

MEDIA RELEASE

New community suicide prevention resource to be launched

15 May 2019

A new resource to help prevent suicide in the Sunraysia Mallee area will be launched at this year's Mildura Field Days. The wallet-sized information card has been developed as part of the Mildura Suicide Prevention Trial and in direct response to community need.

Coordinator of the Mildura Suicide Prevention Trial, Murray PHN's Meryll Whyte, said that people often feel confused about what to do and where to go to get help when a friend or family member is struggling.

"This resource aims to assist people to have discussions with those they are concerned about. It includes local and national help information, prevention and support details. It also promotes the national **#YouCanTalk** message which aims to increase people's confidence when it comes to talking about suicide.

"Suicide can often be prevented by recognising warning signs and by asking someone the question," she said. "People need to know that they don't need to be a health professional to check-in with someone they are worried about. They also need to know that asking someone if they're thinking about suicide won't actually 'put ideas in their head'.

"We hope that this card, which people can keep handy in their wallet, will make people in our region feel more confident in talking about suicide – and in knowing what to say and where to find help when the need arises."

The resource card features artwork by local artist and trial participant, as part of the Lived Experience Group, Tracy Wise.

"By using watercolours, the artwork encapsulates the healing movement of the leaves and the flowers in bloom. Within those leaves and flowers is the Emu Bush. The Emu Bush heals and comforts one's own aches and pain and cleans wounds," she said.

"Doing this artwork has given me a sense of belonging. Knowing in my own lived experience, I have a purpose to be involved, to tell my story and to also remember those I've lost."

The new Sunraysia Mallee suicide prevention resource card will be available at the Mildura Field Days and in prominent locations across the region such as cafes, libraries and shops.

Mildura is one of 12 locations taking part in Victorian Government trials to develop local strategies to prevent suicide. This work forms part of the Victorian Government suicide prevention framework 2016-2025, which aims at halving the state's suicide rates by 2025.

#YouCanTalk aims at giving people the confidence to respond to friends and family when they need help and guide them to the right support services. For further information search **#YouCanTalk**



If you are in an emergency or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. Other services include Lifeline – 13 13 14 or lifeline.org.au or Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467 or suicidecallbackservice.org.au

A note on reporting suicide: *There is extensive literature linking media reporting of suicide with increased suicide rates. Suicidal behaviour can be 'learned' from the media when reports are sensationalised, focus on celebrities, are repeated, and explicitly describe location and method details. Evidence suggests that responsible reporting of suicide by the media can reduce suicide rates. Mindframe Australia Media Guidelines support the media to report suicide accurately, responsibly, and ethically. A summary version of these guidelines accompanies this Murray PHN media release. This information is also available from mindframe-media.info or on the Mindframe App.*

Contact details

Amity Bradford, Communications Specialist, e: abradford@murrayphn.org.au or m: 0436 820 014.