

# LOCAL STRATEGIES FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Murray PHN (Primary Health Network) and the Victorian Government will work together in a joint suicide prevention project in both Mildura and Benalla from March next year.

The Victorian Government aims to halve the rate of suicide by 2025 with a \$27 million, four year investment in the Suicide Prevention Framework. Its partnership with the six Victorian PHNs will help stakeholders and community members plan and deliver suicide prevention initiatives.

This collaboration creates 12 place-based suicide prevention trial sites that will improve local responses to suicide and lay the groundwork for future suicide prevention efforts state wide.

Last year, 654 Victorians lost their lives to suicide, with many areas experiencing significantly higher rates than average. The partnership between State Government and Murray PHN provides a joint approach, using Commonwealth and State funding, to build local capacity. Each of the six State-funded and six PHN-funded trial sites was selected on a number of factors including local need, capacity and other socio-economic and lifestyle issues.

A recent coronial report found that, between 2013 and 2015, the Mildura community lost 29 lives to suicide, while Benalla had the highest annual average rate of suicide in the Murray PHN region.

Murray PHN Chief Executive Officer, Matt Jones said: “The rate of suicide in Victoria was more than double that of the state’s road toll last year.

“Suicide affects so many people, including families, friends, carers, colleagues and communities.

“This is why we are focused on developing locally based strategies to prevent suicides in our region and, in this first stage, particularly in our pilot sites, Mildura and Benalla.”

The strategies being delivered in each project will be locally tailored to include:

- Training GPs to assess depression and other mental illness, and support people at risk of suicide
- Suicide prevention training for emergency services/first responders every three years
- Gatekeeper training for people likely to come into contact with at individuals at risk
- School-based peer support and mental health literacy programs
- Community suicide prevention awareness programs
- Reducing access to lethal means of suicide
- Responsible suicide reporting by media

*If you, or someone you know needs support, ring Lifeline 13 11 14 or beyondblue 1300 224 636.*

## Contact details

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