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## Australia Must Focus on Preventing Suicide

This World Suicide Prevention Day, Mental Health Australia is calling on governments across the country to focus on preventing suicide as an integral part of a national mental health reform agenda.

"As many as 2,500 Australians take their own lives each year," Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan said.

"More people die by suicide than on our roads. Despite this, suicide prevention does not attract anywhere near the same level of public attention or funding.

"In addition, around 60,000 people attempt suicide each year with varying impacts on our health system. I don't know of any other significant community health issue, with such a tangible impact on so many Australians, that receives so little attention from governments across the country.

"However, suicide can be prevented, it just takes leadership and careful investment to make a meaningful change in this area."

Mental Health Australia wants to see the national suicide rate halved over the next decade, and the implementation of a national approach that integrates clinically proven mental health services, community support and public education programs aimed at preventing deaths by suicide.

"Suicide prevention must be part of the upcoming 5th National Mental Health Plan and the Australian Government's response to the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services.

"Much needed reform design should include sound policy and system development, undertaken in partnership with expertise and lived experience from the mental health sector," Mr Quinlan said.

"If we make suicide prevention one of our reform priorities, we can help stop people taking their own lives, or trying, in what is a tragedy for them, for their friends and family and for the community as a whole.

"It's time for action on mental health reform."

For information on Mental Health Australia's campaign for action on mental health reform, go here <http://mhaustralia.org/general/countdown-reform>

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