

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Postvention should be part of the narrative this World Suicide Prevention Day: Jesuit Social Services**

Today, on World Suicide Prevention Day, Jesuit Social Services' Support After Suicide program remembers and honours the lives lost to suicide and acknowledges the immense grief and incredible strength of their loved ones left behind.

"Yesterday's release of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Report is a reminder of the devastating impact of suicide in our community", says Dr Louise Flynn, General Manager of Support After Suicide.

"We were encouraged by the Commission's recognition of the critical importance of long-term postvention services and resources in its recommendations, three years after the importance of postvention was highlighted as part of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System."

With this year's theme, Changing the Narrative, Support After Suicide is calling on Governments to recognise long-term evidence-based postvention support as a critical suicide prevention measure and fund it accordingly.

Established in 2004, Support After Suicide has been supporting Victorians who have lost a loved one to suicide for 20 years. In 2023, the program provided direct support to over 850 people and is one of the few services to provide long-term evidence-based support to those bereaved by suicide.

"A person bereaved by suicide is often relentlessly trying to understand why it happened; how it was that this much-loved person ended their own life. Beyond the tragic loss of the person, researchers have found that bereaved people are 65 per cent more likely to attempt suicide if they are grieving for loved ones who took their own lives."

With Support After Suicide's waiting list growing, now is a critical time to ensure that all states and territories fund evidence-based postvention services with strong connections to local communities.

Support After Suicide supports individuals and families bereaved by suicide through the provision of counselling and facilitated peer support groups; as well as providing communities impacted by suicide with resources and training; and partnering with organisations to develop evidence-based postvention strategies.

While Support After Suicide is currently funded through the Primary Health Networks, funding is precarious and insufficient to meet increasing demands.

"An additional \$1.5m in funding for Support After Suicide would service immediate need and allow for expansion to ensure all Victorians, particularly those in rural and regional Victoria bereaved by suicide have access to the support they need," says Dr Flynn.



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