

MEDIA RELEASE



Monday, 4 September 2017

Take a minute and change a life on World Suicide Prevention Day

People in rural and remote areas are more likely to die by suicide than those in major cities. Yet, suicide is preventable and by Taking a Minute, we have the potential to Change a Life.

World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) on September 10 aims to encourage people to take time to notice what's going on with family, friends and colleagues – and yourself. The theme this year is 'Take a Minute, Change a Life'

Director of the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH) Professor David Perkins said it is about taking the time to have those conversations when you notice something has changed and equipping yourself to help yourself and others.

Suicide prevention is one of the Centre's key priorities and earlier this year the Centre hosted a rural suicide prevention forum at the Easter Show to bring government and organisations together to discuss suicide prevention in rural areas. One of the outcomes from the forum is a position paper to be distributed in the coming weeks.

"We know people living in rural and remote areas face a range of challenges unique to living outside a major city. These include drought, floods and fire as well as isolation. We need to recognise these and work towards implementing proven strategies to rural needs," said Professor Perkins.

"Everyone needs to be part of the solution and our work with 'Our Healthy Clarence' in the Clarence Valley is a great example of a community working together to prevent suicide," he said.

"A key part of this is working towards developing mentally healthy communities using successful mental health promotion campaigns such as Act- Belong -Commit," said Professor Perkins.

The Centre is also addressing the issue of suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People delivering suicide prevention workshops, 'We-Yarn' in Aboriginal communities. This evidence-based training as well as training delivered in workplaces and communities has the potential to expand more broadly.

Professor Perkins said the Centre's research activities are pivotal in understanding the key factors leading to suicide.

"Our research team including international PhD students are engaged in long-term projects



including a major review of the National Coroner Information System.

“This in turn helps inform policy and guides future strategies in rural suicide prevention,” he said.

As part of WSPD and RUOK Day the Centre is also facilitating a free public online forum on Rural Suicide Prevention.

“The online forums are a great opportunity for people to chat anonymously online and get support from a panel of experts,” said Professor Perkins.

For details on how you can participate, please see below:

ONLINE FORUM DETAILS

Where: Online www.theland.com.au

When: Friday 8 September at 12 noon

Panel members:

-**Susan Beaton** – Psychologist with 30 years’ experience working in suicide prevention. Susan has been national adviser to beyondblue and Lifeline’s national office.

-**Sue Murray** – Chief Executive at Suicide Prevention Australia

-**Susan Vaughan** – Led Standby Support after Suicide across the Far North Queensland region and is now National Partnership Coordinator.

-**Trevor Hazell** – Manages suicide prevention programs at the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health.

#WSPD17

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MEDIA CONTACT: Jocelyn Johnston | Communications Coordinator

T: 0410549325

E: jocelyn.johnston@newcastle.edu.au

Locked Bag 6005 Orange NSW 2800



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