
MEDIA RELEASE
27 August 2020

Lifeline Australia is encouraged by the Victorian Coroner's findings the rate of suicide has not increased due to COVID-19.

John Brogden, Chairman of Australia's largest suicide prevention service, Lifeline Australia, said he is encouraged by data revealed today by the Coroner's Court of Victoria, that found the number of suicides in the state this year is consistent with the same period for 2019.

Mr Brogden said:

"These are important numbers. They show that whilst demand for mental health services have increased massively this year, suicides have not increased.

Today's report shows that while enduring the effects of bushfires and COVID-19, Australian's are taking steps to ensure their mental wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around them.

The work that is being done by the suicide prevention sector is above and beyond anything we've seen in Australia's history. Today's data release by the Victorian State Coroner, Judge John Cain, shows that the additional supports that are being provided by Federal and State Governments and the suicide prevention sector are working to save lives."

Mr Brogden said that Australians are taking action to seek help:

"Lifeline is now receiving close to 90,000 calls a month, that's a call every 30 seconds. With the Victorian lock-down, we experienced a 30% increase in calls originating from Victoria. Australian's are recognising the importance of connecting and talking through the challenges they're facing. Today's data shows the additional supports Lifeline is providing are working to prevent suicide.

"While the data is encouraging news for those who have been working round-the-clock to ensure no Australian has to face their darkest moments alone, I acknowledge that these results offer cold comfort for those whose loved ones are represented by the numbers released to today. Our thoughts are very much with you." Said Mr Brogden.

"Lifeline's vision is for an Australia that is free of suicide and we will continue through COVID-19 and beyond to work tirelessly to keep Australians safe." He continued.

Mr Brogden renewed his earlier calls to the community to continue to reach out to those who may be living alone and to those who may find the physical distancing and self-isolation a struggle.

"We know that connection is key. Please keep finding creative ways to connect with each and if you, or someone you know are feeling overwhelmed, we encourage you to connect with Lifeline in the way you feel most comfortable. Either phone us to speak to a Crisis Supporter on 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days) or chat to us online at www.lifeline.org.au (7pm – midnight, 7 nights)." Mr Brogden said.

Lifeline is Australia's leading suicide prevention service, operating the 13 11 14 telephone line within 40 centres around the nation. The service expects to respond to over one million requests for support this year, creating an average of 120 safety plans to keep a person experiencing suicidal ideation safe every day.

To donate to Lifeline, visit www.lifeline.org.au/donate To arrange an interview, please contact: media@lifeline.org.au or phone: 0408 407 376

NB: Lifeline's 24-hour telephone crisis line 13 11 14 is pronounced 'thirteen eleven fourteen'