



Report on early intervention programs aimed at preventing youth suicide

Suicide accounts for the deaths of one quarter of men aged under 25 and also one in seven young women

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing today released its report on youth suicide emphasising the need for greater support of early intervention measures to reduce rates of youth suicide.

Committee Chair Steve Georganas MP said "Regrettably, suicide still accounts for almost one quarter of all deaths among young men in Australia under the age of 25 years, and almost one in seven deaths among young women. However, evidence to the inquiry suggests that measures taken by successive governments have seen the rate of youth suicide decline since 1997."

"In undertaking this investigation, the Committee was keen to learn more about how reductions in the rate of youth suicide have been achieved, and to identify what else can be done to continue this downward trend."

The Committee's inquiry was informed by roundtable discussions with young people, and with a range of organisations which promote mental health, well-being and resilience among young people. In its report titled '*Before it's too late*', the Committee has made a number of recommendations which broadly cover:

- increasing mental health literacy among young people to help them to better recognise when they need help, and to encourage them to seek that help;
- more training for professional staff that have regular contact with young people to assist them to better recognise early warning signs and make appropriate referrals;
- promotion of collaboration across governments and organisations to improve the availability and access to services for young people who are experiencing difficulties; and
- improvements to data collection, research and evaluation to inform best-practice.

Mr Georganas concluded "The courage shown by the young people who interacted with the Committee, sharing their experiences and discussing a range of complex and sensitive issues, exemplifies a level of resilience and determination that we need to encourage and foster. I hope that the recommendations made in the report will enhance collaboration and improve access to services to combat one of the major causes of death among young Australians."

Copies of the report are now available at the Committee's website at:
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/haa/youthsuicide/report.htm>

For media comment, please contact the Chair of the Committee, Mr Steve Georganas by phone on 08 8376 9000.

For all other enquiries, please contact the Committee Secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa