

# MEDIA RELEASE

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

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A new service to support people in the critical months after a suicidal crisis is one step closer to beginning in Mildura, with the appointment of Wellways as the service's non-clinical care provider.

The Way Back Support Service supports people during the critical three-month period following a suicidal crisis and includes the person's family and their other support networks.

The service, designed by Beyond Blue, will be delivered by Wellways and Mildura Base Hospital, which will provide clinical support. The Way Back is commissioned by Murray PHN (Primary Health Network) and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

People referred to The Way Back program will be assigned a Support Coordinator to guide them through their recovery. Coordinators offer people a range of non-clinical care, which can include helping them to build a personalised safety plan and linking them to health and community services, and to clinical care if needed.

Matt Jones, Murray PHN CEO said, "The Way Back approach makes sense. It organises practical support for people in suicidal crises to address the reasons behind the crisis and makes the link to clinical supports as and when needed. This is an important program that will save lives."

David Cahill, Wellways Regional Manager said, "Wellways is proud to partner with Mildura Base Hospital, Beyond Blue and Murray PHN to provide non-clinical, one-on-one care to members of our local Mildura community who have experienced a suicidal crisis and guide them safely through the immediate weeks and months that are crucial to their recovery. Our experience in working directly with local communities to deliver evidence-based programs will enable Wellways to successfully deliver this important initiative.

"As a leading not-for-profit mental health services provider, Wellways knows how important personalised supports are for people after a suicide attempt. The support offered through The Way Back offers innovative services, including face-to-face, non-clinical practical supports that participants can relate to and help them build rapport with the program and their future recovery."

David Kirby, Mildura Base Hospital Director of Mental Health Services said, "Mildura Base Hospital is looking forward to implementing this vital service for our community. We are very pleased to be able to continue working in partnership with Murray PHN, Beyond Blue and Wellways. Wellways is a quality organisation that has been successfully running our Prevention and Recovery Care unit for the past three and a half years and has extensive experience in community suicide prevention."

Georgie Harman, Beyond Blue CEO said The Way Back provides critical support for people after



they leave hospital.

“The Way Back addresses a significant gap in the current service system and eases people’s distress by guiding them towards the right support and informing them about how to stay safe. Coordinators provide people with practical support for improving their situation so they can find their way back to life.”

Anne Webster, Member for Mallee said, “The announcement today of the successful provider for The Way Back in Mildura is an important step on the journey for improving mental health outcomes.

“The Way Back provides help for those struggling with mental health concerns to get the support they need to reduce the risk of suicide. The service will interface with the Emergency Department at Mildura Base Hospital, and will allow for timely, effective care for vulnerable people.

“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 this funding has been made possible.

The Way Back is expected to begin supporting people in Mildura when it is launched by 1 July.

*If you are in an emergency or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. Mental health professionals are available at the Beyond Blue Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via [www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support) for online chat (3pm-12am AEST or email responses within 24 hours).*