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Preventing youth suicide: still more to be done

National counselling service Kids Helpline (KHL) is reminding the Australian community that there is still more to be done to prevent youth suicide despite new Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data showing a decrease in deaths from suicide.

According to **yourtown's** Head of Strategy and Research John Dalglish, while it was pleasing to see suicide rates have decreased from 2015 to 2016 overall, it is still the number one cause of death in young people aged 12-25 and there was a worrying trend of increasing incidences across all age groups for children and young people over the last 10 years.

"The ABS data suggests rates for males in particular are actually up this year for ages 0-24 years and for young women aged 20-29," Mr Dalglish said.

"Indigenous suicide rates for young people continue to be exceptionally high and need urgent attention.

"We also do not have a clear picture of the extent to which suicidality, that is thoughts of suicide, affects girls and young women and we need to find ways to record that impact so we can fully comprehend the scale of the issue.

"Kids Helpline's research with young people who had lived experience of suicide showed that when they do seek our support it does make a difference but nation-wide, we need to find new ways to support those that do not reach out for help."

In 2016, Kids Helpline (KHL) received 8,750 contacts related to suicide. 77% (6,719) included discussion of suicidal thoughts or fears, 7% (572) involved immediate intentions of suicide, 2% (193) were from people attempting suicide at the time of the call and 34% of all duty of care interventions initiated by Kids Helpline involved suicide concerns.

KHL gives children and young people counselling, support, and someone to care and listen. It is Australia's only national 24/7 counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years - free call 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au.

Parents or carers in Queensland and the Northern Territory looking for support can contact Parentline on 1300 30 1300 or parentline.com.au

ENDS

INTERVIEW/PHOTO/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

- John Dalglish, **yourtown** Head of Strategy and Research
- Kids Helpline counsellors
- VNR footage available of Kids Helpline call centre and interviews with counsellors

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