



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

12 October 2006

Suicide prevention: building resilient communities through primary care

The Federal Government's announcement of increased funding for suicide prevention and telephone counselling through Lifeline today has been welcomed by Australia's peak body representing general practice.

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said the new funding will go a long way to improving the community's capacity to tackle suicide rates by intervening early with timely support.

"This is particularly so in rural communities who are struggling with the prolonged effects of drought, which is a major contributing factor to increasing suicide rates in these communities, a rate that is against the national downward trend.

"We know the majority of people dying by suicide or making suicide attempts have a recognisable mental health problem.

"The major focus of suicide prevention efforts should be directed at encouraging help seeking, improving identification and referral of those at risk, and reducing the rates of mental health disorders and addressing the risk factors and life pathways that lead to these disorders.

"GPs are frontline, accessible health professionals who are well placed to provide assistance, referrals and treatment. Talking to your GP about feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts provides a safe and confidential environment to discuss support and treatment needs.

"For many rural communities, the local GP and the division-run psychological (ATAPS) services is the only source of mental health care.

If we are serious about reducing the incidence of suicide in rural communities, it is vital that these services remain and are expanded.

"We are pleased that the local capacity of divisions to deliver suicide prevention solutions has been recognised with grants to four divisions: Murrumbidgee, Adelaide Central and Eastern, Central Wheatbelt and Perth and Hills.

"Community-based projects targeting rural men with information about services, and strategies to support each other delivered in settings in which they live and work hit the mark. If we are serious about helping drought affected communities we need more of these.

WHAT IS ADGP?

- ADGP is the peak body representing 119 Divisions of General Practice and eight State-based organisations (SBOs) around Australia. The Divisions Network supports general practice and their practice teams and drives the implementation of innovative health strategies.
- ADGP, through the Divisions Network, works to integrate general practice with other sectors of the health system, both government and non-government, to deliver high quality care to the Australian community.
- ADGP is committed to promoting the health of all Australians by supporting the role of Divisions in the nation's primary health care system.



Telephone 02 6228 0800

Facsimile 02 6228 0899

Email adgpreception@adgp.com.au

25 National Circuit Forrest ACT 2603

PO Box 4308 Manuka ACT 2603

ABN 95 082 812 146

www.adgp.com.au

"ADGP and the divisions' network understand the links between mental health and the prevalence of suicide. Divisions can provide GPs and other members of the practice team with important tools and programs to respond to suicide risk and to link them up with vital community based services like Lifeline" Dr Hobbs said.

ADGP has today released its special mental health edition of *Dynamic Divisions*. The publication showcases a number of the innovative and workable solutions happening in divisions of general practice across Australia. To view this edition please use the below link.

www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?PageMode=indiv&module=NEWS&page_id=16008

For more information please call Kate Carnell, ADGP Chief Executive Officer, on 0415 662 266 or Dr Tony Hobbs on 0429 424 423 .

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

ACN 082 812 146

PO Box 1126 Belconnen ACT 2617

Telephone: 02-6251 3380 ♦ Facsimile: 02-6251 3390 ♦ Email: adgpreception@adgp.com.au