



Rural Suicide and its Prevention: a CRRMH Prevention Paper

OVERVIEW

Rural suicide causes enormous distress to individuals, families, workplaces and communities and needs to be addressed. The CRRMH has developed this paper for two purposes:

- 1 TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE UNACCEPTABLE RATES OF RURAL SUICIDE
- 2 TO SUGGEST WHERE WE SHOULD FOCUS OUR ATTENTION IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE STATISTICS



In 2016, the number of suicides per 100,000 people in rural and remote Australia was **50%** higher than in cities.

2016 Suicide Rate per 100,000 people

10.0

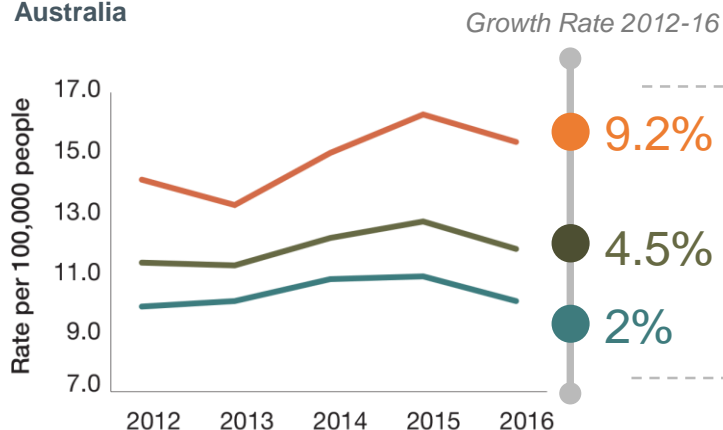
15.3

Greater Capital Cities

Outside Greater Capital Cities

The Indigenous suicide rates are nearly **2 X** that of the non-Indigenous

Figure 1: Suicide rates by region, 2012-2016, Australia



- Rest of States total
- Australia
- Greater Capital Cities total

Over the last 5 years, the increase in suicide rates in regional, rural and remote areas has been more than **4 X** the increase in Capital Cities

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT RURAL SUICIDE?

The CRRMH proposes that rural suicide prevention should be comprised of five focus areas for action (summarised in Figure 2), designed to save lives now and to lower the number of deaths and rates of suicide into the future. These recommended focus areas draw on the ideas and suggestions obtained from participants at the Rural Suicide Prevention Forum in April 2017, local and international sources, and our own experience and resources.

Figure 2: Five focus areas for rural suicide prevention



HOW SHOULD WE GO ABOUT PREVENTING RURAL SUICIDE?

The Position Paper outlines 5 guiding principles that the CRRMH believes should guide future work in preventing rural suicide.

- 1 Approaches to the prevention of rural suicide should be **aspirational**.
- 2 Suicide prevention should be addressed using a **public health lens**.
- 3 **Leadership** and planning in rural suicide prevention is needed at all levels of government.
- 4 People with a **lived experience of suicide**, who have been given training and have active support, should be given a role in all levels of suicide prevention planning.
- 5 Addressing the higher rates of suicide in **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** communities must be a priority.

PARTNER WITH US

The CRRMH welcomes the opportunity to partner with organisations that wish to take action and have a positive impact on rural suicide. If you would like to partner with us, please contact the **Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health**:

E: crrmh@newcastle.edu.au
T: +61 2 6363 8444