

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

SUICIDE COSTS COMMUNITY

\$17.5 BILLION



23 November 2009: A conservative estimate puts the economic cost of suicide at \$17.5 billion a year. That equates to around \$795 per person annually, yet current spending on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy is just 91c per head.

That's according to a collaboration of suicide prevention experts, who have prepared a joint submission into the Senate Inquiry into Suicide in Australia.



This figure doesn't take into account the social, or human, cost of suicide, where grief and trauma can have long term and devastating affects on individuals and the communities touched by suicide.

The joint submission was prepared ConNetica Consulting on behalf of Suicide Prevention Australia, the Inspire Foundation, the OZ Help Foundation, the Mental Health Council of Australia, Lifeline Australia, The Salvation Army and, the Brain and Mind Research Institute, and supported by 59 organisations and individuals.



The submission is calling on all levels of government and the community to undertake significant action to help prevent what is a leading, mostly preventable, cause of death with as many as seven Australians dying by suicide each day and almost 180 attempts daily.



Amongst the recommendations, the group is calling for:

- A truly National Suicide Prevention Strategy
- A massive increase in spending by all levels of government and the community on suicide prevention, bereavement and postvention
- A greater emphasis on training, education and awareness nation wide
- The creation of a national body to focus on suicide prevention
- Significant changes to primary health care provision
- Greater focus on making suicide hot spots safe, like bridges or cliff faces where people frequently take their own lives, and
- Specific suicide prevention and postvention programs to address high suicide rates in groups like men, Indigenous Australians and people in rural areas, amongst others.



The group presented its submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee today, taking the opportunity to praise all sides of politics for recognising the need to look in detail at this significant cause of death in Australia.



The group now looks forward to providing detailed evidence to the Committee over the coming months, and reading the final report due in April 2010.



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