

MEDIA RELEASE



Monday, 8 April 2019

Easter Show Forum focusses on collaborative approaches to community wellbeing

The University of Newcastle's Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH) is facilitating a third rural suicide prevention forum at the Sydney Royal Easter Show focussing on community wellbeing collaboratives and the need for a coordinated approach.

The third Rural Suicide Prevention Forum provides an opportunity to build on the work from the last two years' forums at the Sydney Royal Easter Show including the subsequent development of the [CRRMH's Position Paper on "Rural Suicide and its Prevention"](#).

The forum titled "taking a collaborative approach to community wellbeing" will take place on Tuesday 16 April and will reflect on Focus Area 5 as outlined in the CRRMH's position paper: Build healthy and resilient people and communities.

Key stakeholders from across NSW will come together to discuss how rural and remote communities can better collaborate to improve their mental wellbeing, thereby reducing the incidence of suicide.

Director of the CRRMH Professor David Perkins said the CRRMH has been working closely with many organisations including Our Healthy Clarence (Grafton NSW), the University of Newcastle's Family Action Centre (Muswellbrook NSW) and the Lithgow Mayor's Mental Health Taskforce to create collaborative approaches to community wellbeing.

"This forum provides a timely opportunity for these groups to come together and share their knowledge and learnings and to hear from other stakeholders," said Professor Perkins.

Director of Workforce, Northern NSW LHD Dr Richard Buss said that community wellbeing initiatives are a great opportunity to bring together a wide sector of services to work together on collaborative approaches and ways to partner and work with communities.

"We need the commitment of the whole of community to work together to find sustainable solutions as services and the community working together is the most effective way to establish a healthy mental health approach to suicide prevention," he said.

The upcoming 2019 Rural Suicide Prevention Forum is the third rural suicide prevention forum organised by the CRRMH in as many years at the Royal Easter Show. The first was held in 2017 with the theme: *Working together to prevent suicide in rural communities*; and the second in 2018: *a coalition for action*.

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All forums focus on the fact that in every state in Australia, the rate of suicide among those who live outside the great capital cities is higher than that for residents that live within them.

The Governor of NSW, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) and Mrs Linda Hurley will again attend the forum as well as the NSW Mental Health Commissioner, Catherine Lourey.

“Having the contribution of these key people as well as representatives from across the sector demonstrates a strong commitment to community wellbeing initiatives and reducing rural suicide rates,” Professor Perkins said.

The ideas discussed and suggestions made in regard to community wellbeing initiatives will assist the CRRMH to collect qualitative data to inform the development of community wellbeing collaborative models. It will also help the CRRMH develop an appropriate package of resources for communities.

“The CRRMH welcomes the opportunity to partner with organisations that wish to take action and have a positive, downward impact on rural suicide,” Professor Perkins said.

You can read all the five key focus areas for action to address the need to save rural lives now and to lower the number of deaths and rates of suicide in the future by downloading the [position paper on “Rural Suicide and its Prevention”](#) at www.crrmh.com.au.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

If you're concerned about your own or someone else's mental health, you can call the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

For best practice guidelines on Mental Health and Suicide Reporting, visit: <http://www.mindframe-media.info/>

#RSPForum2019

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