

# MEDIA RELEASE

## New service to help Sunraysia residents find their way back

3 December 2019

A new service to support people in the critical months after a suicidal crisis will soon be established in Mildura.

Murray PHN (Primary Health Network) has received funding from the Australian Government to commission delivery of The Way Back Support Service, designed by Beyond Blue.

The Way Back Sunraysia will be delivered in partnership with Mildura Base Hospital and will involve psycho-social (non-clinical) intensive, assertive outreach, and practical support to an individual following a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis. Support is provided for up to three months and includes the person's family and their other support networks.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones said the new service addressed a gap highlighted by recent research commissioned by the PHN and conducted by La Trobe and Monash Universities. The research into emergency and follow-up care for suicidal crisis in the Mildura region revealed that at least one person per day presents to the Mildura Base Hospital seeking assistance for suicidality or self-harm.

"With phase one complete, we have a better understanding of the pressures facing both community and health services," he said. "A key gap highlighted was the need for proactive follow-up care services within the community."

"The Way Back Support Service will provide critical support to individuals who present to the hospital emergency department or community mental health service during or following a suicidal crisis and whose risk of suicide is identified as imminent."

Anne Webster, Member for Mallee said, "The launch today of the Way Back Program here in Mildura is a partnership between Beyond Blue, Murray PHN and Mildura Base Hospital and is an important step on the journey of improving mental health outcomes."

"The Way Back Service provides active intervention with patients to help those struggling with mental health to get the support they need to reduce the risk of suicide. The rapid, documented response that will exist between the Way Back Service and the Emergency Department at Mildura Base Hospital, will allow for timely, effective care for those people who are in a vulnerable state."

"The Federal Government knows accessing support in a structured and timely manner is essential for positive outcomes for those who have attempted to take their life. That is why I am pleased that the Federal Government funding for this valuable program is made possible through Murray PHN."

Beyond Blue Deputy CEO Susan Anderson said, "The Way Back is designed to give people



practical advice and support in the critical weeks and months after a suicidal crisis. It's there to complement, not replace, any clinical supports the person might require. People who have used The Way Back tell us it's helped to ease their feelings of distress, connected them with the supports they needed and encouraged active steps towards their recovery."

David Kirby, Mildura Base Hospital Director of Mental Health Services said, "The Mildura Base Hospital is looking forward to working with Murray PHN and Beyond Blue to provide an additional follow-up service to individuals experiencing a suicidal crisis. The psychosocial response will assist individuals and their loved ones to better understand the reason why people have thoughts of suicide and provide them with the support they need."

*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.*

*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 [suicidcallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidcallbackservice.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. Guidelines are available from [mindframe-media.info](http://mindframe-media.info) or on the Mindframe App.*

## **Contact details**

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