



## **Midwest Suicide Prevention Trial Stakeholder Update #1**

### **Why a Suicide Prevention Trial in the Midwest?**

The Australian Government selected the Midwest as one of 12 national Suicide Prevention Trial Sites due to an identified high suicide rate in the region, that has continued over an extended period.

The objective of the Suicide Prevention Trial Sites is to find the most effective approaches to suicide prevention for at-risk populations and share this knowledge across Australia.

### **Who is the Trial focusing on?**

The Aboriginal community and men aged 25 to 54, specifically farmers, fishers and fly in, fly out (FIFO) workers.

### **Which communities are involved?**

Geraldton, Carnarvon, Gascoyne Junction, Coral Bay, Shark Bay, Meekatharra, Yalgoo, Mt Magnet, Mullewa, Dongara, Morawa, Mingenew, Perenjori, Three Springs, Carnamah and Coorow.

### **How is the Trial being run and by whom?**

The Trial is led by the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) who is working collaboratively with WA Country Health Service (WACHS) along with other local Stakeholders.

The activities are informed by the Alliance Against Depression, the world's best practice approach for the care of people with depression and in the prevention of suicide the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP).

Local activities are guided by the Trial's Steering Committee and the Geraldton Suicide Prevention Action Group, with a strong focus on community level planning.

#### **How much money is being spent and how?**

The Australian Government has allocated \$4 million to the Trial. This funding is for community consultations, training for GPs and other health professionals, local awareness campaigns, workforce development, data collection and an evaluation of the Trial.

#### **How long is the Trial and how will it be evaluated?**

The Trial began in mid-2017 and ends in June 2020. The planning phase was completed in December 2017 and the implementation phase began in January 2018.

The Trial is being evaluated on an ongoing basis by the University of Melbourne, as part of a national evaluation.

#### **Who else is involved?**

Community groups, community health workers, GPs, health professionals, and federal, state and local governments, all of whom are essential to tackling depression and suicide in the region.

Other groups can become involved by contacting the Trial coordinator (see below).

#### **What has happened so far?**

WAPHA has consulted and collaborated with community, government, health, social services and education sectors to inform and develop the plan for the Trial. Activities completed include:

- Trained GPs and other primary healthcare providers in suicide prevention.
- Educated GPs on the screening, identification and treatment of depression.
- Contracted Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation and Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service to carry out yarning circles in Aboriginal communities in the Gascoyne and Midwest/Murchison to inform and assist further work.
- Supported grassroots promotion of suicide prevention.

- Ran campaigns to raise awareness of depression and suicide and encourage help-seeking behaviour.
- Organised community sessions with people with lived experience talking about their journey in Carnamah and Geraldton.
- Ran Mental Health First Aid training for community members in Geraldton, Mingenew and Carnamah.

WAPHA has signed a memorandum of understanding with the WA Country Health Service to ensure collaboration, coordination and optimisation of results in suicide prevention.

Mates in Construction suicide prevention training has been developed through the Master Builders Association for interested construction employees in Geraldton.

### **What is planned?**

- Community grants to support local suicide prevention activities.
- GP education in counselling and psychotherapy.
- Further campaigns to raise awareness and reduce stigma associated with depression and suicide.
- Mental health first aid training for community members.
- Mindframe training for media and community organisations to encourage sensitive and responsible reporting and portrayal of both suicide and mental illness.
- Community activities to raise awareness of depression and suicide and encourage men to look after their mental health to be held in workplaces, sporting clubs, men's sheds and trade retailers.

### **More information**

To learn more, contact the Midwest Suicide Prevention Trial Coordinator, Jacki Ward on 0438 784 650 or [jacki.ward@wapha.org.au](mailto:jacki.ward@wapha.org.au)