

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MAY 29, 2019

Male mental health crisis highlights the need for secure postvention funding: Jesuit Social Services

A new Beyond Blue report showing that there were more than 30,000 ambulance attendances for men who had thoughts of suicide, or had attempted suicide, over a 12 month period highlights that the Federal Government must commit to secure, long-term funding commitments for a comprehensive suite of suicide prevention services including postvention services, says Jesuit Social Services.

“We have known for a long time that men’s mental health is at crisis levels with, on average, six men across Australia tragically taking their own lives each and every day,” says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

“Our [Man Box research](#), released last year, surveyed 1,000 young Australian men aged 18 to 30. It found a staggering 44 per cent of men ‘inside the man box’ had thoughts of suicide in the previous two weeks. We need to do more to help men be their best selves, and we can start by modelling positive alternatives to the Man Box norms in front of boys and young men.

“We found that too many Australian men are stuck in the “Man Box” and feel pressure to – among other things – act strong at all times, use violence to get respect, assert control in relationships and sort out problems on their own.”

Ms Edwards says that research shows those left behind after the suicide of a loved one – including family, friends and partners – are themselves at heightened risk of suicide.

“We know that effective, holistic and intensive postvention support during this period is vital in helping people navigate the impact of grief and trauma and in preventing future suicides,” she says.

Since 2004, Jesuit Social Services has operated Support After Suicide to provide counselling, support groups and online resources to people bereaved by suicide. In 2017-18, Support After Suicide assisted 964 children, young people and adults, in addition to delivering training to health, welfare and education professionals.

Once funded as one integrated service through the Commonwealth Government, Support After Suicide is now funded in a fragmented way through Primary Health Networks (PHNs) across Victoria.

“Whilst we very much support tailored responses at the local level, there is no statewide approach through the PHN’s,” says Ms Edwards.

“This has led to a lack of understanding of the importance of postvention in preventing and increased layers of administration. It’s hard to know how this benefits people in need on the ground.



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“It is clear to us that there should be an integrated and specialized funding stream for postvention services, including Support After Suicide, who work to prevent further suicides by supporting those left behind.”

In Jesuit Social Services’ recent Federal Election Platform [A more compassionate Australia](#), the organisation also recommended the establishment of consistent reporting and evaluation requirements across PHNs to demonstrate community impact.

“We also call on the Federal Government to increase its investment into suicide bereavement services in regional and rural areas which would allow a program like Support After Suicide to provide a more robust service in line with increased demand.”

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