to suicide and self-harm. Working together to support the most vulnerable Queenslanders and their families promotes better mental health outcomes.

- The **Department of Education's** Be Well, Learn Well program is being evaluated and will continue supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in eight remote schools across North and Far North Queensland.
- **Queensland Health's** Ed-LinQ program supports collaboration and coordination across health and education for school-aged children experiencing mental health needs, including care and support for young people with complex mental health needs. The Ed-LinQ initiative has been expanded to 15 Hospital and Health Services, providing consultation, liaison and training and support to education staff to recognise and respond to the mental health needs of students and to facilitate timely access to mental health treatment.
- The **Queensland Family and Child Commission** commissioned and published a report by Professor Brett McDermott into suicide among children known to the child protection system. The report, *Highly vulnerable infants, children and young people: A joint child protection-mental health response to prevent suicide*, will inform development of a targeted approach to youth suicide in Queensland.
- The **Department of Education** continues to fund Headspace to provide suicide prevention and postvention training to secondary school guidance officers across the state. In 2020–2021, training sessions were delivered to 184 guidance officers.

Children and young people in care

The **Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services** has developed and implemented best practice materials and resources to support child safety practitioners working with vulnerable children and young people.

The Child Safety Practice Manual contains a range of resources to support child protection practitioners to recognise and respond to children and young people in suicidal crisis, such as mental health resources, procedural guidance, practice kits and guides for staff. The manual is accessible to partners in order to share a common language and approach to working with children and young people in, or in contact with, the child protection system. Work is also progressing to deliver improvements to foster care training.

The department continues to embed the Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice which focuses on the safety, belonging, cultural safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the child protection system.

Navigate Your Health and Strengthening Health Assessment Pathways both continue to be operational across areas of Queensland and aim to improve health outcomes and strengthen health and wellbeing supports for children and young people in out-of-home care.



Targeted interventions for community members at greater risk

Co-designed initiatives in mental health and suicide prevention are more effective and result in better outcomes.

- **Queensland Health's** Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre developed a suicide prevention resource hub, providing materials translated into 26 different languages and offering culturally responsive suicide prevention training. The hub is designed for service providers and community members who are providing support to clients at risk of suicide.
- The **Department of Environment and Science** has continued to fund the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program, which provides support to people seeking asylum and vulnerable refugees, and enhances culturally-appropriate support services, including mental health support.
- The **Department of Justice and Attorney-General** developed a suicide prevention framework for working with people impacted by domestic and family violence who may be at risk of suicide. The framework has been incorporated into ongoing workforce development initiatives.
- The **Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training** Transition to Success initiative helps young people who are involved in, or at risk of contact with, the youth justice system to re-engage with education and training. They complete a nationally-recognised certificated to develop positive behaviours, improve life skills and build confidence. Sixty-seven per cent of participants did not offend within 12 months of completion.



STaY — Suicide prevention in Cherbourg

In the wake of several deaths by suicide and attempts by young people in 2020, Cherbourg Health Service and community members identified the need for a new model of early intervention to address suicide risk.

The Sit, Talk and Yarn (STaY) program commenced in March 2021. The program provides a cohesive framework to identify, assess and monitor suicide risk among its residents. It is a low to moderate suicide prevention and wellbeing service. It offers assessment based in a contextual framework that accounts for culture and kin, a lived experience of trauma, strengths-based approaches and resiliency.

The suite of services and interventions offered by STaY are diverse and dynamic to match the needs of the Cherbourg community, with an additional emphasis on the service provider working to earn the trust and buy-in of each client. Support provided to clients includes shared safety planning with clients, family and friends; social and cultural support; and referral to services for health, social and emotional wellbeing supports. The project consciously steps outside the typical referral criteria, and clients can become involved with STaY through a number of flexible pathways, including informal community support referrals.

In 2022, 39 per cent of referrals came directly from distressed individuals or concerned family members, while just 12 per cent of clients came through the health system, indicating growing trust in the STaY model of care, the destigmatisation of mental health and suicide, and improved community capacity to identify and respond to increased suicide risk.

The STaY project is bridging western models of health care and addressing the deep, complex and advanced knowledge held within the minds and spirits of First Nations people. As a result, the STaY project has significantly reduced suicide in Cherbourg.

“When we talk about suicide prevention as a community approach, health care and social service providers wouldn’t typically imagine a HHS as the lead agency in that work.”

Mental wellbeing in corrections

Queensland Corrective Services and Swinburne University developed and delivered a training package for Community Corrections officers to enhance understanding and support of people living with mental health conditions or problematic alcohol and other drug use, people experiencing domestic and family violence and/or suicidal ideation. The specialised training modules include trauma-informed practice and suicide and self-harm awareness.

Queensland Corrective Services and Prison Mental Health Service also developed and delivered an updated training package for custodial corrections officers regarding working with persons exhibiting complex behaviours that could place their welfare at risk, which is being delivered to new recruits.



Enhancing responsiveness

Enhance responses to suicidality

Every life seeks to enhance and improve responsiveness to people in crisis and those affected by suicide through evidence-based and informed care, with a focus on consistent follow-up, connecting care and enhancing service options.

Every life set out to achieve improved outcomes for people experiencing suicidality by ensuring the right service is available at the right place and time. The plan recognises the need to increase the range and quality of service options for people experiencing crisis.

Priorities under this action area include:

- making every contact with a government agency an opportunity for intervention
- expanding options for the care of suicidal people, including non-medical and peer support options
- pursuing excellence in the care of suicidal people across the health system
- timely and accessible support to people following a suicide.

Progress

Queensland Health has worked with the Australian Department of Health, Primary Health Networks, its Queensland Government and non-government partners, and people with lived experience to design and deliver a range of new suicide prevention and crisis care programs and services.

This work has seen:

- The **Way Back Support Service** established in seven locations in Queensland, offering specialised psychosocial support to people who have presented to emergency departments following a suicide attempt. In total, there have been 4,111 presentations to Way Back services between July 2020 and May 2022.
- **Crisis Support Spaces** opened at the Prince Charles Hospital; Princess Alexandra Hospital; Cairns, Mackay, Townsville and Hervey Bay Hospitals; and the Southport Health Precinct. These services offer clinical and peer support in a home like environment as an alternative or adjunct to the emergency department. They received 1,526 presentations between July 2021 and May 2022.
- The **Queensland Health, Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Police Service Mental Health Co-Responder Program** evaluated, and will be expanded over two years. This service pairs paramedics with experienced mental health clinicians to respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis in their home or community.
- The **Zero Suicide in Healthcare Framework** being implemented in 12 **Hospital and Health Services** across Queensland. A range of resources for people with lived experience, family and carers, and clinicians has also been developed.
- **Queensland Health** also continue to strengthen its suicide prevention in health services quality improvement program. As part of this program, ongoing support has been provided for the Zero Suicide in Healthcare Multisite Collaborative, and a partnership developed with the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Learning and people with lived experience to develop new training options for staff caring for people in suicidal crisis.

The Way Back Support Service

The Way Back Support Service is an aftercare initiative providing non-clinical care and practical support to people following a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis, in order to minimise the risk of further attempts.

After a person has been referred to the service by clinical staff, they're contacted by a Support Facilitator within one working day of receiving the referral. The Support Facilitator then guides them through safety planning and a personalised aftercare program for up to three months.

This includes engaging them with services addressing some of the issues leading to their distress. This can reflect a broad range of supports from financial advice, to connecting them with community groups, or helping them attend health care appointments.

A recent Australian study found coordinated assertive aftercare is among the most effective strategies for reducing suicide reattempts, providing a potential reduction of up to 19.8 per cent.

The Way Back Support Service aims to prevent further suicide attempts by providing proactive, non-clinical support and coordinating access to community services.

The service focuses on increasing social connectedness, improving access to clinical and community support services and building peoples' capacity to self-manage and improve mental wellbeing.

The role of Support Facilitators is to:

- maintain contact and provide encouragement and support
- facilitate access to a range of community support services (e.g. housing, income support, family support, education, employment)
- encourage uptake of hospital discharge plans and safety plan utilisation
- support attendance at medical and allied health appointments
- assist clients to connect with support networks (e.g. family and carers, friends and peers, and other community and social supports).

Wesley Mission Queensland is one provider delivering this service to people who live in the Gold Coast and Brisbane south regions. The service is offered over the phone, face-to-face and through digital (online) options.

Source: Beyond Blue and Wesley Mission Queensland



The Way Back Support Service launch, 22 July 2020. The service was commissioned by Gold Coast Primary Health Network and funded by the Australian Department of Health and Queensland Health.

Working together

Achieve more by working together

The success of *Every life* depends on all sectors and communities working together to shift and challenge the status quo. It requires connected and informed planning, shared information, leveraging national, local and regional experience and knowledge, and growing and expanding partnerships.

Every life depends upon all sectors and communities working together to prevent suicide. Historically, much of the focus has been on health solutions and interventions to drive suicide prevention. Interventions have been based on responding to crisis and to people in significant psychological distress.

Every life required a shift toward simultaneous and integrated interventions across a range of agencies that reduce the effects of social and economic disadvantage. The plan created opportunities to work together through shared plans, and coordinated networks and actions.

This work is supported by data and evidence including information sharing, suicide surveillance, and systemic reviews and evaluation to inform ongoing actions, as well as the evaluation of *Every life*.

Priorities under this action area include:

- creating a more coordinated approach to suicide prevention
- strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in mental health and suicide prevention
- improving the way data, evidence and evaluation is used to drive suicide prevention.

Progress

Improving systems approaches

- The **Queensland Mental Health Commission** has included veteran and Australian Defence Force status indicators into the Queensland Suicide Register (QSR) and interim QSR data to ensure there is adequate oversight of this particular group going forward.
- The *National Suicide Prevention Adviser – Final Advice* recommended that all jurisdictions work with the National Suicide Prevention Office to set priorities for suicide prevention research and share knowledge with one another for continual improvement. This action will be taken forward by the **Queensland Mental Health Commission** and other government agencies as part of a collaborative and coordinated approach with the Australian Government.

A long-term plan for the Queensland Suicide Prevention Network

A revised structure and function for the Queensland Suicide Prevention Network has been established to support the oversight, ongoing engagement and coordination of suicide prevention efforts across all sectors.

The Queensland Suicide Prevention Network is an important forum for members to:

- share updates and information
- seek guidance and support for the implementation of suicide prevention initiatives that align with *Every life's* strategic direction, and

- foster partnerships across sectors and levels of government.

The voices of people with lived experience of suicide have provided the network with valuable insights and led the progression of innovative models of care, ensuring the voice of lived experience is reflected in statewide policy and planning.



Enhancing our understanding of suicide

The **Queensland Mental Health Commission** completed a review of the surveillance model of suicide, suicide attempts and crises in Queensland, including a review of current and future need, and is designing and developing options for an enhanced surveillance model.

Queensland was the first jurisdiction in Australia to establish a suicide register in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, there has been significant change in the use and accessibility of suicide surveillance data and as a commitment under *Every life* Phase One, the Commission committed to undertaking a review of the current surveillance model to identify opportunities for enhancement.

The Commission is working with Queensland Government agencies and other stakeholders to develop an enhanced model for surveillance of suicide to inform suicide prevention efforts across all sectors.

Significant progress has occurred in designing a contemporary suicide data and surveillance system that is responsive to the variable needs of policy, planning, service delivery, evaluation, and review.

Operationalising this is a priority for the next phase of *Every life*, to ensure there is timely, fit-for-purpose and accessible data available to inform suicide prevention responses in Queensland.

Next steps

Phase One of *Every life* is now complete and a review has assessed progress against the priority areas and captured feedback from government agencies, service providers and people with lived experience.

As Phase One of *Every life* concluded in 2022, an independent review was undertaken of implementation and systemic impact of the plan on suicide prevention in Queensland. The findings and outcomes of the review have been used to inform the development of *Every life* Phase Two.

The *Every life* review identified strong momentum in system advocacy and influence, including embedding suicide prevention as a priority across all Queensland Government departments. Clear progress was also identified in the area of leadership and governance, as well as opportunities to be more catalytic in the next phase of the plan, and to capitalise on the appetite across government for cross-agency and collaborative approaches.

Every life has provided a foundational whole-of-government investment in suicide prevention. This will be built upon in successive phases, particularly focusing on issues such as the greater risk of suicide in men, young people and First Nations people. National, state and regional cross-integration is essential for achieving a whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention, including greater lived experience leadership and engagement at all levels of policy development and implementation.



Need help?

Thinking and reading about suicide can be distressing.

If you need help, please ask for the support you need.

No one needs to face their problems alone.

Lifeline Counselling services for anyone at any time.	13 11 14	www.lifeline.org.au/gethelp
Kids Helpline Telephone and online counselling for young people aged 5–25 years.	1800 551 800	www.kidshelpline.com.au
Suicide Call Back Service 24/7 phone and online counselling to people affected by suicide.	1300 659 467	www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
MensLine Australia Telephone and online counselling to support men with concerns about mental health, anger management, family violence, relationships, stress and wellbeing.	1300 789 978	www.mensline.org.au
Beyond Blue Support Service 24/7 advice and support.	1300 224 636	www.beyondblue.org.au
13YARN 24-hour national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. Confidential, one-on-one yarning with Lifeline-trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis supporters.	13 92 76	www.13yarn.org.au
SANE Australia Support for people with complex mental health issues including trauma, and for family, friends and carers.	1800 187 263	www.sane.org
ARAFMI Support for family, friends and carers of people with mental illness.	1300 554 660 Regional Queensland 1800 351 881	www.arafmi.com.au
Defence Family Helpline 24/7 phone or email support for Australian Defence Force members and their families.	1800 624 608	www.defence.gov.au/dco/defence-helpline.asp
QLife (LGBTIQ+) Anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.	1800 184 527	www.qlife.org.au
Multicultural Connect Line Support and information to find aid, assistance and mental health services, between 11:30am to 8:00pm, 7 days a week.	1300 079 020	www.worldwellnessgroup.org.au/multicultural-connect-line-about

References

- 1 Diamond, A 2010, 'The Evidence Base for Improving School Outcomes by Addressing the Whole Child and by Addressing Skills and Attitudes, Not Just Content'. *Early Education and Development*, vol. 21, no. 5, pp 780–793.

