



Australian Government

Prime Minister's National Suicide Prevention Adviser

KEY REPORTS CALL FOR A COMPASSIONATE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

16 November 2020 - National Suicide Prevention Adviser to the Prime Minister, Ms Christine Morgan, has welcomed the public release of the [Interim Advice documents](#) prepared to shape Australia's suicide prevention approach.

Released by the Prime Minister, the *Interim Advice* consists of three interrelated reports: *Compassion First*, detailing the experiences of people with lived experience of suicide, the *Interim Advice Report* containing 13 in-principle recommendations, and *Shifting the Focus* which outlines a whole of government approach to suicide.

"Suicide, suicide attempts and suicidal distress will affect most Australians at some point in their lives, often leaving long lasting and far-reaching impacts on individuals, families, workplaces, schools, services and communities," Ms Christine Morgan said.

"Every day, we miss opportunities to prevent people dying by suicide or attempting to take their own lives because we don't intervene early enough. This needs to change."

"We know from our data that 3,318 Australians died by suicide last year – seven men and two women each day – and a further 65,000 will make a suicide attempt. Behind each of these numbers is a person, a journey, and a network of other people."

Ms Morgan said that the experiences and knowledge of people with lived experience of suicide and suicidal distress was critical in shaping the Interim Advice. The Compassion First report captures the voices of close to 2,000 people with lived experience of suicidal behaviour, particularly those who have survived attempts or lived with suicidal distress.

"Suicidal distress has its origins in experiences and traumas that happen long before someone seeks help or tries to take their own life" said Ms Morgan.

"The clarion call from people with lived experience is for a more connected and prevention-focussed approach that addresses vulnerabilities long before a crisis; and for a more compassionate response that supports them through distress." Ms Morgan added.

The report calls for a national whole-of-government approach that strengthens and builds on what our health systems can offer.

"To be effective, we need all jurisdictions and portfolios working together to reduce and respond early to distress."

"It means using the levers of government and partnerships with other agencies to reduce and respond to the social and economic drivers of distress."



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“We need to go to where people are and respond early. That means developing the workforce and embedding support in our Family Courts, in employment services, in schools and workplaces, in our family and social services.”

“We need to consider all of the factors that may increase distress and ensure our approach works for men as well as for women, for younger people and older people, for urban and rural communities – because we know the contributing factors and impacts for each can very different.”

“We must empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to drive their own solutions and consider the disproportionate impacts that suicide is having, especially for men and also on our LGBTQI community, those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and specific workforces and groups such as Veterans, emergency services workers and communities impacted by multiple disasters.”

Ms Morgan stated that the release would enable further consultation with governments, the suicide prevention sector and the broader community to refine the Advice for delivery before the end of the year.

“I have seen a genuine commitment and goodwill across government portfolios, across jurisdictions and across organisations and communities to work together. The Interim Advice builds on that commitment and goodwill, but the time to shift our approach is now.

-ENDS-

To access the reports – visit

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-national-suicide-prevention-adviser>

If you or someone you know needs support, contact on the services outlined below:

- Lifeline – 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au
- Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 224 636 or suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- Kids helpline – 1800 551 800 or kidshelpline.com.au
- Beyondblue – 1300 224 636.
- QLife - 1800 184 527

Media inquiries: call Jenny Muir on 0415 401 200