



Media Release

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Suicide Prevention: Targeted Approach Required For Diverse Communities

With Australia's suicide rate at its highest level in 13 years, The Salvation Army is calling for an overhaul of the mental health care system and an increase of funding into community based approaches to deal with our country's national emergency.

The Salvation Army, through its Hope for Life Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Support program, provides information, resources and training for those that support people at risk of suicide or have lost a loved one to suicide.

The National Program Manager of Hope for Life, Bill Sayers says a "one-size-fits-all" approach to mental health treatment cannot effectively cater for Australia's most ethnically diverse communities.

"We encourage the Federal Government to continue to invest in specialist suicide prevention programs that train, develop and support communities and individuals," Mr Sayers said.

"Suicide literacy needs to reach every high school, workplace and culturally diverse community. More importantly, these strategies must be owned by local people."

The Salvation Army has advanced this community based approach and has provided early intervention to individuals experiencing poverty, relationship breakdowns, financial or social stress through its work in regional and ethnically diverse communities.

The creation of Together for Hope, a community initiative in Western Sydney, is one example of how The Salvation Army has advanced this localised approach to suicide gatekeeper training and strategy.

Mr Sayers says a community based approach will deliver a reduction in suicidal behaviours and in the long term, the number of deaths from suicide.

"Reconnecting people through effective social programs that value every individual, lies at the heart of reducing this awful toll," he said.

"Let's talk about the issue openly to help reduce the stigma and make the goal of halving suicide rates over the next decade a reality. We need action, not words."

For more information or to organise an interview with Bill Sayers, please contact:

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