

MEDIA RELEASE

RAW EXPRESSES CONCERN AT TASMANIA'S INCREASING SUICIDE RATES

The CEO of Rural Alive, and Well (RAW), Liz Little, has expressed deep concern that Tasmania is the only state in Australia with an increasing suicide rate (ABS standardized).

Information released yesterday by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that over the last decade Tasmania's suicide rate has risen by 25% with an increase in deaths per 100,000 from 13.5 in 2007 to 17.0 in 2016... the Australian national average suicide rate is 11.7.

Ms Little commented "These appalling figures represent a deep well of personal mental anguish and isolation in our community and unquantifiable personal grief for associated family members, friends and communities.

This increase in the rate of suicide in Tasmania is occurring at a time when direct services to 'at risk' and vulnerable people in their time of highest need are decreasing.

As a result of both Commonwealth and State funding decisions this year, RAW has cut 1.4 staff from its statewide suicide prevention Outreach program since July, and faces making even larger cuts in services in 2018 with the foreshadowed complete withdrawal of Commonwealth funds. In 2015 RAW had 12 Outreach Workers to cover the state, we now have less than 9.

Ms Little continued "RAW is unique in Australia. Our Outreach program works proactively to go where people live & work and provide ongoing physical and emotional support. In 2015 alone, RAW Outreach Worker's engaged with 31 clients who were attempting suicide when the worker arrived on location or a suicide note had been written and the means of suicide was in ready access.

I congratulate the Australian Government on its initiative of declaring Tasmania a 'suicide prevention test site' and resourcing capacity building in our community. However I urge all levels of Government to increase their funding and support to direct services on the ground to assist 'at risk' individuals. The need is now!"

**TALK TO A MATE - 1300 HELP MATE (1300 4357 6283)
24HR / 7 DAYS - STATEWIDE**

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Thursday 28th September 2017

