

A Blue Print for the Future

Developing A National Vision:

*“In One Generation Suicide Will No Longer Exist as a
Health Risk for Men”*

September 2006



Preamble

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Suicide takes the lives of over two thousand Australians each year. For each death, parents, children, brothers and sisters, extended family, friends and workmates experience significant impact. The greatest loss is among Australian men, who account for four out of every five suicides. Within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, suicide takes an exceptional toll. Recent reporting suggests that the overall rate of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is some 40% greater than that found in the general population. For young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men under 35, the rate of suicide was three times that found for non-Indigenous males of the same age. This loss is an Australian tragedy that demands Australian solutions.

In 2005 Suicide Prevention Australia undertook a survey of members and the broader community as part of a broader process for identifying key priorities in suicide prevention to which they were best suited to make a contribution. The overwhelming response to this survey was the need to address suicide among Australian men. Working from the passion of respondents, SPA undertook to develop a national forum in which those with knowledge and experience were able to come together to collaborate and develop a framework for action.

In 2006, SPA approached Crisis Support Services – Mensline Australia as a potential co-host to this Forum, bringing to the project their special expertise in working with men and in suicide prevention. This partnership was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding, which demonstrated a strong alliance in the planning and implementation of the National Forum. A National Advisory Group was formed with representatives able to bring their own expertise and skills in service delivery, research, policy and life experience. This Group provided ongoing guidance in the planning for the Forum, including design of the program, the process and recommendations for invited participants.

The National Forum was convened in Sydney on May 2nd and 3rd, 2006 with some eighty participants including individuals and representatives of organisations from each State and Territory as well as from the Australian Government. The aim of the Forum was to draw on existing knowledge and experience to develop a framework for action in reducing suicide among men and to promote more effective responses to men at risk.

From this forum, the Sydney Statement 2006 was adopted as a statement of core principles and areas of action, recognising the roles of Government, of employers, education providers, of community organisations, researchers and service providers. This Statement, appended to the Blue Print, formed the foundation for the drafting of the Blue Print for Implementation.

From Blue Print to Action

The Blue Print for Implementation expands upon the Sydney Statement 2006, setting out a structure based on core objectives and principles for action. *It is essential to recognise that the Blue Print is only the first step in making a difference. To move this forward, there is a need for:*

- An Implementation Group able to facilitate the development and ongoing roll out of the Blue Print to action
- Detailed action plans for moving forward in each of the objective and strategies
- Support at all levels, acknowledging individual roles, responsibilities and opportunities for implementation
- Resources and commitment from all sectors to the vision and means set out in the Blue Print.

Actions which are to be taken then include:

- Broad consultation on the draft Blue Print with finalisation by 1st July 2006
- Establishment of an Implementation Group
- Finalisation of a Roll Out Strategy
- Establishment of funding support to enable Implementation to commence
- Ongoing development of strategies for collaboration and change
- Ongoing monitoring and review, facilitating the development of further actions and strategies which build on achievement and address barriers to implementation.

Suicide Prevention Australia and Crisis Support Services, Mensline Australia are committed to the implementation of the Blue Print. However it will take the support of Governments, of service providers, communities, researchers and organisations to achieve the vision. This is then the first step in a pathway forward to "In One Generation Suicide Will No Longer Exist as a Health Risk for Men."

Acknowledgements:

It is important to acknowledge the advice, support and involvement of the National Advisory Committee for this project. Appreciation is expressed to:

Michael Dudley,	Suicide Prevention Australia, Co Chair
Terry Melvin,	Mensline Australia, Co-Chair
Stan Bordeaux,	Injury Prevention & Physical Activity Policy Officer, Community Population & Rural Health, Tasmanian Government
Jill Fisher	Project Coordinator, StandBy Response Service United Synergies Ltd
Peter Gebert	Operations Manager, Cbus
Graham 'Bonny' Gibson	Project Coordinator, Aboriginal Young Male Suicide Prevention Project; Indigenous Men & Family relationships Project Lower Murray Nunga Club
Gordon Gregory	Chairperson, rural Health Alliance
Travis Heller	Senior researcher, Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention
Craig Hodges	Senior Program Manager, Youth Agenda, beyondblue
Julian Krieg	Board member, Suicide Prevention Australia
Adam Lawrence	Senior Coordinator, LifeForce Programs
Professor John MacDonald	Foundation Chair in Primary Health Care; Co-Director Men's Health Information and Resource Centre, University of Western Sydney
Ryan McGlaughlin	Executive Officer, Suicide Prevention Australia
Jane Ryan	Senior Policy Analyst, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Centre for Mental Health, NSW
Sven Silburn	Director and Professional Fellow, Curtin Centre for Developmental Health, Telethon Institute for Child Health Centre
Anthony Smith	Health Promotion Officer, Central Coast (NSW) Health Promotion Unit (North Sydney Central Coast Health
Wendy Sturgess	Chief Executive Officer, Crisis Support Services
Dr Kim Webber	CEO, Australian Rural & remote Workforce Agencies Group (Former beyond blue)

Appreciation is also owed to the delegates who through their participation in the National Men and Suicide Forum contributed their knowledge, expertise and experience to this endeavour.

1.0 Introduction

The primary aim of this initiative has been to develop a blue print for the future, which will provide a framework for responding to the challenge of *reducing* suicide among Australian men. Importantly this needs to be understood within the context of the broader goal that men are able to achieve quality of life based upon equality of opportunities to work towards their own goals, pursue their own interests and contribute to the community.

The achievement of the broad vision of *In One Generation Suicide Will No Longer Exist as a Health Risk for Men* will require a collaborative effort involving all levels of government, those involved in research and service delivery, employers, and the larger social networks which make up the Australian community.

The blue print set out in this document has been shaped to be consistent with, and to support implementation of, the values and strategies identified by the participants in the National Forum on Men and Suicide, May 2006 and articulated in the Sydney Statement 2006

It is understood that real change, will require a multi-faceted, multi level approach with defined goals and clearly articulated actions for implementation. The aim of this blue print is provide a framework for establishing a collaborative culture, recognizing the contributions that may be made by each sector, community and individuals. In setting a national framework it is essential to respect the importance of all of these contributions, and to not single one out at the cost of another.

Within any discussion involving people with a variety of perspectives, experience and knowledge, it is reasonable to expect divergent views on priorities. While the Forum was able to achieve consensus on the key principles for moving forward, it is important to acknowledge that there are many voices that need to be heard and this diversity of messages must not be ignored. Any truly national strategy must be designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, those who have experienced suicidal ideation, those bereaved by suicide, older men as well as younger men, those from diverse cultural backgrounds, men from rural and remote areas as well as those in the cities, and those who might otherwise slip through the net. A key challenge then in the implementation of this Blue Print will be to ensure that these voices continue to be heard, and that we remain open, willing to listen and to learn, if this bold vision is to be achieved.

1.1 Components of this Blue Print Report

The elements that shape this Blue Print were derived from the strategies and actions identified by the 80 participants in the National Men and Suicide Forum, 2006.

1.2 Core Objectives

By setting out the core objectives of the Blue Print it is possible to establish a framework for guiding implementation of the recommendation actions and a basis for monitoring the extent to which such actions are effective in achieving the desired outcomes. However, as will become apparent in considering the blue print, there is an inherent inter-dependence of the objectives, strategies and actions that flow from them (e.g. effective communication strategies and training are essential elements in the implementation strategies across all objectives). This will require then a commitment to ongoing dialogue, cooperation and review by all those involved, to ensure that maximum benefits are derived from the whole of the effort.

Objective 1:

Establish a national *Positive Health and Well Being Strategy* that is grounded in valuing men, their contribution to society and a positive male identity. This Strategy must foster a cultural change, challenging and replacing the negative aspects of gender stereotyping, and replacing these with more empowering and positive ways in which men see themselves and how men are understood.

This requires a well designed, multi-dimensional and appropriately resourced communication, media and population health promotional strategy which conveys a range of positive messages, is informative, raises awareness, and effectively engages across the diverse audience of the Australian community.

Objective 2:

Provide men with access to services from wherever they are. This will be achieved by building on, and continuing to resource, proven service models, adopting actions that will increase awareness, skills, engagement and commitment from the ground up, to ensure that men are supported by healthy communities and barriers to access to appropriate assistance are eliminated. This includes establishing effective strategies for building the capacity of front line workers, employers, social, sporting and recreational networks to play an active role in meeting the needs of men.

Objective 3:

Develop and implement more effective responses to, the diversity amongst men, across geography, culture and language, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and those from diverse international backgrounds. Importantly achieving this objective requires that resourcing and actions reflect the priority that needs to be given to this objective.

Objective 4:

Address the program, structural and policy barriers that inhibit continuity of care, help seeking and quality of support for men. This will require, but is not limited to a significant reform of the way primary and community health care is provided. This also includes a re-orientation from a mental health model and greater recognition of, and response to, social determinants of health and well-being, and particularly those which specifically impact on men.

Objective 5:

Implement educational programs and role model strategies that reach out to children and young people, promoting awareness, understanding, skills and capacity to respond to life challenges along the way. This objective seeks to achieve generational change through a proactive approach to the nurturing of children and young people and to building resilience in them.

Objective 6:

Establish ongoing support for continued learning through research, evaluation and dissemination of critical evidence needed to guide action. This will require a confidence in the continuity of funding, and adequate opportunity to begin to measure and assess the outcomes being achieved.

Objective 7:

Establish a Blue Print Implementation Group to guide the achievement of these objectives, able to provide oversight and direction. The implementation body must be able to guide and monitor implementation, and to act as a visible and accessible point of information for those involved in any of the action areas outlined.

2.0 Blue Print for Going Forward

Objective 1

Establish a national *Positive Health and Well Being Strategy* that is grounded in valuing men, their contribution to society and a positive male identity. This Strategy must foster a cultural change, challenging and replacing the negative aspects of gender stereotyping, and replacing these with more empowering and positive ways in which men see themselves and how men are understood.

A. Preface:

The core beliefs underpinning this objective include the need to:

- work from a strength based model, promoting positive health messages, supporting a culture of connectedness and help seeking
- focus promotion and prevention efforts within the settings where men live, work, and recreate (that is at home, in the workplace, and the community) and where people seek health information and / or assistance. (link to Objective 2)
- mobilise action, engaging partners across jurisdictions, within the health system, and across other sectors that affect health
- contribute to culture change which is directed towards normalising life events and transitions, emotions, including grief, and how to respond to them
- de-stigmatise discussion of suicide and mental health, placing suicide in a social context in addition to a mental health framework
- expand perceptions of what it means to be a man, establishing positive and valued concepts of men in society.

B. Strategies and Actions to Support this Objective

1. **Develop local strategies and mechanisms that incorporate health and well being in the activities of all stakeholders, ensuring that local strategies have actions to support this.**

Enabling Actions:

- 1.1 Drawing from existing evidence, develop, document and widely disseminate model approaches that facilitate local action
- 1.2 Ensure that health promotion and well being strategies as well as suicide prevention, are incorporated in the curriculum for health and related professional training

2. **Ensure that the consequences for health and well being are considered within all major program and service strategies and policy making decisions**

Enabling actions:

- 2.1 Promote the development of policy and procedures requirements associated with assessment for positive health and well-being implications within program planning regimes
- 2.2 To facilitate implementation, establish an impact analysis checklist, or similar easy to use self-audit tool, which is made widely available to assist policy makers, program planners and evaluators to identify and assess potential intended and unintended consequences.

3. **Promote the adoption of practices across service delivery agents which enable, empower and support men to make informed choices**

Enabling Actions:

- 3.1 Drawing from established service models, develop professional development modules that are accessible by means of a range of in-service training systems and delivery modes.
- 3.2 Foster and promote mentoring and exchange programs, which provide an opportunity for professional development in an action-learning context.

4. **Develop promotional strategies and resources which increase public awareness and understanding about the need for positive mental health and well being, and actions that can be taken to support good health i.e. moving conceptions of mental health into the same realm as physical health issues.¹**

Enabling Actions

- 4.1 Fund the development of quality promotional and awareness raising resources, including presentation of personal and community protective actions. Resources must be designed to accommodate a variety of mediums, and be suitable for use on a national, state and local level. To meet the needs of culturally diverse and Aboriginal men, attention must be given to ensure the use of relevant presentation and resource considerations.
- 4.2 Establish pilot projects in local areas to monitor and evaluate the impact of such strategies on the attitudes, knowledge and skills of the community or specific audience. This should include piloting within an Aboriginal community and a culturally diverse community.

¹ This has a direct link with Objective 2 and associated strategies.

5. Promote those actions which are protective and supportive of good health and well being contribute to the reduction of (and reducing the involvement in) inappropriate risk taking behaviours²

Enabling Actions

- 5.1 At a national level, establish a high profile public campaign that addresses inappropriate risk taking, and substance misuse and promotes positive male images in the context of healthy lifestyle
- 5.2 Ensure early identification and early intervention of support when problems do occur in order to promote improved chances of affecting change.
- 5.3 Building on existing models for working with men at risk, establish multifaceted approaches which combine peer support, school based and community based strategies, focusing on creating sustainable linkages and networks of positive relationships.

Objective 2:

Provide men with access to services from wherever they are. This will be achieved by building on, and continuing to resource, proven service models, adopting actions that will increase awareness, skills, engagement and commitment from the ground up, to ensure that men are supported by healthy communities and barriers to access to appropriate assistance are eliminated. This includes establishing effective strategies for building the capacity of front line workers, employers, social, sporting and recreational networks to play an active role in meeting the needs of men.

A. Preface:

The core belief underpinning this objective is that suicide prevention needs to be understood as a whole of community issue. Accordingly, there is a need for:

- men to locally access information, support and, where relevant, specialist interventions.
- shared responsibility for delivering responses at a local level that meet the needs of men, designed to respond to the diversity of age, culture, experience, location and circumstances.
- building community capacity by men, in support of men, will be greatly enhanced by the engagement of sporting, social and recreational networks operating at a local level.
- Developing the workplace as a significant locus of support, as well as a vehicle for culture change, with the support of employers and employee advocates
- Front line workers, within Government services and non-government services to play a critical role in prevention, through their ability to identify and respond effectively to men at risk.

² This strategy will rely largely on those associated with Objectives 2-4.

- Additional research to better understand why men aren't seeking help and develop strategies to respond to this problem.

B. Strategies and Actions to Support this Objective

In developing strategies and actions, it is essential to acknowledge that considerable work is currently being done as part of a range of suicide prevention initiatives. It is critical to draw on this experience, proven models, and to ensure that such learnings are disseminated and accessible. At the same time, it is crucial to recognize that 'one size does not fit all' and that it is not helpful to try to do so.

- 1. Substantially enhance access to information, support and advice by improving the ability of front line workers in non suicide specific services to identify risk, to be aware of appropriate agencies that are able to offer appropriate services, and ensure that linking processes reduce the risk of men 'falling through the cracks'.**

Enabling Actions

- 1.1 Review the current training packages to determine suitability to roll out across diverse front line working environments, and determine actions required to customize or implement as a matter of priority.
 - 1.2 Negotiate with training providers, such as VET, TAFE and tertiary education institutes for the incorporation of skills based training within the curriculum for those working in relevant community and service-oriented fields.
 - 1.3 Work with funding bodies and service providers to ensure that front line workers are provided with accredited training, information and accountability for providing working effectively with men who may require assistance outside the service's mandate or capacity.
 - 1.4 Establish monitoring processes to assist in identifying the impact of training and increased awareness on capacity to identify and respond to the needs of men.
- 2. Working from existing proven service models, work collaboratively to establish specific national, industry relevant, and situational appropriate strategies which will assist employers to develop workplace programs as part of an occupational health and safety obligation.**

Enabling Actions

- 2.1 Establish a working party with representatives of employers, employees, and occupational health and safety to develop actions for implementation of work based training and programs across diverse industries and employment sectors. This includes identification of specific industry related risk factors, and known generalist factors such as bullying and harassment, and ensure that these are addressed within the broader strategy.
- 2.2 Amend occupational health and safety legislation to include mental health and well being benchmarks, and to have life skills training mandated and supported in the work force.

2.3 Review current program and training modules and develop processes for integrating awareness raising, skill development, health promotion, and help seeking within the core business of occupational health and safety.

2.4 Building on existing strategies used in the building trades, motor vehicle trades and military, develop approaches which are relevant to the broader range of employment settings such as hospitality industry, primary industries, and professional settings in which men are employed.

- 3. Working with national, state, and local bodies, develop and support the implementation of strategies which assist those working in sporting organisations, at all levels, to be a positive force in promoting positive messages, awareness raising, supporting help seeking and responding to cases of individual risk that may arise.**

Enabling Actions

3.1 Establish a working group involving peak sporting bodies, both amateur and professional, to develop actions for implementation of awareness-raising, training and positive programs across the sport sector.

3.2 Provision of information, resources and strategies needs to be designed to specifically reach out to, and engaging with, local clubs that are key gathering places for men of all ages.

3.3 Link training mental health first aid and prevention programs within the accreditation processes for coaches across all sport areas.

- 4. Recognizing the role of community connectedness and social networks in the promotion of positive health, ensure that key messages, training, and information are accessible in the public domain.**

Enabling Actions

4.1 Provide resources and support for community capacity building with local medical practitioners, men's groups, churches, and social groups, providing a range of public education initiatives relevant to the particular audience – e.g. MATE program, slogans 'its ok to be a man' and to be different. This should include reducing fear and anxiety to identify and engage with men in crisis and raising community awareness of the value of giving friendship (i.e. mates in the workforce).

4.2 Develop appropriate ways to identify and educate gatekeepers so they can enable supportive and accessible opportunities within the social milieu.

Objective 3:

Develop and implement more effective responses to, the diversity amongst men, across geography, culture and language, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and those from diverse international backgrounds. Importantly achieving this objective requires that resourcing and actions reflect the priority that needs to be given to this objective.

A. Preface:

The core belief underpinning this objective is that strategies and interventions need to be customised to the specific needs of men, taking into account the diversity of situations, which may exist. Accordingly, there is a need to:

- give priority be given to supporting initiatives appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.
- support programs that provide culturally appropriate responses to men from diverse cultural backgrounds, and in particular refugees, recently arrived migrants and young men who may experience particular resettlement and acculturation stresses
- support programs that reach out to men in rural and more remote settings in which services are not readily available
- actively promote initiatives which will enable local services, including local governments, to better understand actions that they can take to better respond to the needs of men
- provide dedicated suicide prevention services that target the specific needs of men from CALD and rural and remote communities.

B. Strategies and Actions to Support this Objective

1. Fully support the programs and initiatives that effectively enhance the capacity to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

Enabling Actions

This needs to be achieved by ensuring that:

- 1.1 Aboriginal controlled health services and government operated health services observe the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in relation to providing access and culturally appropriate methods of dealing with gender and identity issues.
- 1.2 Professional training and professional development training provides psychologists and counsellors with the understanding, sensitivity and skills to respond to the factors that are weighing down the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males.

- 1.3 All ways and means of assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males to reconnect with family, country and culture should be investigated.
 - 1.4 Cross government funding resources is made available to enable specific programs to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and establish strategies suitable to their communities to combat self-harm, violence and suicidal tendencies
 - 1.5 Resources are allocated to develop an effective workforce across all sectors that recognises, values and enhances the capacity of Aboriginal communities, organisations, and government agencies to respond to the mental health and suicide prevention issues. Health workforce training programs require development, based on established standards
 - 1.6 Strategies and resources are in place to promote success stories and publicise these broadly
 - 1.7 Adequate resourcing for the effective implementation of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well Being 2004-2009
 - 1.8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are involved in partnership across all aspects of mental health and suicide prevention initiative to ensure learning exchange ultimately benefits the recipients.
- 2. Building on current knowledge, networks and expertise, enhance the capacity to meet the needs of men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and in particular refugees and young men who are at risk from resettlement and acculturation processes.**

Enabling Actions

- 2.1 Promote the adoption of positive policies that recognise the impact of migrant and refugee experience and promote multiculturalism in the community, in the workplace and school environment, supporting a balance between the old and new.
- 2.2 Provide resources for the development of training and support materials for non government organisations and community support services to enhance their understanding of the CALD communities and how to provide culturally appropriate support, health and mental health services
- 2.3 Develop and support models of capacity building for community organisations to increase their understanding of mental health and actions that can be taken to assist men who may be at risk
- 2.4 Support the Framework for the Implementation National Mental Health Plan for a Multicultural Australia 2003-2008.

3. Drawing on existing expertise and demonstrated models of practice, support the development of locally appropriate responses for men living in rural and more remote locations.

Enabling Actions

- 3.1 Service planning should ensure a mix of primary health care, preventive health, public health, clinical practice, community development, and consideration of the specific issues within the region.
- 3.2 Training and professional development practices should ensure that workers have a broad mix of skills and information to work in partnership in health promotion
- 3.3 Continue to support existing models of service, including peer support programs able to work in appropriate local contexts.
- 3.4 Continue to research gender and environmental issues that impact on men living in rural areas, with a focus on potential community action-oriented outcomes.

Objective 4:

Address the program, structural and policy barriers that inhibit continuity of care, help seeking and quality of support for men. This will require, but is not limited to a significant reform of the way primary and community health care is provided. This also includes a re-orientation from a primary mental health model and greater recognition of, and response to, social determinants of health and well-being.

A. Preface:

The core beliefs underpinning this objective include the need to:

- provide a seamless care system which responds appropriately to men whether in the community, in the hospital, or in transition from one care setting to another
- ensure that care providers are better informed about issues that men face and are better skilled in providing individually appropriate responses
- recognise the social, legal, economic, and individual factors that impact on wellbeing as a factor impacting on men's general health and mental health
- address the barriers associated with program and policy frameworks and which hinder cross discipline and jurisdictional boundaries.

B. Strategies and Actions to Support this Objective

1. **New systems for primary care should be created to include outreach and community based service provision. This should include provision for transitional services for men being discharged from psychiatric hospitals, men leaving emergency departments after self harm, men with complex co-morbidity problems and those experiencing social isolation.**

Enabling Actions

- 1.1 Establish an outreach and referral model for government-funded health, mental health and welfare services that is responsive to men at risk who use these services. Ensure that those who deliver such services are well placed to provide early identification and intervention.
 - 1.2 Require health and support outreach services to demonstrate how they will be able to better engage with men from marginalised groups, including those unemployed and lacking social networks, to improve service access amongst those least likely to be identified as being at risk.
 - 1.3 Review the schedule of payments for general practitioners to ensure that this structure does not create a barrier to a doctor taking the time to required to work with a man that is considered to be potentially at risk, or needing to access early intervention strategies.
 - 1.4 Enhance the accessibility of health services, and mental health services generally, through a variety of delivery arrangements, including specialist men's services, specific men's service times, and shop front services within broader community or welfare services.
2. **Establish positive incentives for breaking down program, service or disciplinary boundaries to facilitate enhanced continuity of care as well as opening up the opportunities for men to receive appropriate assistance locally.**

Enabling Actions

- 2.1 Consult with existing service providers, men in general and those who have been service users, to identify where such barriers occur from a user perspective, and establish action plans for removing them.
- 2.2 Review and restructure current tertiary psychology, social work and welfare courses to ensure that men's issues are addressed in a positive framework and appropriate models of working with men are promoted.
- 2.3 Encourage and facilitate greater collaboration between community based health care providers and complementary services to facilitate effective referral and collaborative care management supports.

2.4 Review and restructure public policy or program funding strategies that create effective barriers to responding to the social, economic, housing, employment, family cultural and health requirements of men in a holistic manner.

2.5 Establish a positive culture of inclusiveness in all public service agencies, including Centrelink, the Family Court, Child Support Agency Australia, prisons and other custodial settings, founded on a positive understanding of men, and a capacity to respond to individual need.

3. Develop and implement strategies that promote and encourage men to use available services.

Enabling Actions

3.1 Drawing from the expertise of those who have developed effective models for working with men at risk and for engaging men to access services, as well as involving service users, develop guidelines for a 'male friendly' practice. Ensure that guidelines are widely distributed across the public and community service sector, and incorporate such requirements in national standards.

3.2 Continue to positively promote the role of men working with men in the field, focusing on enhancing the status and value of such work, and promoting positive messages associated with men supporting men in the community.

Objective 5:

Implement educational programs and role model strategies that reach out to children and young people, promoting awareness, understanding, skills and capacity to respond to life challenges along the way. This objective seeks to achieve generational change through a proactive approach to the nurturing of children and young people and to building resilience in them.

A. Preface:

The core beliefs underpinning this objective include the need to:

- Adopt a proactive approach, engaging with children and young men within the school environment, to model positive health behaviours and problem solving skills which will reduce risk
- Recognise that young people who have resettled in Australia and are experiencing resettlement and acculturation problems require support to develop networks and safety nets in the new country
- Recognise the high level of risk amongst young Aboriginal men, and support strategies to reduce the known risk factors

- Recognise the potential risk amongst young gay men, and the need to provide a supportive atmosphere within the social and learning environment
- Ensure that employers, educational institutions, and other organisations working with young men are aware of the need to eliminate, and face the consequences for permitting, bullying, harassment or other anti social behaviours.

B. Strategies and Actions to Support this Objective

- 1. Continue to support whole of school programs that seek to establish a supportive environments, that enhance skills and coping strategies, and encourage positive relationships within the school community.**

Enabling Actions

- 1.1 Review, and amend as appropriate, current curriculum to ensure that it promotes positive male images and complements existing school based programs that can be delivered across ages and through a variety of classroom, sport and social programs.
 - 1.2 Building on established programs, Australian and State Education Departments facilitate the uptake of such programs across all schools, linked with national reporting requirements.
 - 1.3 Provide schools with the tools required to assess the school culture and identify strategies for establishing a more male supportive environment.
- 2. Ensure that teachers, counselors and aides are provided with appropriate training on the identification of, response to and effective referral of at risk students.**

Enabling Actions

- 2.1 Review current preparation and curriculum, and where a gap exists, take action to ensure that teacher education, counseling courses, professional development and in-service training programs incorporate training to assist those working directly with children and young people have the knowledge, skills, awareness to identify and respond to students at risk.
- 2.2 Establish a monitoring program to track and document the effectiveness of such training in responding to young people at risk.
- 2.3 Ensure that teachers and counselors are informed about and are able to access contact arrangements for appropriate referral services.

3. **Promote the adoption of culturally appropriate practices, particularly in schools, clubs and community settings, in working with young Aboriginal men, promoting greater confidence, life skills and positive attitudes to reduce the likelihood of self harming or suicidal behaviours.**

Enabling Actions

- 3.1 Review current preparation and curriculum, and where a gap exists, take action to ensure that teacher education, counseling courses, professional development and in-service training programs incorporate training specifically targeted for and responsive to the unique needs of Aboriginal children and young men.
 - 3.2 Proactively create opportunities for engaging of parents, wider family and community within the school to create healthy support networks between students and the broader Aboriginal culture and community.
 - 3.3 Establish partnership arrangements with Aboriginal organisations and service providers able to provide guidance to schools in program and message development as well as being a referral agency for any student that may be considered at risk.
4. **Promote the development of social relationships and linkages for students who are recent migrants or refugees and may be at risk from resettlement and acculturation processes.**

Enabling Actions

- 4.1 Review current preparation and curriculum, and where a gap exists, take action to ensure that teacher education, counseling courses, professional development and in-service training programs incorporate training specifically targeted for enabling staff to be responsive to the unique needs of children and young people experiencing resettlement and acculturation related adjustment issues.
 - 4.2 Proactively create opportunities for engaging of parents, wider family and ethnic community within the school to create healthy support networks between students and the community.
 - 4.3 Establish partnership arrangements with trans-cultural community organisations and service providers able to provide guidance to schools in program and message development as well as being a referral agency for any CALD student that may be considered at risk.
5. **Review, and where appropriate enhance, parent programs delivered by schools, to increase awareness, understanding, and knowledge to respond to potential risk as well as developing positive parenting skills.**

Enabling Actions

- 5.1 Drawing on established programs, and where relevant develop culturally appropriate content, to assist schools to provide parent programs that increase awareness and understanding of

problem and crisis behaviours, develop skills and knowledge of positive actions they can take and sources of support and assistance should it be required.

- 5.2 Ensure that parent programs, and all information distributed by a school, incorporate positive male images, promote health and well-being and is consistent with appropriate gender messages.
- 5.3 Schools work collaboratively with parents and the community to incorporate positive role modeling within the school and the community.

Objective 6:

Establish ongoing support for continued learning through research, evaluation and dissemination of critical evidence needed to guide action. This will require a confidence in the continuity of funding, and adequate opportunity to begin to measure and assess the outcomes being achieved.

A. Preface:

The core beliefs underpinning this objective include the need to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to ongoing support for research, evaluation and dissemination of evidence by the National and State Governments.
- Ensure that research funding supports work specifically targeting the issue of men and suicide, with particular regard to those at greatest risk
- Recognise the importance of, and facilitate the involvement of, people with lived experience and those bereaved by suicide in the research and evaluation process
- Build on current knowledge and practice to establish a robust body of evidence relevant to diverse needs of men and social, economic, and situational factors as well as mental health.
- Incorporate within resourcing strategies, adequate regard to the dissemination of information, promotion of male specific service practices.
- Promote greater collaboration in research, evaluation and information dissemination across disciplines, sectors and geography to better respond to the needs of men.

B. Strategies and Actions to Support this Objective

1. Support research that examines the social, economic and situational factors impacting on, and related to, the rates of suicide among men.

Enabling Actions

- 1.1 National coroners database needs to be expanded to encompass more quality information about culture, family, work background and reasons for suicide.
 - 1.2 Prioritise research that develops a model of suicidality based on the relationship and interaction of social, economic, cultural and other non-mental health factors.
 - 1.3 National and state programs should foster and support qualitative research that explores individual experiences across cultures should be prioritized.
 - 1.4 Build on current NSPS projects and research to produce evidence to support strategies that specifically assist men living in rural and remote locations.
2. Adopt a research and evaluation agenda that specifically examines the issue of men and suicide, with particular regard to those at greatest risk

Enabling Actions

- 2.1 Fund providers should proactively encourage and support, research that focuses on greater understanding of why men kill themselves. This is needed to provide a basis for evaluating NSPS and LiFE and impact on reducing the rate of suicide.
- 2.2 Continue to support research, including community action research, which addresses the particular risk experienced by Aboriginal men, men from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (in particular refugees and migrants) and men living in rural and remote locations.
- 2.3 Continue to support research, services and evaluations that seek to add knowledge about men's help seeking behaviours and how to redress barriers to service access.
- 2.4 Establish a nationally accepted framework for involving men with lived experience and bereaved by suicide in research through an ethically sound manner, low risk and methodologically robust manner.

3. Ensure that population health strategies are appropriately planned, monitored and evaluated as part of the NSPS and a Men's Health Framework.

Enabling Actions

- 3.1 Actively encourage and support research, piloting and evaluation of national communication strategies targeting cultural change with respect to gender, inappropriate risk taking and positive health messages.
 - 3.2 Actively encourage and support monitoring and evaluation strategies that document and evaluate the effectiveness of information dissemination strategies designed to engage the involvement of workplaces, schools, sporting groups and community groups.
 - 3.3 Allocate funding for developing and / or evaluating of local population health strategies that focus on information, awareness and culture change in support of men's health and well-being. This includes initiatives that reach out to young men, men in high risk populations and community.
4. Actively encourage collaboration in research, evaluation and information dissemination across disciplines, sectors and geographical boundaries to better respond to the needs of men.

Enabling Actions

- 4.1 In determining the forward research agenda, create incentives for more collaboration in research, which draws on local knowledge and experience working with men in diverse environments and with diverse issues, in the design, implementation and evaluation.
- 4.2 Support research and evaluation initiatives which foster greater cross disciplinary collaboration, including more effectively bringing together mental health and social researchers in partnership.

Objective 7:

Establish a Blue Print Implementation Group to guide the achievement of these objectives, able to provide oversight and direction. The implementation body must be able to guide and monitor implementation, and to act as a visible and accessible point of information for those involved in any of the action areas outlined.

A. Preface:

While it is recognised that implementation of the Blue Print will require a separate, and complementary, roll out plan, the Men's Forum delegates were in agreement that this will require the establishment of an Implementation Group, recognised by both the Government and non Government sector. The aim of this objective is then to establish general terms of reference that will shape the establishment of the Implementation Group that will then be able to carry forward the recommendations of the Forum.

B. Strategies and Actions to Support this Objective

Structural and Resource Considerations:

1. The Implementation Group will require a capacity to apply and receive funding. As such it is anticipated that it would be auspiced by an existing association or other suitably incorporated body.
2. The Implementation Group will require comprehensive representative make up including those involved in research, service, media, workplace, education and policy to facilitate access to the wide range of relevant networks.
3. The Implementation group will require resource and secretariat support to enable it to carry out its role as a visible and accessible point for those involved in progressing the Blue Print.
4. Responding to the Needs of Aboriginal Men, Men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and emerging at risk populations.

It is recognised that there is a need to work within a culturally appropriate framework to most effectively reach out to men from diverse backgrounds. Accordingly, the Implementation Group will have the capacity to establish a number of sub committees with particular relevant expertise and able to support the work of those in the field as well as the broader strategic roles of the Group.

Roles: The Implementation Group will establish:

1. A register of initiatives being undertaken in accordance with the Blue Print, providing half yearly updates and actively disseminating information as it becomes available
2. A clearinghouse service offering ready access to information and materials specifically related to promotion of health and well-being, as well as suicide prevention for men.
3. A referral service for employers, schools, community and sporting bodies and the like wishing to identify local expertise or partners in developing strategies or services which assist men.
4. A consortium of expertise to advise individuals or organisations developing, implementing or evaluating research or program initiatives targeting men.
5. Support and advice to the development of promotional, awareness and information strategies targeting men and those who work with men
6. Oversight of the Blue Print, identifying areas for which needs to be taken, and actively seek individuals and organisations appropriately situated to assist in moving work forward
7. Actively seek to participate in relevant forums and conferences to heighten awareness of the Blue Print, of available evidence and strategies for moving forward
8. Provide advice to policy makers, researchers and fund providers with respect to priorities and opportunities to enhance implementation of the principles, objectives and strategies set out in the Blue Print.

Appreciation is expressed to Forum Sponsors:

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PO Box 729,

LEICHHARDT, NSW 2040

Phone: (02) 9568 3111

Fax: (02) 9568 3511

Email: spainfo@bigpond.com

Website: www.suicidepreventionaust.org

ABN: 64 461 352 676

REGISTERED CHARITY CFN 114411

© Crisis Support Services Inc Incorporating:

Mensline Australia

Suicide Helpline Victoria

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Incorporated 1990

PO Box 2335,

FOOTSCRAY, VIC 3011

Phone: (03) 8371 2800

Fax: (03) 8371 2888

Email: enquires@crisissupport.org.au

Website: www.crisissupport.org.au

ABN: 33 185 295 654

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Author: Emily Schindeler

S&S Consultants

Phone: (07) 3202 7314

Cover Designed by: Yehuwdiy Dillon

S&S Consultants

Phone: (07) 3202 7314

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Phone: (02) 9262 2697