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**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**26 September 2018**

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**SUICIDE INCREASE BY 9.1% OVER THE LAST YEAR – GOVERNMENT MUST SET TARGETS FOR SUICIDE REDUCTION**

National suicide data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today showed an 9.1% increase in the number of lives lost to suicide in Australia over the last year.

Lifeline Chairman, John Brogden, today called on the Federal Government to set a national target to achieve 25% suicide reduction over 5 years.

*“Suicide in Australia is increasing at the same time as deaths from most physical illnesses are decreasing.”*

*“We must set a target to focus Governments’ funding and the community on suicide reduction.”*

*“We should say as a nation that we want zero suicides and we are starting with a target to reduce suicide in Australia by 25% in the next 5 years.”*

*“3,128 people died last year from a mostly preventable illness this is an outrage and it is no longer acceptable.”*

*“In 2002, the Scottish Government set a target to reduce suicide by 20% in 10 years. This National commitment achieved a reduction of 17% by 2016. The number of deaths of suicide in Scotland in 2015 was the lowest it has been since 1974.”*

*“Behind every number released today is a person who is cared for and loved, with family and friends left devastated by their loss,”* Mr Brogden said.

*“This increase in Australian lives shattered, must be met with a plan of action. Lifeline Australia calls on the Federal Government to set a National suicide reduction target to offer hope to those experiencing suicidal ideation and their loved ones.”* He continued.

As Australia’s largest suicide prevention crisis line, Lifeline received almost 1 million connections with Australians in crisis over the last year. On average, every day, Lifeline crisis supporters assist 115 Australians to create a safety plan that will help them keep safe for the next 24 hours.

*“Life saving services such as Lifeline are here to help Australians who are doing it tough. We receive a call every 32 seconds, but we need to answer more. We can’t reach every person in need without increased commitment to national plan of action to prevent suicide.”* Said Mr Brogden.

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

Lifeline operates Australia's largest suicide prevention hotline. It has been providing support to Australians in crisis for over 55 years, bringing hope to Australians doing it tough and ultimately saving lives.

**Lifeline provides crisis support at any time via phone: 13 11 14 (24 hours / 7 days a week); by webchat at [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au) (7pm – midnight every day) and is currently trialling a text messaging service on 0477 13 11 14 (5pm – 9pm AEST.)**

To arrange an interview regarding ABS data release, please contact:  
[media@lifeline.org.au](mailto:media@lifeline.org.au) or phone: 0408 407 376

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