



Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy

Consultation Draft

Facilitating a community workshop



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About the public consultation

Thank you for your interest in supporting the public consultation on the draft *Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy* (Advice on the Strategy).

The National Suicide Prevention Office (NSPO) is committed to ensuring its work is guided and informed by people with lived and living experience of suicide, and that it draws on the rich knowledge and expertise of individuals, communities, service providers, advocates, researchers, and government agencies.

It is important that we hear from a broad range of people with diverse views to strengthen the Advice on the Strategy and provide governments with the strongest and most effective advice possible.

The public consultation on the draft *Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy* opened on Tuesday 10th September 2024. The consultation will close on Sunday 27th October 2024.

The aim of the public consultation is to test the recommended actions with people with a lived experience of suicide, service providers, researchers and communities to:

- Understand if the advice provided is what stakeholders hope to see in government action on suicide prevention.
- Ensure the actions recommended are practical and will be effective on the ground in service delivery and community.
- Seek to understand the actions that stakeholders find a priority for suicide prevention.

The draft Advice on the Strategy and associated documents can be found at <http://haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/draft-advice-national-suicide-prevention-strategy>

The following pages include information that may support your efforts.

If there is anything else you may need, please don't hesitate to get in contact: nspo@nspo.gov.au

Thanks so much for spreading the word!
The NSPO team



Preparing for a workshop

Supports and safety

Support lines

Talking about suicide can bring emotions to the surface for anyone. Take care of yourself as you read the draft Advice on the Strategy and as you move through a group workshop. Please also encourage your community to do the same.

We know that people have their own supports and resources to call upon in times of strong emotion or distress, and that they can access these as and when it's right for them. It can also be useful to have at hand the national support services that are available. These phone numbers and websites can be accessed on the National Suicide Prevention Office's 'Find Support' webpage <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/find-support>.

Displaying one or two support line numbers at the workshop is always encouraged and perhaps a good prompt for people to look out for others and check in with themselves. There are many support line options that can be used, please select the ones that are most appropriate for your community.

Language

The way we speak about suicide and self-harm has a major influence on how the community understands and responds to people who might be at risk. It also impacts on the stigma and shame around suicide.

For more information on how to speak about suicide please visit the Mindframe website at [Language - Mindframe](#)

Considering readiness to participate

People may like to reflect on whether they are ready to participate in a workshop about suicide - this can change over time depending on circumstance or time of year. For those just stepping into this space or those who have contributed to suicide prevention for some time, it's always good to check in and self-reflect.

Roses in the Ocean, a lived experience of suicide organisation, has developed a worksheet to support people with a lived experience of suicide to consider just this. While this tool has a specific purpose, some of the questions might be useful to also share with those who don't have a lived experience to also reflect on how they might come to the conversation, or for a facilitator, it might support consideration of whether holding a workshop in community is right at this time.

You can find the Readiness to Participate PDF here: [Readiness to be involved in suicide prevention - Roses in the Ocean](#)

Understanding the draft Advice on the Strategy

The draft Advice on the Strategy can be found at:

<http://haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/draft-advice-national-suicide-prevention-strategy>

It is important that facilitators and participants take the time to read and understand the document before providing feedback or participating in a workshop. For some individuals, this might require time or supports to navigate and take in the information.



Facilitators and participants are also invited to email any questions or queries direct to the NSPO at nspo@nspo.gov.au.

We will answer all questions as quickly as possible. When appropriate, we will also post these answers to the FAQs on the website; chances are someone else has the same question.

The FAQs can be found here:

<https://haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/92198/widgets/431562/documents/281837>

Inviting participants to the workshop

The public consultation is open for 6 weeks. Recognising that people will require time to familiarise themselves with the draft Advice on the Strategy, it will be important to get an invitation out as soon as possible.

We acknowledge that you know how best to engage with your community, however in case it's helpful, we have drafted an invite below as a starting point.

Draft Invite

SUBJECT: Community Workshop on the draft Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy

Dear {NAME}

The draft Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy has been released for public consultation.

{INSERT ORG/GROUP NAME} will be hosting a workshop to collectively gather feedback on the Advice to send to the National Suicide Prevention Office. We would love for you to attend.

Date: {INSERT}

Time: {INSERT}

Location: {INSERT}

Please register your interest here {INSERT LINK}

Prior to the workshop, we ask that you read the draft Advice on the Strategy, which can be found at <http://haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/draft-advice-national-suicide-prevention-strategy>

As you're reading this, you may like to begin to think about:

- Whether you feel the Advice on the Strategy and the key objectives in each section reflect what is needed in suicide prevention in Australia*
- If you think any of the recommended actions need to be changed*
- If there is anything critical that the Advice is missing that should be included*
- And if any actions stand out to you as a priority.*

Please reach out to {NAME} at {CONTACT DETAILS} with any questions.



Workshop design

There are many ways that a workshop can be run and facilitated. Again, you know your community best and it's important that the workshop reflects this. To support the design of a workshop, we have provided a general guide below.

We also appreciate that the draft Advice on the Strategy is detailed. So, the document could be addressed as a whole (reflected in the below table), or perhaps a workshop might work through each objective separately.

The NSPO is available to hold a conversation on workshop design. If this is helpful, please reach out at nspo@nspo.gov.au.

Session Guide (Please tailor as needed)

1 **Welcome and Acknowledgement**

- Acknowledgement of Country
- Recognition of Lived Experience
- Welcoming all participants
- Housekeeping, including language, safety and supports (see above)

2 **Introductions**

- Facilitator introduction
- Group introductions

3 **Overview of the need for a national Strategy**

It is time to change the approach to suicide prevention.

- Every day in Australia approximately 9 people die by suicide and more than 150 people attempt to take their own life.
- This is more than 3,000 deaths and 55,000 attempts each year. In addition, thousands more will experience suicidal distress or thoughts of suicide.
- The impacts of the loss of life, suicide attempts and suicidal distress on families and communities is devastating.

The National Suicide Prevention Office's Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (consultation draft) proposes a fundamental change to the way we think and act on suicide prevention.

Suicide prevention must begin before people reach the point of crisis.

- People with lived experience of suicide, the data and scientific research all tell us that suicidal thoughts and behaviours are not just about mental ill-health – they are also about all the circumstances that can create feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and entrapment.
- Financial stress, housing instability, domestic and family violence, childhood adversity, discrimination, and alcohol and drug harm can all play a role in contributing to suicidal distress.

Many of these circumstances are preventable.



The draft Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy provides clear guidance for governments, service providers and communities on a comprehensive, compassionate and effective national approach to suicide prevention.

It offers a point of reflection for everyone with a role to play in preventing suicide on what is currently being done and what needs to be done to prevent suicidal distress, suicide attempts and suicide deaths.

It is a call for change that will save lives. There is no task that is more essential.

4 Introducing the draft Advice on the Strategy

To be truly effective we need a comprehensive suicide prevention system that:

1. Acts to prevent people from reaching the point of suicidal distress in the first place.

This can be achieved by taking proactive steps to address areas of disadvantage and adversity that contribute to distress before they escalate into suicidal thoughts or attempts.

2. Strengthens the support system to ensure that when a person does experience suicidal distress, support is accessible, compassionate, and effective.

The support system must be able to respond to individual needs and circumstances, be better equipped to address the full range of factors underlying a person's distress and aim to restore wellbeing.

3. Is sustained by collective effort from governments, sectors beyond health, service providers, and communities.

The system needs to be supported by greater accountability, more research and better data, and a stronger suicide prevention workforce. This will require the voices and expertise of lived and living experience to be embedded in the heart of policy design and implementation.

The Advice on the Strategy does not stand alone.

The document is intended to guide governments to deliver the necessary reform, building on the recommendations from three seminal reports:

- *The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health*
- *The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System*
- *The National Suicide Prevention Adviser's Final Advice.*
- The actions within the Advice on the Strategy have been informed by over 30 existing reports. These have been supported by commissioned academic reviews and evidence briefs to ensure the actions are firmly grounded in evidence.
- The document has been designed in consultation with all states and territories to ensure alignment in suicide prevention activity across Australia.
- The Advice on the Strategy has been designed to work in unison with the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy* being developed by Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia. The two documents have been developed along



	<p>similar timelines with the intention of mutual reinforcement and the recognition that the vision within the Advice on the Strategy cannot be achieved without significant and sustained reductions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lives lost to suicide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The <i>Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide</i> delivered its final report on 9th September 2024. The actions within the Advice on the Strategy reinforce the need for all governments to work with current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members to progress recommendations as a critical part of national suicide prevention efforts.
4	<p>Prompt Questions</p> <p>(These questions can be reworded and repeated if you have the opportunity to cover each objective separately)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How well does the Advice on the Strategy articulate what is required for long term change in suicide prevention?- Is there anything critical to preventing suicide in Australia, that the Advice on the Strategy does not address?- Are there any recommended actions in the Advice on the Strategy that you do not understand, or need more information about?- Which actions do you think are the highest priority?- Is there anything else you would like to tell us in response to the draft Advice on the Strategy?
5	<p>Session Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Summary of the day- A thank you for attending

Recording and collating the outcomes

Capturing information

There are many ways to record workshop feedback. For example, perhaps having participants use butchers' paper on the day, sticky notes or if the session is online using an online whiteboard is great for collaboration.

There is also of course the option of simply writing notes by hand or electronically in a Word document.

Please be sure to request permission from participants if the workshop is to be recorded electronically. Unfortunately, we won't be able to accept electronic recordings as a submission but appreciate that this might help with checking notes later.

Collating your feedback

Outcomes can be shared with us in any written format that feels most appropriate. If it's helpful, we have included a template on the next page that can be cut and pasted into a Word document as a suggestion to bring the information together.



Proposed Template

Collective feedback on the draft Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy

Region:

Community represented:

Number of people:

Questions	Notes
How well does the Advice on the Strategy articulate what is required for long term change in suicide prevention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• XX• XX
Is there anything critical to preventing suicide in Australia, that the Advice on the Strategy does not address?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• XX• XX
Are there any recommended actions in the Advice on the Strategy that you do not understand, or need more information about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• XX• XX
Is there anything else you would like to share?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• XX• XX

After the workshop

Reach out to participants

Following a workshop, it's always valuable to reach out to participants by email or phone, or perhaps even in person. It's a great way to say thank you (and we would be grateful if you could include our gratitude in that also) and a good way to just check-in and see how they're doing after a big conversation.

Another thought would be to share with them how their input was used, perhaps even sending them a copy of the final feedback that was provided.

Submitting your feedback

Privacy and confidentiality

The NSPO is keen to understand the diversity that is reflected in the feedback that we receive, however, it is important that the feedback does not identify any individual without their written permission.



The recording of the number of participants and the community that is represented – for example, it might be a geographical place, or perhaps a cultural group, would be useful for our understanding of who provided the feedback.

More information about our privacy practices can be found here:

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/about/governance/policies/privacy>.

Where to send feedback

Please send your feedback via email or mail to:

- Email to nspo@nspo.gov.au
- Mail to:
The National Suicide Prevention Office
PO Box R1463
Royal Exchange NSW 1225

How feedback will be used

All the feedback received will be collated and categorised. The National Suicide Prevention Office will then consider this feedback and incorporate it into the draft Advice on the Strategy as is appropriate.

A report summarising the feedback received will be made publicly available after the public consultation has closed. It will include detail on how the feedback has been categorised and incorporated in the Advice on the Strategy. The report will be made available at:

www.haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/public-consultation-draft-national-suicide-prevention-strategy.



Other ways to support the public consultation

There may be some members of the community who might like to read the draft Advice on the Strategy and provide feedback as an individual. To share the public consultation with them, we have developed the following social tiles and words to support.

We are grateful for your support in sharing this and helping to ensure that the advice we provide truly speaks to what is needed to improve suicide prevention in Australia.

Social Media

Open for consultation announcement:



Text for post:

Each day, 9 Australians die by suicide and more than 150 attempt to take their own life.

The Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy outlines how we change our approach and prevent this. *It has just been released for public consultation.*

It's important that you have your say.

Click here: <http://haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/draft-advice-national-suicide-prevention-strategy> *to have your say.*

Newsletter or Email

SUBJECT: Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (consultation draft) is open for public consultation



Advice on the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (consultation draft) has been released for public consultation.

We'd like to encourage you to provide your feedback!

Suicide prevention must begin before people reach the point of crisis. People with lived and living experience of suicide, the data and scientific research all tell us that suicidal thoughts and behaviours are not just about mental ill-health – they are also about all the circumstances that can create feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and entrapment. Things like financial stress, housing instability, domestic and family violence, childhood adversity, discrimination and alcohol and drug harm can all play a role in contributing to suicidal distress.

It is time to change the approach to suicide prevention.

The draft *Advice on the Strategy* provides guidance to prevent people from reaching the point of suicidal distress in the first place and strengthen the support system to ensure that when a person does experience suicidal distress, support is accessible, compassionate and effective.

The National Suicide Prevention Office would like to hear from you. It is important to understand if the advice provided is what you hope to see in government action on suicide prevention. Will the actions be effective in your community? And which actions you see as the priority?

We can all contribute to shaping the future of suicide prevention in Australia. Have your say today:
<http://haveyoursay.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/draft-advice-national-suicide-prevention-strategy>

