



Illawarra Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention Collaborative

Statement of Purpose

1. Background

Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15-44 years of age, accounting for more deaths than motor vehicle accidents, assaults and substance use combined. Put another way, every day in Australia, 7-8 people die by suicide and another 240 attempt to suicide.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven is far from immune, with suicide rates for this region higher than NSW State averages. Despite a number of services being available to help those at risk of suicide, suicide rates have remained stubbornly high over the past 10 years. Therefore, a more systematic and coordinated approach is warranted.

2. Vision

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention Collaborative (the Collaborative) was founded on the common ambition of multiple government and non-government agencies to reduce the impact of suicide in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. This incorporates reducing the number of people who die by suicide, and improving the service experience for those at risk of suicide and those who care for them.

The Collaborative aims to reduce the impact of suicide by:

2.1. Improving the supports available to people at risk of suicide as well as improving people's experience of those supports

The Collaborative aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of suicide prevention services available in the Illawarra Shoalhaven. In acknowledgement that there are many people at risk of suicide who do not engage with traditional health services, the Collaborative will not be restricted to clinical interventions when considering suicide prevention activities.

The Collaborative is committed to learning from those with lived experience so as to improve the supports and services available to people at risk of suicide as well as those who care for them.

2.2. Encouraging systems change through collaboration

The Collaborative understands that when a person's care is transferred from one service/sector to another can be a particularly high risk time for suicide.

Therefore, a significant and sustainable reduction in the number of suicide deaths will only be achieved by working together in a systematic and coordinated way. This will be achieved through encouraging innovative solutions, cross-sectorial collaboration, and whole-of-community involvement.

2.3. *Ensuring that suicide prevention efforts are effective*

It is crucial that we focus our suicide prevention efforts on strategies that are evidence-based. Furthermore, suicide prevention activity should continue to be subject to thoughtful and well-designed evaluation to ensure such activity effectively addresses local needs. Any innovations should also be evaluated, and the findings be made available to the community to contribute the emerging evidence-base. The Collaborative commits to systematic evaluation of all suicide prevention activities it undertakes, and actively creating opportunities to build upon the evidence-base in the literature.

3. Guiding Principles

The Collaborative believes that suicide prevention is everyone’s business, and not exclusive to any one service or sector. People at risk of suicide and those who care for them often access support from various services and sectors, and so any successful approach will require a collaborative cross-sectorial approach.

The Collaborative values those with lived experience, and is committed to actively ensuring that these people are encouraged to contribute to the development, evaluation and governance of suicide prevention activities in the region.

4. Membership

Membership of the Collaborative includes key representatives from all the major services involved in supporting those at risk of suicide, including health, education, academia, emergency services, community groups, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community organisations, media, council, and lived experience representatives.

Current membership includes:

[put
organisation
name here]

[person’s
name
here,
person’s
role
here]

date