

## **Snapshot: Farmer Suicide in Queensland**

*Based on work by the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention*

### **Background**

In Australia, and around the world, farmers have a higher-than-average rate of suicide.

In Australia, it has been found that farmers have suicide rates around 1.5 to 2 times higher than the national average.

In Queensland, males working in the agriculture sector have been shown to be at particular risk of suicide, relative to workers in other occupations.

### **Risk factors for farmer suicide**

A wide range of different risk factors may influence rates of farmer suicide. Examples of possible risk factors include:

- Demographic factors (such as being male, or older)
- Financial stressors such as debt
- Insecurity and uncertainty about future income or business viability
- 'Health' of the agricultural industry, changing demand for agricultural commodities, and a shift away from rural industries
- Cultural attitudes and stigma (for example, not talking about problems)
- Limited access to support services
- Long work hours
- Physical illness or disability
- Relationship stress
- Natural disasters and other environmental factors
- Mental illness

### **Reducing farmer suicide rates**

Although there are many possible and probable risk factors for farmer suicide, few of these are supported by robust evidence. This makes it very difficult to understand what an effective intervention may look like.

It is important to recognise that suicide prevention for farmers is not only about service access and mental health.

Important protective factors for farmers may be practical things, like the ability to hire staff to harvest a crop, or being able to get a decent price for livestock and produce.