



Bronnie Taylor

Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women

Mark Speakman

Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES LANDMARK SUICIDE MONITORING SYSTEM

The NSW Government has introduced a new suicide monitoring system which will provide up-to-date data for health and support services about the number of suicide deaths across the state.

Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor said the system will deliver the NSW Government timely access to information on location, age and gender.

“This means that from right now, we will be able to make critical decisions about services and local health responses in communities where we can effectively see risks emerging in real time instead of reacting to year-old data,” Mrs Taylor said.

“The first public report showed the number of suicide deaths in 2020 is tracking almost identically to the equivalent period in 2019. From 1 January to 30 September 2020, there were 673 suspected or confirmed suicide deaths reported in NSW. That is one more than the same time period in 2019.”

“While every death by suicide is a tragedy, we need to underline that there has not been an overall spike in numbers in a year that has delivered so many challenges.”

Attorney General Mark Speakman said that reforming the collection and management of suicide data is the result of significant collaboration between NSW Health, the Department of Communities and Justice, State Coroner Teresa O’Sullivan and NSW Police.

“The suicide monitoring system will provide meaningful insights for frontline services, while ensuring that best practice protocols are in place to maintain the security and accuracy of this very sensitive information,” Mr Speakman said.

The next stage of the program will be to develop an enhanced data set, which will include information about the social, economic and other pressures a person may have experienced, as well as any previous contact with health services.

Magistrate O’Sullivan said the system would be key to a more timely and sophisticated understanding of trends and why a suicide occurred.

“The Monitoring System is an important first step towards developing a suicide review process

that will result in more nuanced insights into suicide including information about key vulnerable groups to understand what may have contributed to their susceptibility and what could be done to prevent this tragedy from happening to other people,” Magistrate O’Sullivan said.

Towards Zero Suicides is a NSW Premier’s Priority and the NSW Government is investing \$87 million over three years in new suicide prevention initiatives.

If you, or someone you know, is thinking about suicide or experiencing a personal crisis or distress, please seek help immediately by calling 000 or one of these services:

- Lifeline **13 11 14**
- Suicide Call Back Service **1300 659 467**
- NSW Mental Health Line **1800 011 511**

To access the first public report from the Suicide Monitoring System, please visit health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/resources/Pages/suicide-monitoring-report-oct-2020.aspx.