

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Community wellbeing approach delivers positive results

'Our Healthy Clarence' a community-wide positive mental health and wellbeing initiative in the Clarence Valley could be adopted and tailored as a model for other rural communities facing similar challenges.

A paper published recently: [Our Healthy Clarence: A Community-Driven Wellbeing Initiative](#) highlights the process and achievements of the initiative called 'Our Healthy Clarence' and the benefits of a community-driven approach to suicide prevention and wellbeing.

Our Healthy Clarence was formed in response to an unexpectedly high number of deaths by suicide and unhelpful media coverage.

Director of the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH) Professor David Perkins said there was good evidence that taking a multi-agency and community approach to support the mental health and wellbeing of a community can have positive results.

"Our Healthy Clarence has created a group of stakeholders that have changed the narrative about mental health and wellbeing in the Clarence Valley and they now have the capacity to address further issues as they arise," said Professor Perkins.

"This initiative could help and support other communities faced with similar challenges provided the initiatives are tailored to the local communities' needs and builds on their strengths to ensure they are relevant and sustainable," he said.

Our Healthy Clarence is a collaboration between the community, local government, health services, education, police, and community-managed organisations.

The actions of Our Healthy Clarence reflect the five focus areas of the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health's [Position Paper on Rural Suicide and its Prevention](#).

Factors contributing to its successful implementation included a collective commitment to mental health and wellbeing, clarity of purpose, leadership support from key local partners, a paid Coordinator and inclusive and transparent governance.

Download the paper: [Our Healthy Clarence: A Community-Driven Wellbeing Initiative](#) published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. For more information about Our Healthy Clarence head to [ourhealthyclarence.org.au](http://ourhealthyclarence.org.au)

For best practice guidelines on reporting suicide and mental ill health, check the Mindframe Media guidelines on <http://www.mindframe-media.info/>

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