



Suicide Prevention Australia

2008 - SPA's Recent Achievements and Planned Developments

Consolidating the Organisation

The last 12 months have been characterised by a period of stabilisation and consolidation for Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA). This period also marked the expiration of the 2005-2008 SPA Strategic Plan; recognising that the organisation achieved most of what it set out to do within this framework.

During this period, SPA also received a continued commitment from the Australian Government for core funding. The organisation experienced a record year for project-related fundraising. However, SPA continues to face the challenge of acquiring long-term financial security.

Over the past four years, SPA's staff team has grown from one full-time position to three employees; all of whom are now full-time. These positions include: SPA Executive Officer, SPA Events & Projects Coordinator, and SPA Finance & Administration Coordinator.

[Click here](#) to view the SPA staff team

SPA's staff team is supplemented by a number of external professional services providers. These include an IT consultant; website development consultant; graphic designer; printer; bookkeeper; medical writer; and policy writer. SPA also utilises the professional services of events assistants, interns, and volunteers.

The cost of events and projects carried out by SPA is principally covered by sponsorship.

[Click here](#) to view SPA's sponsors

The main ongoing challenges facing SPA include the cost of rent for office space and locating additional funding sources for growth and long-term sustainability. The cost of rent is only part-covered by the grant received from the Australian Government. The remaining percentage is paid from received donations.

If you are renewing or becoming a new member, you are encouraged to consider making an additional donation to help the vital work of SPA.

Recent Key Achievements

Events

SPA has now built a solid reputation around the production and delivery of events-related projects; fostering collaboration and partnerships between communities, practitioners, research and industry. These events also advance SPA's agenda in building community awareness and advocacy.

The fifth annual LIFE Awards Ceremony (2008), held at The Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, was no exception; acknowledging the vital work being undertaken in the prevention of suicide across Australia. Once again, a record number of nominations were received for the LIFE Awards, with nominees representing every state in Australia.

[Click here](#) to view the LIFE Awards winners

In conjunction with World Suicide Prevention Day in 2008, SPA also hosted a Community Forum at the Brisbane City Hall themed, *Let's Get Talking & Suicide Prevention in the Workplace*. This forum reiterated SPA's commitment to educating and engaging the public in discourse around the issues of suicide and self-harm.

Discussion conducted as part of the Community Forum's *Suicide Prevention in the Workplace* session was recorded and will soon be used to produce a DVD aimed at providing encouragement to businesses who have not yet introduced suicide prevention to their workplaces.

[Click here](#) to view SPA's past projects

SPA, in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention, has commenced planning for the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) Asia Pacific Regional Conference, to be held in Brisbane in 2010.

[Click here](#) to view SPA's current projects

Consultation, Collaboration and Networking

With every event and project, SPA continues to develop new partnerships both across and between sectors, organisations, and individuals. We invite stakeholders and members to participate in our specially-formed task-related working groups, such as those devised for World Suicide Prevention Day and to assist in the development of SPA Position Statements.

SPA Board Members and SPA State Delegates represent the organisation on committees and by attending functions throughout the sector. Particular recent highlights have included the appointment of Dr Michael Dudley, SPA Chairperson, and Professor Diego De Leo, SPA Board Member, to the new Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council to the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon. Nicola Roxon MP.

In 2008, SPA representatives made presentations at a number of key external events. These included:

- *Standardised Reporting of Suicide*: Chief State Coroners' Forum (Sydney, May 2008)
- Launch of the *Working with Warriors* DVD (Perth, May 2008)
- Suicide Prevention Australia – *evolving direction!*: Queensland Suicide & Self-Harm Prevention Conference (Cairns, July 2008)
- *A Case Study for Standardised Reporting of Suicide in Australia*: Queensland Suicide & Self-Harm Prevention Conference (Cairns, July 2008)
- *Standardised Reporting of Suicide – A process for achieving national standards*: Asia Pacific Coroners Society Conference (Adelaide, November 2008)
- *The vital role of non-government organisations in the prevention of suicide workshop*: 3rd Asia Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (Hong Kong, October 2008)

Communications Strategy

This year, SPA's communications strategies were further improved and broadened, reaching more stakeholders and the public through increased traffic to the SPA website and an increase in subscribers to the organisation's quarterly e-newsletter.

A predominantly volunteer-driven project has also resulted in the development and addition of a comprehensive list of organisations, crisis support services, information and resources to the *Getting Help* and *Links* web pages on the SPA website.

Click on the links to view the [Getting Help](#) and the [Links](#) web pages

Phase 2 of the re-design of the SPA website, which will include a 'Members Only' portal, is now in progress.

Furthermore, SPA has now consolidated its quarterly e-newsletter and produced its first report of activities (2007-2008). Notable topics of stories featured in the SPA e-newsletter have recently included:

- *A few positive signs amongst Indigenous Australians;*
- *Rural suicide, drought and beyond;*
- *Men's suicide; and*
- *Suicide prevention in the workplace.*

[Click here](#) to view the 'E-Newsletters' archive

SPA continues to improve its communications and, over the coming year, will conduct a number of surveys to obtain feedback and ideas from both our members and the general public.

Looking to the Future

In June 2008, SPA completed its three-year strategic review (conducted by ConNetica Consulting); the results of which recognised that the organisation has achieved much of what it set out to do within the framework of the 2005–2008 SPA Strategic Plan. However, the needs of the sector have changed, and many stakeholders now view the 2005–2008 SPA Strategic Plan as irrelevant to the sector's needs moving forward.

[Click here](#) to view the Executive Summary from the Report of the Evaluation of the 2005-2008 SPA Strategic Plan and Organisational Review

One particular challenge for SPA in its new strategic direction will be its evolution into a truly effective national voice in both the community and in policy development. This was recognised as part of the review of the organisation: "...a larger and better resourced organisation may have been able to continually monitor these perceptions and aspirations".

SPA Strategic Plan 2008–2010

The 2008–2010 SPA Strategic Plan has recently been developed on the basis of the key learning's derived from both the ConNetica Consulting organisational review, and decisions made at a SPA planning workshop, conducted in Hobart in April 2008.

The three 'key result areas' of the new SPA Strategic Plan are as follows:

1. Strategic Alliances & Partnerships;
2. Sector Advocacy & Partnerships; and
3. SPA Reform & Sustainability.

[Click here](#) to view a copy of the 2008–2010 SPA Strategic Plan

Position Statements

During 2007-2008, SPA commenced a series of position statements; devised as foundation documents to provide a basis for understanding, discussion, teaching, delivery and research on priority issues in suicide and self-harm prevention, intervention and postvention. SPA encourages government and other organisations to use the position statements as a strong basis to developing their own policies and strategies on each of the issues addressed.

Each SPA position statement is developed under the guidance and expertise of a reference group of specialist individuals who also assist in the broader consultation of community and other stakeholders on the various issues. Final approval of position statements rests with the authority of the SPA Board.

To date, SPA has produced the following position statements:

- *Responding to Suicide in Rural Australia;*
- *Suicide Prevention and Capacity Building in Australian Indigenous Communities; and*
- *Men and Suicide – Future Directions.*

[Click here](#) to view current SPA Position Statements

SPA is currently developing a number of additional position statements on issues as wide-ranging as mental illness and suicide, bereavement and suicide postvention, and suicide in the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex communities.

If, as part of the community consultation, you would like your opinion heard on any of these issues, please let Ryan McGlaughlin, SPA Executive Officer, know by sending an email to: ryan@suicidepreventionaust.org

Work Plan Highlights for 2009

During the year ahead, SPA plans to focus on the following key areas and deliverables:

- Undertake SPA Governance Reform to align with new strategic direction;
- Lead the inquiry into a possible new national enterprise to effectively tackle suicide prevention in Australia;
- Continue the development of SPA Position Statements and provide policy advice on current and emerging issues;
- Produce and distribute an educational DVD on *Suicide Prevention in the Workplace*;
- Continue the development of World Suicide Prevention Day activities and the LIFE Awards as national events, in collaboration with other stakeholders in the sector;
- Establish a National Committee for Standardised Reporting on Suicide;
- Continue planning for the 2010 IASP Asia Pacific Regional Conference, in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention;
- Host state members' forums and a national members' policy forum; and
- Continue to build stronger partnerships and linkages with national, state, territory and local networks, and other organisations working in the field.

SPA is striving hard to bridge the gaps between researchers, practitioners and those deeply affected by suicide to achieve more effective outcomes.

We encourage you to maintain your support!

For further information on any of our strategic objectives and/or suicide prevention initiatives, please contact the SPA office via the details listed on our [Contact Us](#) page.

Current as at January 2008