

World Suicide Prevention Day 2007

The report...

What is WSPD?

After a successful launch in 2003, World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) is now held every year on **10 September** around the world. On this day, numerous events, conferences, campaigns and local activities call to public attention one of the world's largest causes of premature and unnecessary death – suicide.

The International Association for Suicide Prevention, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, calls upon governments, government agencies, NGOs, international and national associations, local communities, clinicians, researchers and volunteers to be involved in the organisation of WSPD activities. The aim of these activities is to promote increased awareness about the problem of suicide and the many ways in which we can work to reduce suicide rates and the incidence of suicidal behaviours.



International Theme for WSPD

The international theme for WSPD in 2007 was *Suicide Prevention across the Life Span: Dreams and Realities*. This theme was adopted to emphasise the fact that suicide occurs among people of all ages. As such, suicide prevention and intervention strategies should be adapted to meet the needs of different age groups.

[Click here](#) to see more information about the theme for WSPD 2007.

SPA World Suicide Prevention Day Activities

In 2007, SPA moved its WSPD activities from its hometown of Sydney to the bright lights of Melbourne. Here, the LiFe Awards were held for the fourth year in a row. An inaugural Community Forum was also held to coincide with WSPD. Both events drew attention to the international theme.

2007 LiFe AWARDS

The LiFe Awards have become a model event for SPA, with the 2007 LiFe Awards ceremony no exception. The event was held at the striking BMW Edge Amphitheatre, Federation Square in Melbourne on Sunday 9 September 2007. It was satisfying to relocate the event from Sydney to Melbourne and achieve the same high standards, as recognised by those individuals and organisations that attended the ceremony.

We were pleased to have Senator the Honourable Brett Mason, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing – Australian Government in attendance to provide the opening address and offer congratulations to the LiFe Award winners. The flow of the evening was assisted by the contribution of the compare, host and producer of *All in the Mind* ABC Radio National, Natasha Mitchell. It was an additional benefit that Natasha had much familiarity of the sector.



Aunty Joy Murphy, Senior Elder of the Wurundjeri People acknowledged the traditional landowners in the official Welcome to Country Ceremony. The entertainment for the evening was Carneval Strings (String Quartet).

The number of nominees for the 2007 LiFe Awards increased again on previous years, providing greater recognition of the value contributed by those directly and indirectly involved in suicide prevention. In particular, there was an increase in nominees in both the Public Sector and Emerging Research categories.

In 2007, the quality of nominees was also consistent with that of the high standards set the previous year. Nominations came from a wide spread, including from both urban and regional Australia. Natasha Mitchell, broadcaster and MC of the LiFe Award's ceremony, touched on this point when she made the observation that the last three awards that had been presented had ranged from Alice Springs to Perth and as far as Sheffield in Tasmania. The nominations give SPA, and others, an opportunity to observe the diversity of suicide prevention work taking place in the Australian community.

It is gratifying to also see new projects that have commenced, which complement the recommendations made in the Blue Print that resulted from the 2006 National Forum on Men and Suicide, hosted by Crisis Support Services and SPA. These include the *Coach the Coach* initiative generated by Familycare, National Rugby League and Lifeline Australia for the [Help a mate stay in the game](#) campaign and the Child Support Agency's [Staying Connected](#) program.

While the categories for the 2007 LiFe Awards remained the same as in 2006, the judges did make a decision to also award two Outstanding Contribution Awards.

[Click here](#) to see the list of judges for the 2007 LiFe Awards.

To see the complete list of 2007 LiFe Award Winners and Honourable Mentions [click here](#).

The complete program of the 2007 LiFe Awards ceremony can be [downloaded here](#).

State LiFe Awards were also conducted in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

[Click here](#) to see the report from the LiFe Awards held in Tasmania.

[Click here](#) to see the report from the LiFe Awards held in the Northern Territory.

COMMUNITY FORUM

The Community Forum, *Let's Get Talking*, held at the Melbourne Town Hall on WSPD, Monday 10 September 2007, was a new accomplishment for SPA. The diversity of the members of the two panels, and the richness of content that the speakers conveyed to the audience was a key factor to this achievement.

The Community Forum was facilitated by radio and TV personality, Julie McCrossin. Julie was a wonderful conduit between the panel and the audience, making it a true Community Forum with audience participation.



The Honourable Lisa Neville MP, Victorian Minister for Mental Health, opened and assisted in *Setting the Scene* for the Community Forum. Graeme Johnstone, the [Victorian State Coroner](#) finished *Setting the Scene* by outlining rates of suicide and clarifying the role of the Coroner in relation to suicide, including bereavement support. He also gave a recent personal account of a case study.

The Let's Get Talking and Help Each Other and *Breaking the Silence: Personally and in the Media (Challenges, Opportunities and Media Ethics)* panel discussions were well received by the audience. The *Let's Get Talking and Help Each Other* panel discussion, in particular, focused on personal stories and help-seeking tips. Listening to such personal stories was one of the highlights of the Community Forum.

Throughout the Community Forum, two TV commercials from the [beyondblue](#) National Advertising Campaign 2006 (Older People and Men) were screened along with two web films from [ORYGEN Youth Health](#) – *Not the Only One* and *Someone Who Will Listen*. All illustrated some very handy help-seeking tips.

The *Breaking the Silence: Personally and in the Media (Challenges, Opportunities and Media Ethics)* panel discussion provided a sophisticated and respectful examination of the issues. This debate was appreciated by delegates for its diversity of discussion.

[Click here](#) to see some of the opinions from the speakers.

SPA was also privileged to have the St Joseph's School (Collingwood) choir perform a pertinent piece at the end of the night. The choir was organised through [The Song Room](#).



The following

organisations also

had information booths as part of the Community Forum:

- [SANE Australia](#)
- [Suicide Helpline](#)
- [Mensline Australia](#)
- [Incolink](#)
- [The Song Room](#)
- [ORYGEN Youth Health](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid Training](#)
- [Support After Suicide](#)
- [Inspire Foundation](#)
- [Reach Out!](#)
- [headspace](#)
- [Parentline Victoria](#)
- [Association of Relatives and Friends of the Emotionally and Mentally Ill](#)

SPA is indebted to the calibre of individuals and organisations that represented the Planning Committee for WSPD 2007. Their advice and contributions were significant.

[Click here](#) to see the organisations represented on the Planning Committee.

SPA also wishes to express appreciation to the sponsors, volunteers and supporters of this event, without which it could not have happened.

[Click here](#) to see the list of sponsors.

Future of WSPD in Australia

The International Association for Suicide Prevention seeks to make WSPD a strong manifestation for the prevention of suicide. WSPD continues to incite increasing numbers of organisations around the world to conduct activities on that day and during the months that follow.

One of the challenges in preparing material and organising more local activities for WSPD is a lack of resources. SPA would like to invite individuals and organisations interested in being involved in a collaborative effort to make WSPD more nationally visible to contact Ryan McGlaughlin, SPA Executive Officer, either via email: ryan@suicidepreventionaust.org or mobile: 0425 382 800.

If you are planning a local WSPD event, you are encouraged to inform Tony Phillips, SPA Events and Projects Coordinator, via email: tony@suicidepreventionaust.org, so that we can help promote your event on the SPA website.