



GREAT SOUTH COAST
**Suicide Prevention
Place Based Trial**



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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GPs TO BUILD CAPACITY IN SUICIDE PREVENTION IN VICTORIA'S GREAT SOUTH COAST

A landmark project has investigated the barriers encountered by GPs in the Great South Coast when working with people at risk of suicide. Its findings have highlighted the need for further support for GPs in their work and systemic reform.

The research project was conducted by Larter as part of the **Great South Coast Suicide Prevention Place Based Trial** (GSCSPPT), a joint commitment between the Western Victoria Primary Health Network (PHN) and the Australian Government recognising the benefits of collaborative, community-based approaches to suicide prevention.

The research project investigated the factors impacting GPs from supporting people at risk of suicide and identified opportunities to build a strengthened response to suicide in general practice.

Its recommendations will be embedded into the workforce development strategy across the region to help build the capacity of General Practice in suicide prevention. The findings will also be considered in the re-design of service models to help streamline access to ongoing care for people at risk of suicide, and to reinforce collaborative shared care with GPs for those most at risk.

Rowena Clift, Chief Executive Officer at Western Victoria Primary Health Network said, "The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports that 2.73 million Australians received a Medicare-funded mental health service in 2019-20. This highlights the critical role of GPs when juxtaposed with Australian research suggesting that GP capacity building could be associated with the largest predicted reductions in suicide. Therefore, this project looked at ways to support a strengthened response to suicide risk in general practice.

"The findings recommend enhancing GP skills in supporting patient distress, providing better supports for family and carers as well as providing safe, gender and culturally affirming service for all people", said Clift.

Specific opportunities identified for building capacity in general practice include upskilling to recognise suicide risk in patients, developing the capacity to respond earlier to distress, and developing treatment skills to working with suicidality.

Dr Denbigh Burrows - GP Registrar - Robinson St Medical Centre, Camperdown says: "The insights captured in this research are desperately needed, given the major role GPs play in supporting people through mental health challenges, particularly suicide. I look forward to utilising the project recommendations to better support suicide prevention in our own communities".

Pictures Of Dr Burrows: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qhXWboZ8IPJ2FB8pSSdpwsv-493FmTSr>



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WHERE GPs CAN FIND SUPPORT

- GPs have access to the GPMHSC resource - a mental health first aid resource on suicide prevention to support general practitioners (GPs) in their day-to-day practice, to recognise and respond to patients whose mental health issues might be risk factors for suicide.
<https://gpmhsc.org.au/guidelinessection/index/dba12e0b-6816-40bc-a315-99a327fa3b0e/after-suicide>
 - Living Works START first aid training is available for GPS and general practice staff in a 'whole of organisation' approach. This training is free to those living in the Great South Coast.
<https://bit.ly/STARTtraining>
- ENDS -

SUPPLIED PHOTOGRAPHY

Dr Denbigh Burrows at Robinson St Medical Centre, Camperdown - [click to download](#)

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

Rowena Clift, Chief Executive Officer at Western Victoria Primary Health Network

Cr Anita Rank, Chair - Great South Coast Suicide Prevention Place Based Trail Leadership Group and Mayor - Glenelg Shire Council

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FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE GREAT SOUTH COAST SUICIDE PREVENTION PLACE BASED TRIAL:

The Great South Coast Suicide Prevention Place Based Trial is an initiative aimed at delivering activities to reduce the suicide rate in the shires of Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne and Southern Grampians and the City of Warrnambool.

Coordinated by Western Victoria Primary Health Network (WVPHN) in partnership with the Federal Government and a range of health care service providers, the trial offers a coordinated approach to reducing the suicide rate in the Great South Coast with a range of community network support activities.

WVPHN Chief Executive Officer Rowena Clift said: "Many families across the Great South Coast are struggling to understand why their loved ones have taken their own lives. From teenagers to adults and both male and female; the suicide rate for Great South Coast is unacceptably high. We want to ensure that every single person who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide or has attempted suicide has support networks available to help them when and where they need it. These activities will help us achieve this by filling identified service gaps and giving the community the support it requires."

Information on all of the individual activities in the trial can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3xCi9LL>