



# Managing the Risk of Suicide

## A Suicide Prevention Strategy for the ACT 2009–2014

### Message from the Minister

Suicide leaves profound emotional, social and economic effects for families and friends and communities. The impact of suicide challenges human services and the community to do as much as possible to prevent these events, and reduce the consequent harm

Managing the Risk of Suicide: A Suicide Prevention Strategy for the ACT 2009–2014 builds on the work and learnings of the 2005–2008 suicide prevention strategy and provides a collaborative and co-operative whole of government approach to preventing suicide in the ACT.

I am confident that the actions identified in this Strategy will guide education campaigns to educate the community about the factors that influence suicide, reduce suicide rates in the Australian Capital Territory and strengthen support services for those bereaved by suicide.

*Katy Gallagher*

Katy Gallagher, MLA  
Deputy Chief Minister  
Minister for Health

### Key features of Managing the Risk of Suicide

- Informed by the national policy LIFE: Living is for Everyone (2008)
- Provides a whole of government, coordinated approach to suicide prevention
- Enhances individual awareness of suicide prevention and intervention, reduces stigma and promotes help-seeking behaviour
- Increases access to early interventions for people in the justice system at risk of suicide
- Increases access to early intervention services and programs for at risk men
- Increases support for individuals working in the area of suicide prevention
- Enhances the capacity of emergency personnel to respond to family and friends traumatised by the impact of suicide
- Provides evidence based early education and information to consumers and carers and at risk individuals
- Increases responsiveness of service providers to requests for grief and loss counselling and support of those affected by suicide.

### Objectives

- Access to a timely and integrated service response;
- Increased community awareness of and access to suicide prevention training, education, information, networking and postvention;
- Identification of specific at risk groups, risk and protective factors and interventions to support at risk groups;
- The development of future suicide prevention initiatives; and
- Improving the general well-being, resilience and connectedness of the ACT community by supporting the implementation of the Building a Strong Foundation: Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing in the ACT 2009–2014 as appropriate.

# Action Areas

Six key action areas provide the direction and framework for  
Managing the Risk of Suicide: A Suicide Prevention Strategy for the ACT 2009–2014:

## Action Area 1: Improving the evidence base and understanding of suicide prevention

**Outcome 1.1:** Consistent collection and analysis of data on feelings of suicidality, suicide attempts, death by suicide and self-harm across the ACT.

**Outcome 1.2:** Improved capacity and skill in evaluation and reporting of suicide prevention programs in the ACT.

## Action Area 3: Building community strength, resilience and capacity in suicide prevention

**Outcome 3.1:** Increased level of knowledge of suicide prevention activities and increased capacity to respond to the signs of suicidal behaviour.

**Outcome 3.2:** Increased media compliance with the MindFrame national media guidelines.

## Action Area 5: Providing targeted suicide prevention activities

**Outcome 5.1:** Front-line workers families, carers and gatekeepers have a greater capacity to support those experiencing suicidal feelings.

**Outcome 5.2:** Reduced incidence of suicide and suicidal behaviour in groups at highest risk.

**Outcome 5.3:** People in the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems receive assessment, treatment and care as appropriate to their level of suicide risk.

**Outcome 5.4:** There are no suicides in ACT detention facilities.

**Outcome 5.5:** Increase supports for people identified as 'at risk', who are transitioning between services.

**Outcome 5.6:** Reduced incidence of stress-related health problems, incidence of vicarious trauma and suicide or suicidal behaviour among clinicians, community support workers and emergency service works.

## Action Area 2: Building individual resilience and wellbeing

**Outcome 2.1:** Enhance individual awareness of suicide prevention/intervention, reduce stigma, and promote mental health literacy, help-seeking and support skills.

**Outcome 2.2:** Increased support for individuals working in the field of suicide prevention and those responding to incidents of suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm.

## Action Area 4: Taking a coordinated approach to suicide prevention

**Outcome 4.1:** Increased collaboration, including sharing of experience, collaborative service delivery and program implementation between organisations providing suicide prevention and postvention services in the ACT.

**Outcome 4.2:** Improve support to the carers, families and friends of people at risk of suicide.

**Outcome 4.3:** Improve access to and coordination of support and follow-up services for families, friends and carers of those who have attempted to or have taken their life by suicide.

## Action Area 6: Implementing standards and quality in suicide prevention

**Outcome 6.1:** Increased knowledge, skills and capacity among front-line workers, gatekeepers, families and carers in effective suicide prevention practices.

**Outcome 6.2:** Enhance the capacity of Government Departments and non-government service providers to recognise and respond to signs of suicidal behaviour.



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