

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Building a suicide safety net in Sunraysia Mallee

8 October 2019

This World Mental Health Day, 10 October, community members are invited to participate in free suicide prevention training, designed to provide everyday people with simple steps to help save a life from suicide.

As part of Mildura's place-based suicide prevention trial, Murray PHN is offering community members across the Sunraysia Mallee region access to the online *Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR)* training through the Black Dog Institute.

People who are suicidal often communicate distress through their words or actions, and new ways of thinking about suicide prevention suggest that training a large number of people in a community to respond to these signs can build a local safety net.

Coordinator of the Mildura Suicide Prevention Trial, Murray PHN's Merryl Whyte said that while many training programs promoted mental health awareness, QPR has a strong evidence base for building skills to help with a suicidal crisis.

"The more people we have trained to understand and identify people who may be in distress, the more chance we have as a community to prevent deaths by suicide – so we really want people in our region to get on board, complete this training and help us to build a safety net in Sunraysia Mallee," she said.

"We have purchased 3000 licences for use in our region, and we hope that these are taken up over the next year. In particular, we are putting the call out to workplaces as we know that one of the best ways to achieve an effective safety net is to get organisations involved."

"Since we launched access to the training six weeks ago, we have had 130 people register – and 99 per cent of those who have completed the training believe they are now in a better position to help someone who is suicidal," she said. "We have also had some positive feedback from a couple of the workplaces that have promoted it to their staff – especially as it is a great alternative to sending people to two days of classroom training."

QPR is an online evidence-based training that provides the knowledge and skills to help identify warning signs that someone may be suicidal, builds confidence to talk with that person about suicidal thoughts, and shows then how to connect the person with available supports. The training is open to anyone 18 years or over, takes only 60 minutes and can be completed in multiple sittings. It's perfect for hairdressers, baristas, bankers, sporting clubs, or anyone who regularly interacts with a range of people. Interested community members can visit [murrayphn.org.au/qpr](http://murrayphn.org.au/qpr) to register to complete the course, which can be done in one session or in multiple sittings. The QPR licence also provides access to a number of useful resources related to suicide prevention.

*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](http://lifeline.org.au) or Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467 or [suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)*

*The World Federation for Mental Health has chosen suicide prevention as this year's World Mental Health Day theme in recognition of it being a global health issue. Every 40 seconds someone dies by suicide and suicide is the leading cause of death in 15-29 year olds (World Health Organisation).*

*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.

**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 available from <https://mindframe.org.au/industry-hubs/for-media> or on the Mindframe App.*

### Contact details

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