

# Reducing Suicide: **Action Plan 2003**

The Queensland Government  
*Suicide Prevention Strategy*  
2003 - 2008



**Queensland**  
Government

# Preface

The Reducing Suicide Action Plan 2003 is a whole-of-Government response representing the specific actions and initiatives of nine Queensland Government agencies aimed at reducing suicide, and fostering individual and community resilience and capacity. It translates the *Reducing Suicide: Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003 - 2008* framework into measurable actions.

This Action Plan outlines the suicide prevention priorities of the key Queensland Government agencies during the initial phase of the Strategy's implementation. The progress against the Action Plan will be reported to Cabinet during 2004. Future action planning will be developed based on the continuing evaluation of annual achievements.

# Introduction

***Each year in Queensland, over 500 people die from suicide. For each suicide death, there are many more people who have attempted suicide.***

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In Queensland, despite decreases in the incidence of youth suicide over several years, recent data shows particularly high rates of suicide among young and older adults, males and those living in particular geographical regions. Furthermore, the suicide rate for Indigenous Queenslanders is around double that of the wider population and rates for other at-risk groups have increased in recent years. We are determined to reduce the tragically high rates of suicide in Queensland.

*Reducing Suicide: The Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003–2008* aims to reduce the rate of suicide and suicide attempts in Queensland through a whole-of-Government approach to suicide prevention. This Strategy builds on the achievements of the Queensland Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy and broadens the focus to the whole of the population. The Strategy recognises the multitude of factors that make people of all ages vulnerable and directs this knowledge into effective prevention measures.

The Queensland Government provides a direct allocation of \$2 million per year for suicide prevention initiatives. This Strategy will be implemented within this allocation over the next 12 months through a whole-of-Government Action Plan. This Action Plan has been derived from nine comprehensive Action Plans. Whilst specific suicide prevention activities will be put in place by this Strategy, suicide prevention policy and program development cannot be seen in isolation.

A significant number of overarching State Government initiatives also contribute to suicide prevention. These initiatives encompass activities which also target the social determinants of health, promote well-being and respond to people who are at-risk of suicide and suicidal behaviour. Such initiatives include *Smart State: Health 2020*, *the Ten-Year Mental Health Strategy for Queensland (1996)*, *Beyond a Quick Fix – The Queensland Drug Strategic Framework (1999)*, *the Strategic Policy Framework for Children’s and Young People’s Health 2002-2007 (2002)*, *the Queensland Government Putting Families First Policy (2000)*, *Queensland Families: Future Directions (2002)*, *Meeting Challenges, Making Choices (2002)*, *the Safe and Strong Families – draft proposal for a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence agreement*, and *the Education Queensland 2010 Strategy (1999)*.

The *Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003-2008* links with these and other relevant existing policies and program initiatives, and is consistent with the Commonwealth Strategy *Living is For Everyone: A framework for prevention of suicide and self-harm in Australia*. The Strategy sets a common direction for Departments to address suicide and suicide attempts and aims to facilitate greater alignment and coordination between State and Commonwealth Government suicide prevention

activities. It also aims to further develop initiatives with the non-Government sector and contributes to State Government priorities by putting in place activities to support *Safe and more Supportive Communities and Community Engagement and a Better Quality of Life*. In particular, this Strategy demonstrates commitment by relevant Departments to work together, share resources and undertake evaluation of initiatives which aim to:

- Increase communities' capacity to promote and maintain well-being;
- Increase communities' knowledge and awareness of suicide and responses to suicide and suicide risk;
- Increase knowledge and skills of services to intervene early and respond effectively to suicide and suicidal behaviour;
- Enhance the effectiveness of treatment and support services;
- Enhance the coordination of the system of care across sectors;
- Ensure that service responses are culturally sensitive and appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- Improve evidence-based policy, program and service development.

The continuation of the four project officer positions funded under the Queensland Government Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy is important for the support of the realigned infrastructure and implementation of cross-agency activities. These positions will remain within the current host Departments (Office of Youth Affairs, Employment and Training; Health; Education; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy) and work across relevant agencies to facilitate Statewide implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.

The following activities include the introduction of new suicide prevention

initiatives and the strengthening of existing services to be implemented over the next 12 months. These activities aim to address the seven Outcome Areas identified by the *Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003-2008* and contribute to the Queensland Government priorities.

## ***Whole-of-Government approach for Queensland***

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Whilst the *Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003-2008* provides the framework for action, and structural and governance arrangements necessary for implementation, the *Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003-2008 Action Plan* indicates specific activities to effect Strategy implementation over the next 12 months. The following section of this attachment provides a summary of new initiatives under the Strategy. This is followed by a comprehensive overview which further details these new initiatives and other activities which aim to strengthen existing services for suicide prevention.

It should be noted that a large number of activities, nominated by Departments as contributing to suicide prevention, are part of core services or are components of other projects and are funded by the relevant Department. However, specific activities such as the *Early Intervention Officer Program*, *Indigenous Youth Suicide Prevention Program*, *Cape York Youth Initiatives Program* and project officer support for the implementation of the Strategy will be funded within the existing \$2 million per annum recurrent budget for suicide prevention (see Appendix A).

# Summary of new initiatives

## *Queensland Health will*

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- implement the \$1,400,000 Early Intervention Officer Program to work with local communities and services to improve the capacity of services to respond to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, drug and alcohol problems and stressful life events and circumstances. In particular, the 19 Early Intervention Officers will work with Emergency Departments, General Practitioners, School-Based Youth Health Nurses, School-Based Guidance Officers, Youth Services, Police and Emergency Services and rural networks to promote, identify and assist with the development of strategies that enhance early intervention initiatives to respond to high-risk individuals displaying early warning signs and symptoms of mental health problems and suicidal behaviour;
- develop District Suicide Prevention Action Plans that reflect regional and local area priorities for suicide prevention;
- improve mental health promotion through implementation of an integrated set of strategies to enhance public health service ability to promote mental health at the population level through a partnership between mental health and public health;
- undertake selective prevention initiatives with known high-risk groups;
- improve the mental health of children, families and young people, build more cohesive and inclusive communities and implement strategies to reduce stigma and discrimination affecting specific high-risk population groups;
- develop strategies that respond to the mental health and well-being needs of people in rural and remote communities;
- work with relevant sectors to provide communities, agencies and service providers with appropriate education, training and support in regard to suicide prevention, detection and management;
- coordinate the implementation of suicide prevention training programs such as the Coordinated Training Program in Suicide Prevention Planning and the Living Works ASIST Program;
- put in place pathways to care for people at-risk of suicide by partnering with other Government Departments, non-Government organisations and community groups so that care across agencies and into the community is consistent with best practice;
- improve early detection, identification, assessment, early intervention, management and discharge planning for people with suicide risk and behaviour, in particular priority groups such as young people, Indigenous people, people in custody, older people, people of non-English speaking backgrounds, people with a mental illness and gay, lesbian and transgender people through implementation of a comprehensive and whole-of-health suicide risk management practice guideline; and

- improve follow-up of people discharged from mental health inpatient services, especially those with a history of previous suicidal behaviour by putting in place guidelines and protocols.

### ***Department of Families will***

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- implement the Prevention and Early Intervention Trials in 2002-2003 to respond to the most vulnerable people who are at-risk of suicide;
- implement trials of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Support Centres to provide a range of supports for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families; and
- employ Indigenous Program Support Officers in youth detention centres and conduct cultural programs for Indigenous young people run by Indigenous elders to support young people, reduce the risk of harm to young people and assist their reintegration into family and community.

### ***Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will***

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- convene an Indigenous Reference Group as part of the governance structure of Reducing Suicide: The Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003–2008 to enable views of Indigenous people to be considered throughout the implementation of the strategy;
- work with Queensland Health to implement and monitor culturally appropriate guidelines and protocols for the early detection, intervention and follow-up of Indigenous people identified at-risk of suicide and self-harm;
- develop regionally based family violence action plans to address individual and community risk factors associated with suicide; and
- fund the development of infrastructure in Townsville, Mt Isa and Cairns to provide safer places for Indigenous homeless people and improve their health outcomes.

### ***Department of Primary Industries will***

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- provide training and support for Farm Financial Counsellors in suicide awareness and identification of suicide risk and establish links with other service providers to improve responses to those at high-risk of suicide and self-harming behaviour as part of its Farm Financial Counselling Service for farm families in financial difficulty;
- work with **Queensland Health** and the Department of Families to provide appropriate support for officers from the Department of Primary Industries who engage with and support farm families affected by drought and other adverse social events; and
- train regional staff to respond to crisis calls from farm families in financial difficulties.

### ***The Queensland Police Service will***

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- work with Queensland Health to develop formal protocols (Memorandum of Understanding) in each police region to promote a coordinated system of care, the delivery of effective and efficient services to assist in meeting the needs of people with mental illness, and assist in the prevention or safe resolution of mental health crisis situations.

### ***Department of Corrective Services will***

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- establish a number of mental health and mental illness prevention programs in partnership with other Departments which address specific issues of priority groups;
- incorporate training programs such as the Entry Level Training Program and Certificate III in Correctional Practice into its workforce development programs;
- incorporate suicide minimisation design principles into the design of corrective services facilities; and
- develop an operational procedure to

develop and disseminate evidence-based information to inform approaches and practices which enhance protective factors against social conditions and reduces risk factors associated with suicide and self-harm of offenders.

Development Strategy;

- produce a publication that profiles positive images of young people;
- improve information and referral pathways for at-risk participants in employment, training and TAFE programs.

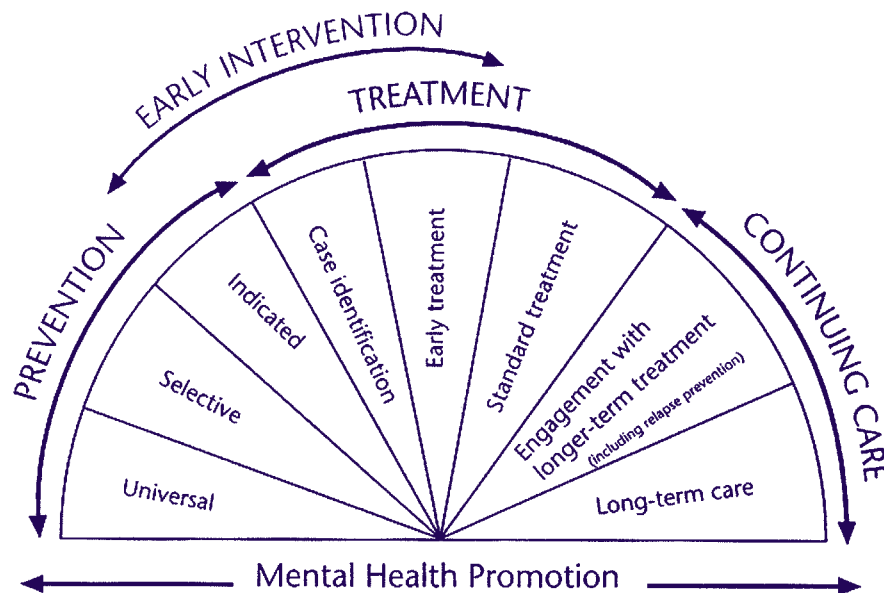
### ***Department of Employment and Training will***

- provide a suite of accessible employment and training programs which aim to reduce the vulnerability to suicide and self-harm of marginalised groups through improving employment and training outcomes and increasing opportunities for participation in community life;
- implement key initiatives including the Education and Training Reforms for the Future White Paper, the Queensland Youth Charter, Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People and the Cape York Youth

### ***All relevant Departments will***

- contribute to the work of suicide prevention researchers, academics and expert advisors by providing information for the development of good practice approaches for suicide prevention, the development of appropriate professional development and training of staff and support of cross agency work to improve data collection to identify areas of high need in Queensland.

### ***Spectrum Of Interventions For Mental Health Promotion (Commonwealth, 2000)***



Source: adapted from Mrazek and Haggerty (1994)

# Addressing suicide through safe and more supportive communities

## *Increasing communities' capacity to promote and maintain well-being by:*

- developing approaches which promote and maintain social, emotional, cultural and spiritual well-being at the individual, family, community and organisational levels;
- facilitating local level community participation and ownership in planning for sustainable well-being; and
- building health public policy to facilitate responsive communities and strong family units.

**Key State Government activities to achieve this outcome include:**

## *New suicide prevention initiatives*

*District Suicide Prevention Action Plans* that reflect regional and local priorities will be developed by **Queensland Health** through engagement with key community and service representatives across the State.

**Queensland Health** will improve mental health promotion through implementation of an integrated set of strategies to enhance public health service ability to promote mental health at the population level through a partnership between mental health and public health. Efforts will also be directed at facilitating selected strategies with known high-risk groups in local communities. *Health Promotion – Mental Health* workers and child and youth health personnel across Queensland will work with key stakeholders to target family functioning, school environments and communities to enhance the mental health of children, families and young people and build more cohesive and inclusive communities. **Queensland Health** will also work with Health Promotion Queensland, researchers and other key stakeholders on projects which aim to build the resilience of school-age children in selected rural and metropolitan schools and modify evidence-based anxiety and depression programs for children from Indigenous and non-English speaking backgrounds.

The **Department of Families** will implement the *Prevention and Early Intervention Trials* in 2002-2003 which will test more innovative and targeted responses which seek to divert families from the statutory child protection system. These trials will target the most vulnerable people who are at-risk of suicide and will identify and respond to risk factors, reduce the likelihood of individuals and families falling into crisis, and strengthen people's abilities to cope and protect themselves within their family or informal support networks. The **Department of Families** will also implement trials of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Support Centres to provide a range of supports for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The **Department of Primary Industries** will work with **Queensland Health** and the Department of Families to make available appropriate support for

officers from the **Department of Primary Industries** who engage with and support farm families affected by drought and other adverse social events.

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### ***Strengthening services***

**Education Queensland** will work with Queensland Health, the Department of Families, and the Queensland Police Service to deliver the School-Based Youth Health Nurse Program, the Youth Support Coordinator Program and School-Based Policing Program to build resilience, and enhance protective factors and well-being within school cultures.

Under the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy leadership of the implementation of Meeting Challenges, Making Choices, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement, and the Safe and Strong Families – draft proposal for a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence agreement, community well-being and the provision of safe environments for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be improved. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will also fund the development of infrastructure in Townsville, Mt Isa and Cairns to provide safe places for Indigenous homeless people that will contribute to an improvement in their health outcomes.

The **Department of Corrective Services** will work with other key agencies to target risk and protective factors for people in custody such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Worker Scheme, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Support Program and the Homelessness Strategy. In particular, the Centrelink Protocol as part of the Memorandum of Understanding with Centrelink aims to reduce prisoner debt accrual and provide prompt payment reviews for prisoner dependents and facilitate crisis payment upon release.

The **Department of Employment and Training** will provide targeted employment assistance programs to support the connection of marginalised groups to employment

opportunities and community life and therefore reduce the vulnerability of these groups to suicide. Such programs include the Community Jobs Program, Community Employment Assistance Program, the Worker Assistance Program and the Public Sector Employment Program. The Department of Employment and Training and Education Queensland will implement the Education and Training Reforms for the Future White Paper to improve education, training and employment pathways that will strengthen the capacity of young Queenslanders to achieve better life outcomes. The Department of Employment and Training will also improve information and referral pathways for at-risk participants in employment, training and TAFE programs.

The Cultural Advisory Unit, Crime Prevention Unit, Police Liaison Officers and the Lesbian, Gay and Transgender Network within the **Queensland Police Service** will be working in partnership with key Government and community agencies to put in place programs to address factors that are often related to suicide including drug and alcohol or social problems. Such activities include the School-Based Policing Program and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Liaison Program which focus on reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors for those groups at high-risk of suicide.

The **Department of Emergency Services** will provide suicide prevention education and support for the community through programs such as First Responder, Drug Overdose Visitation, Fight Fire Fascination, Elder Abuse, Homesafe and Farmsafe.

***Increasing communities' knowledge and awareness of suicide and responses to suicide and suicide risk by:***

- engaging with relevant agencies and individuals working with priority groups to develop approaches to promote mental health and well-being and prevent mental illness;
- increasing skill and knowledge in mental health literacy; and
- developing approaches to reduce stigma and discrimination so to support marginalised and high-risk groups within the community.

**Key State Government activities to achieve this outcome include:**

***New suicide prevention initiatives***

**Queensland Health** will work with key community and Government stakeholders to develop strategies that respond to the mental health and well-being needs of people in rural and remote communities. Initial focus will be given to mental health promotion initiatives aimed at increasing the mental health literacy of rural communities. **Queensland Health** will further contribute to increasing the mental health literacy within Queensland by facilitating the availability of appropriate education and training options for key service providers, agencies and community groups. Health and community personnel throughout Queensland will be trained in programs including the *Coordinated Training Program in Suicide Prevention Planning* and the *Living Works ASIST Program* so they can be conducted across the State. Queensland Health will also work with communities to implement strategies to reduce stigma and discrimination affecting specific high-risk population groups. **Queensland Health**, in partnership with the Centre for Primary Health Care, University of Queensland, will develop resources to increase the capacity of services and the communities to support people who experience loss and grief.

The **Department of Corrective Services** will establish a number of mental health and mental illness prevention programs in partnership with other Departments which address specific issues of priority groups (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders, female offenders, and offenders with disabilities). The **Department of Corrective Services** will also incorporate training programs such as the *Entry Level Training Program* and *Certificate III in Correctional Practice* into its workforce development programs for the promotion of well-being and prevention of mental illness. Suicide minimisation design principles will also be incorporated into the design of corrective services facilities.

***Strengthening services***

**Education Queensland** will implement the P-10 Health and Physical Education Program to promote the health of individuals and communities to develop resilient and healthy young people and will put in place locally relevant programs that recognise diversity, address school racism, bullying and harassment and support marginalised and high-risk groups within the community which may protect against suicide.

**Education Queensland and Queensland Health** will continue to implement Mind Matters Program within secondary schools across the State. This program is facilitated by Child & Youth Health, Public Health and School-Based Youth Health Nurses and targets important individual and environmental protective factors against suicide. Specific examples include building supportive school environments, promoting individual well-being and connectedness, improving the mental health literacy of staff and students, and equipping students with essential coping and life skills.

The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy** will work with key stakeholders to put in place mechanisms to improve the safe custody of Indigenous people in police watch-houses, correctional centres and youth detention centres. The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy** will

also work with stakeholders to monitor the diversionary centres (funded under the Diversion from Custody Program) so that procedures operate within workplace, health and safety guidelines.

The **Department of Employment and Training** will improve information and referral pathways within employment, training and TAFE programs to support the effectiveness of suicide prevention and postvention activities.

The **Department of Families** will work with relevant Departments and the community to promote the Suicide Prevention Awareness Raising Kit developed by the Seniors' Interests Unit which raises awareness of mental health and illness and suicide prevention in older men.

The **Queensland Police Service** will utilise the Problem Oriented Partnership Policing to identify priority groups for suicide risk in each region and develop strategies to address the needs of these groups. The Queensland Police Service will increase training for police personnel in mental health literacy and establish links with services to promote a coordinated system of care for people in identified priority groups.

### ***Increasing knowledge and skills of services to intervene early and respond effectively to suicide and suicidal behaviour by:***

- putting in place education and training for mental health service and primary care providers, police and emergency service personnel and the community sector in the early identification of suicidal and self-harming behaviour, detection of the early signs of mental illness and to deliver appropriate responses;
- improving referral systems and care pathways across agencies and into the community; and
- improving service support for people experiencing adverse life events.

**Key State Government activities to achieve this outcome include:**

## **New suicide prevention initiatives**

**Queensland Health** will implement the Early Intervention Officer Program to undertake local level activities to address suicide prevention across the whole of life span, rather than focus solely on youth suicide. The Early Intervention Officer positions will work closely with Emergency Departments, General Practitioners, School-Based Youth Health Nurse Program, School-Based Guidance Officers, Youth Services, Police and Emergency Services, rural networks and other key services and groups to promote, identify and assist with the development of strategies that enhance early intervention initiatives including early detection and identification, and ensuring appropriate treatment for high-risk individuals displaying early warning signs and symptoms.

The *Early Intervention Officer Program* will improve the geographical coverage of suicide prevention activity across Queensland by better allocating these positions within areas of Queensland through the realignment of other existing core infrastructure, such as Life Promotion Officers and the School-Based Youth Health Nurses. **Queensland Health** will work with key primary care providers and key Departments to facilitate appropriate education and training options for key service providers, agencies and community groups in suicide risk detection and management.

**Queensland Health** will also partner with other Government Departments, non-Government organisations and community groups to put in place referral pathways to care for people at-risk of suicide risk so that care across agencies and into the community is consistent with best practice. Mechanisms that improve the ongoing collaborative care management for key groups of people experiencing mental health problems will be developed with agencies including schools, youth services, prisons, police, emergency services, aged care settings and rural service networks. Projects aimed at improving mental health support for rural and remote areas will explore on-line service provision and supervision options. Early intervention initiatives including the *Family CARE Home Visiting Program*, the *Parenting Support*

*Initiative and the Young Parents' Support Program* aim to improve key risk factors through environmental and family interventions early in the development of children. Early intervention for older people's mental health and suicide risk will be facilitated through the joint venture coordinated by the Seniors' Interest Branch, **Department of Families**, targeting problems associated with social isolation.

The **Department of Primary Industries** will provide training and support for Farm Financial Counsellors in suicide awareness and identification of suicide risk; and establish links with other service providers to improve responses to those at high-risk of suicide and self-harming behaviour as part of its Farm Financial Counselling Service for farm families in financial difficulty. The **Department of Primary Industries** will also train regional staff to respond to crisis calls from farm families in financial difficulties.

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### ***Strengthening services***

**Education Queensland** and **Queensland Health** will work together to support school staff in the early identification of risk and the facilitation of appropriate responses to suicidal and self-harming behaviour and mental health problems. Specialist alcohol and drug workers will implement the Drug Interventions in School Communities model as a way of responding within a whole-of school approach to school age drug related presentations and referrals. The Memorandum of Understanding between **Queensland Health** and **Department of Families** will provide access to health services for young people in detention centres. The evaluation of the Inala and Logan Youth Early Intervention projects will provide important learning's regarding best practice intersectoral approaches to the early detection and intervention for young people experiencing mental health problems and adverse life events.

The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy** will work with Queensland Health and other stakeholders so that the training programs about suicide prevention, such as the Coordinated Training Program, are

culturally sensitive and are implemented in Indigenous communities across the State.

The **Department of Corrective Services** will be providing training in the early identification of self-harming behaviour. In partnership with Government, non-Government and community sector organisations, the **Department of Corrective Services** will incorporate operational processes that provide appropriate interventions and referral mechanisms and pathways to care across agencies and into the community.

The **Department of Families** will continue to operationalise the suicide alert process as part of the FamYJ system to alert staff of those children and young people subject to statutory child protection/youth justice intervention, who are considered to be at-risk of suicide.

The **Department of Employment and Training** will promote suicide prevention training opportunities to the community youth sector, relevant staff, including TAFE Institute staff, and will improve information and referral pathways for the participants in employment, training and TAFE programs. The **Department of Employment and Training** will also work with **Queensland Health** and the community youth sector to improve referral pathways for young people between Government services, in particular Government health services, and the community youth sector.

The **Department of Emergency Services** will provide education and training for Paramedics and Communications Officers to improve recognition of suicidal and self-harming behaviours and respond with the most appropriate interventions.

# Addressing suicide through community engagement and a better quality of life

Enhancing the effectiveness of treatment and support services for people who are at high-risk of suicide and suicidal behaviour by:

- increasing access, relevance and appropriateness of health and specialist support services;
- ensuring that people are able to access timely and evidence-based treatment;
- improving the quality of services by enhancing education and training in the identification, diagnosis and treatment of suicidal behaviours and associated mental health problems;
- improving options for continuing treatment for people identified at-risk; and
- improving responses to people in crisis with suicidal behaviour.

**Key State Government activities to achieve this outcome include:**

## ***New suicide prevention initiatives***

**Queensland Health** will improve early detection, identification, assessment, early intervention, management and discharge planning for people with suicide risk and behaviour, in particular priority groups such as young people, Indigenous people, people in custody, older people, people of non-English speaking backgrounds, people with a mental illness and gay, lesbian and transgender people through implementation of a comprehensive and whole-of-health suicide risk management practice guideline. Initiatives to contribute to improved detection, assessment and management of suicide risk include projects such as; Emergency Mental Health, Consultation and Liaison Psychiatry, and Alternatives to Admission for people with acute mental health needs. Training and development initiatives such as the Mental Health Workforce Project, the Professional Development Program and Managing Cultural Diversity in Mental Health Program will contribute to improved mental health outcomes for known high-risk groups. Finalisation of the Strategic Directions for Mental Health Care for Older People will foster an integrated approach to service delivery and the development of key partnerships with groups and organisations across all settings. Research collaborations with leading researchers will enhance knowledge and skills regarding effective therapeutic interventions with people at-risk.

## ***Strengthening services***

**Education Queensland** will implement Crisis Management Plans in all Queensland public schools to support individuals, families and school communities bereaved by suicide.

The **Departments of Education, Health and Police** will provide services in Queensland State schools such as Guidance Offices, School Chaplains, Behaviour Management Teachers, School-Based Nurses and Police Officers, and Youth Support Coordinators to improve access to specialist support.

The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy** and **Queensland Health** will work to increase accessibility, relevance and cultural appropriateness of mainstream services for Indigenous people.

The **Department of Corrective Services** will implement comprehensive operational procedures for the identification, assessment, early intervention, management and discharge for people in custody with suicide risk and behaviour, and provide treatment and support services for at-risk offenders and people in custody. The Department of Corrective Services will also work with key Departments and stakeholders for Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse cultures to implement appropriate crisis responses. The Department will also implement procedures which link with specialist support services such as Crisis Support Units.

The Department of Families will enhance the training of Family Service Officers so that skills and knowledge in the areas of prevention and early intervention for suicide and self-harm are incorporated into their areas of work.

### ***Enhancing the coordination of the system of care across sectors by:***

- ensuring consumer and carer engagement in accessing a coordinated system of care through education;
- improving the follow-up of people at-risk of suicide and suicidal behaviour, particularly those at high-risk following discharge from hospital or mental health facility;
- working with the non-Government sector to provide coordinated and quality care for those at-risk of suicide;
- enhancing support systems to meet the needs of people bereaved by suicide; and
- improving the transfer of information between systems to assist with continuity of care.

**Key State Government activities to achieve this outcome include:**

### ***New suicide prevention initiatives***

**Queensland Health** will improve follow-up for people discharged from mental health inpatient services, especially people with a history of previous suicidal behaviour, by putting in place guidelines and protocols with key agencies and services. These guidelines will also assist with the active engagement of consumers and carers.

The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy** and **Queensland Health** will implement and monitor best practice guidelines and protocols for the early detection, intervention and follow-up of Indigenous people identified at-risk of suicide and self-harm.

The **Department of Employment and Training** will work with **Queensland Health** to develop Statewide information and referral strategies for suicide prevention and postvention that are focused on young people and identified priority groups including refugees and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people.

### ***Strengthening services***

**Education Queensland** personnel will liaise with Queensland Health to assist the follow-up of students at-risk of suicide and suicidal behaviour.

The **Department of Corrective Services** will improve the level of information on access to services for offenders with a history of suicidal behaviour through induction processes and pre-release processes. Continuity of care, postvention guidelines and initiatives to address grief and loss issues will also be implemented across the Department in operational procedures.

The **Department of Families** will improve the coordination of service responses to children and young people who are both child protection and youth justice clients of the Department. The **Department of Families** will also implement procedures across all regions to respond to families bereaved by suicide.

### ***Ensuring that service responses are culturally sensitive and appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by:***

- working with communities to improve primary health and mental health services for Indigenous people and promoting mental health to prevent mental illness;
- improving access for Indigenous people to specialist mental health services;
- putting in place education and training for Indigenous communities to recognise and respond to suicide risk at the individual and community level; and
- developing partnership approaches with communities to strengthen local responses to address drug and alcohol use, interpersonal conflict, violence and loss and grief.

**Key State Government activities to achieve this outcome include:**

### ***New suicide prevention initiatives***

The **Department of Families** will employ Indigenous Program Support Officers in youth detention centres and conduct cultural programs for Indigenous young people run by Indigenous elders to support young people, reduce the risk of harm to young people and assist their reintegration into family and community.

The **Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy** will convene an Indigenous Reference Group as part of the governance structure of Reducing Suicide: The Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003–2008 to enable views of Indigenous people to be considered throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

### ***Strengthening services***

The Department of Families will continue the \$210,000 Brisbane-based Indigenous Youth Suicide Prevention Program (Brisbane) and the \$170,000 Cape York Youth Initiatives Program which provide early intervention and

appropriate responses to children and young people who may be at-risk of suicide or attempting suicide.

**Queensland Health** will establish Regional and Local Partnership Forums as a mechanism to engage communities and community organisations in service planning. Implementation of Queensland Health Cultural Awareness Program and Reconciliation Learning Circles will continue to improve the provision of culturally sensitive health services and strategies. Access of Indigenous people to specialist mental health services will be enhanced by the employment of Indigenous health and mental health workers.

Education Queensland in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will implement Partners for Success: Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People which is a specific initiative to improve education and employment outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This initiative aims to improve curriculum programs in partnership with local school communities to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous learners and resilience which contribute protective factors for suicide.

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will work with relevant Departments and Indigenous communities to strengthen community justice groups to identify clients who may be at-risk of suicide or self-harming behaviour, develop regional family violence action plans that address individual and community risk factors associated with suicide and continue activities which aim to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous people in custody and detention.

The Department of Employment and Training will, in liaison with the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, lead the implementation of the Cape York Youth Development Strategy. The Strategy provides a framework for engagement between the Queensland Government and Cape York communities for enhancing access to youth development opportunities by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young

people. The Strategy will enhance the capacity of young people to make positive life choices and to shape the future of their communities.

The Department of Corrective Services will work with Indigenous communities, service providers and community organisations to provide Aboriginal culture-based programs for offenders within corrective services facilities. The Department will also put in place operational procedures which provide culturally appropriate mechanisms for Indigenous offenders at-risk of, or engaging in, suicidal behaviour.

### ***Improving evidence-based policy, program and service development by:***

- working with the commonwealth government and local governments to better align and coordinate suicide prevention activities and initiatives at the policy development and implementation levels;
- developing and implementing suicide prevention policies, programs and services based on evaluation and evidence;
- building in evaluation and reporting as core components of suicide prevention programs;
- working with key researchers, academics and experts in the field of suicide prevention to enhance planning and program development;
- sharing best practice approaches with relevant sectors and provide appropriate workforce training to put current evidence into practice at all levels of suicide prevention activity; and
- supporting ongoing research into suicide prevention by establishing data collection and surveillance mechanisms to inform and refine suicide prevention interventions.

**Key State Government activities to achieve this outcome include:**

### ***New suicide prevention initiatives***

All relevant Departments will contribute work with suicide prevention researchers, academics and expert advisors to provide information for the development of good practice approaches for suicide prevention, develop appropriate professional development and training of staff, support cross-agency work to improve data collection and identify areas of high need in Queensland.

The Department of Corrective Services will develop an operational procedure to develop and disseminate evidence-based information to inform approaches and practices which enhance protective factors against social conditions and reduce risk factors associated with suicide and self-harm of offenders. The Department of Corrective Services will also provide best practice information to professional staff on the Departments Intranet website and make available the Level III Certificate in Correctional Practice to all staff. The Department of Corrective Services will also maintain suicide and suicidal behaviour data collection procedures.

### ***Strengthening services***

Queensland Health will work with the Commonwealth to improve the coordination of suicide prevention initiatives. Queensland Health will also consult and liaise with the Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention and other experts to review Queensland suicide data and statistics to inform and refine suicide prevention interventions based on need.

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy will provide access for Department staff to professional development and training with respect to suicide prevention and facilitate staff awareness of critical incident reporting mechanisms and the need for review of these mechanisms for Indigenous suicides and deaths in custody.

The Department of Employment and Training will work with Queensland Health on strategies to improve data collection and evaluation and measurement of protective factors related to community capacity building

and well-being. The Department of Employment and Training will also provide relevant information and data to assist research into the role of working conditions, employment and training as protective factors in suicide prevention.

## ***Evaluation***

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The Queensland Government is committed to policy that works. To that end, the initiatives as outlined above will be subject to monitoring and evaluation so that over time government Departments understand and can further develop “what works”. Major new initiatives within the Strategy will be subject to periodic review to ensure that they deliver the desired outcomes.

## Appendix A

It should be noted that a large number of activities, nominated by Departments as contributing to suicide prevention, are part of core services or are components of other projects and are funded by the relevant Department. However, specific activities such as the Early Intervention Officer Program, Indigenous Youth Suicide Prevention Program, Cape York Youth Initiatives Program and project officer support for the implementation of the Strategy will be funded within the existing recurrent \$2 million budget for suicide prevention.

The following table is an indicative budget for the implementation of the Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003-2008 in 2003. The figure of \$2.2 million includes carry-overs which reflect less than anticipated levels of activity in the previous year due to the development of the new Strategy. It should be noted that the final allocation for initiatives will be determined by the Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Steering Committee.

### *Indicative funding allocation for 2003*

<b>Initiatives under the Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003-2008</b>	<b>Budget for 2003</b>
Trial Early Intervention Officer Program	\$1.400 million
Project Officers (QH, OYA, DATSIP, EQ)	\$0.320 million
2 Indigenous Projects (DOF)	\$0.380 million
Training Packages	\$0.100 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2.200 million</b>



