

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunraysia Mallee safety net grows

4 May 2021

Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) training was launched in the Sunraysia Mallee region in 2019 as part of Mildura's place-based suicide prevention trial.

In the last 20 months, more than 540 people have signed up for the free training, further building the local safety net for people in distress.

Trial Coordinator, Murray PHN's Merryl Whyte, said that new ways of thinking about suicide prevention recommend training large numbers of people in a community.

"People who are suicidal often communicate distress through their words or actions; so, training a broad section of our community to understand the triggers and see warning signs is part of the range of work underway in the Mildura trial."

QPR is an online evidence-based training program 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 then shows how to connect the person with available supports. The training is open to anyone aged 18 years and older and takes only 60 minutes to complete.

The QPR training offered through the Mildura trial has been of interest to a wide range of people in a variety of occupations with teachers, accountants, pharmacists, plumbers, librarians, CEOs and administration, hospitality and retail staff among those who have completed it.

"In late 2019, we asked local people to get on board and complete QPR – and they've certainly answered the call," said Ms Whyte.

"We've had a really good uptake and been particularly pleased to see a number of regional workplaces make QPR training compulsory for their staff."

"Workplaces have told us that the training has helped increase staff understanding about suicide and suicide prevention, and the likelihood that questions would be asked of a friend or colleague who was showing signs of distress.

"They've also said that the online aspect of QPR was particularly useful during COVID-19 lockdowns, and a good alternative to organising offsite training sessions for staff."

Anyone in Sunraysia Mallee who would like to complete QPR training can visit murrayphn.org.au/qpr to register. The training can be completed in one session or in multiple sittings. The licence also provides access to useful resources related to suicide prevention.

Ms Whyte said that she would like more individuals and workplaces to consider taking up this training opportunity, while the QPR licences were still available.

"We would like to see more hairdressers, barbers, baristas and bankers participate in QPR, due to the high conversational nature of their jobs. Our local agricultural, trade and transport industries can also benefit as these areas can sometimes experience isolated and high-pressure situations."

Mildura is one of 12 locations taking part in Victorian Government trials (2017-2022) 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 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 is available from <https://mindframe.org.au/industry-hubs/for-media> or on the Mindframe App.*

Contact details

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