



Suicide Prevention Action Plan

2025-2028



Government of South Australia

Department of Primary Industries
and Regions

All Enquiries

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the state's first peoples and nations. We recognise Aboriginal peoples as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters. We pay our respects to Aboriginal cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging. We appreciate the cultural and historical significance of connection to country and the vital role it plays in mental health and wellbeing.

We acknowledge the individual and collective contributions of those with a lived and living experience of mental ill-health and suicide, and those who love, have loved and care for them. Each person's journey is unique and a valued contribution to Australia's commitment to mental health suicide prevention systems reform.

We would also like to acknowledge the input of all staff and industry partners who contributed to the development of this Action Plan. The willingness and vulnerability of many people to share with us their insights, experience and perspectives has been humbling and motivated us to ensure this plan makes a difference.

From the Chief Executive

Suicide is a far-reaching issue that can have long-lasting effects on individuals, families, and communities. A multitude of complex factors can contribute to someone's distress but with the right support many deaths by suicide are preventable. The Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) is committed to playing our part in the prevention of suicide and supporting South Australians impacted by suicide.

The primary industries, regional communities and our staff who support them experience some complex and multi-faceted factors that have the potential to contribute to distress such as:

- Economic pressures
- Social isolation and remote working conditions
- Roles that involve first responder responsibilities (whether in their work role or in community roles)
- Psychosocial risk factors such as emotionally demanding work
- Global events and geopolitical tensions that can cause trade disruptions and market fluctuations.
- Climatic conditions and adverse events (droughts, bushfires, floods, frost, hail, pests, and disease outbreaks)

PIRSA can play an important role in supporting our stakeholders and communities in navigating these challenges, building resilience, being compassionate and linking them with professional support as needed.

Suicide has traditionally been seen as a health matter. However, suicide prevention is much more than that. It involves taking action to build well-being, address life's adversities, strengthen protective factors, raise community awareness, and change our collective mindset. Behind every suicide is the loss of a unique person with their own story¹. Every suicide creates a ripple effect, impacting their family, friends, and work colleagues. This impact may be felt immediately and last for a lifetime, and change how we think, feel, and experience our work and personal life. By working together, we can create compassionate, resilient, and connected communities that support wellbeing and save lives.

As we embark upon the journey of implementing our first Suicide Prevention Action Plan, it will be important to acknowledge that this will be a process of learning and evolving in our approach. This plan is to be treated as a living document that will evolve based on our learning over the years, and ongoing consultation with key stakeholders, experts, and peak professional bodies. But most importantly we want to get started.



Professor Mehdi Doroudi PSM

Chief Executive

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

¹ SA Suicide Prevention Plan 2023-26

Strategic Context

South Australia is proud to be leading the way by introducing the first-ever suicide prevention laws in Australia. At the centre of the Suicide Prevention Act 2021 (SA) is the South Australian Suicide Prevention Plan 2023-2026.

The State Suicide Prevention Plan vision of compassionate, resilient, and connected communities that support wellbeing and prevent suicide is based around three goals:

- To reduce suicide related distress and death by suicide in South Australia
- To reduce distress that may contribute to suicide
- To improve community understanding and responsiveness to prevent suicide.

The state plan provides a framework for prescribed state authorities to develop their own Suicide Prevention Action Plans and focus on priority population groups. Actions in agencies' Suicide Prevention Plans should cover five priorities:

- Prevent – create compassionate, safe and resilient communities
- Respond – meet the needs of people and communities when, and in the ways, they are needed
- Respect – promote social and emotional wellbeing and prevent and respond to suicide risk for Aboriginal South Australians
- Review – monitor and evaluate suicide prevention strategies and support evidence informed practice
- Partner – enable multisectoral and whole of community approaches to suicide prevention.

PIRSA's strategic vision is to advance the prosperity and sustainability of South Australia's primary industries and regional communities. Our primary industries, and agribusinesses are major employers and our largest export sector accounting for more than half of the state's merchandise exports. A healthy, vibrant and resilient community is a critical foundation for this vision to be realised. PIRSA has a unique role and has the potential to impact and influence the prevention of suicide. Our regional footprint, connection to community and the nature of our work allows us to increase awareness regarding suicide prevention and enable access to support.

We want our actions to be impactful and make a difference, and we need to take a structured and phased approach by:

- Building a solid foundation of understanding, awareness, compassion, and respect
- Reinforcing existing initiatives, and as required implementing new ones to prevent and support those impacted by suicide
- Focusing on those we work with that are overrepresented in the statistics - knowing the ripple effect will be felt broader
- Partnering with industry stakeholders, peak bodies/representatives and other public sector agencies to provide help and support
- Building in regular review and reflection points to mature our approach to suicide prevention

About Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA)

PIRSA aims to advance the prosperity and sustainability of South Australia's primary industries and the regional communities. We exist to stimulate the value growth of South Australia's primary industries while protecting and sustaining the resources that underpin them, thereby building stronger regional communities.

Our priorities are to:

- Stimulate Value Growth – Grow the value of primary industries by leveraging government's cross-functional capabilities to pursue opportunities where South Australia has a competitive advantage
- Reset the Operating Environment – Remove barriers to economic growth of primary industries and the advancement of regions
- Sustain the Resource – Protect and maximise primary industry resources through integration of targeted research, monitoring, policy and regulatory interventions
- Manage Risk & Recovery – Preparing for risks and being able to respond and recover quickly from adverse events that impact economic growth and community wellbeing
- Enable Regional Growth – Support key regional development drivers
- Perform well – Perform as a modern, flexible and responsive organisation that values its partners and people.

Our staff are on the land and the sea. They sit side by side with primary producers and regional communities. They experience the highs and lows of our communities. At times they are the bearer of good news, and other times their role could lead to profound impacts. Their commitment and dedication to their roles can bring elation and celebration, but also at times sadness and disappointment and unwarranted feelings of responsibility. Our work includes many functions some of which can be distressing for our staff, but also our community members and their families.

When it comes to the facts, the figures show that:

- Men are three times more likely to die by suicide as females² (noting that women attempt suicide more frequently than men in Australia, consistent with global trends)
- Aboriginal people in South Australia are dying by suicide almost twice that of non-Aboriginal people²
- In regional, rural and remote South Australia suicide rates are higher than in the Adelaide metropolitan area²
- LGBTIQ+ communities have a higher rate of suicide related behaviours than their peers²
- People with disability, Autistic and neurodivergent people are more likely to experience anxiety and depression and be at risk of self-harm and suicide³
- Farmers are twice as likely to die from suicide than the rest of the working population and one farmer dies of suicide every ten days⁴
- The suicide rate among veterinary workers is four times greater than in the general population⁵

² [SA Suicide Prevention Plan 2023-26](#)

³ [La Trobe University response to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, 2021; AIHW Report: Mortality patterns among people using disability support services: 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2018](#)

⁴ [First national study of farmer suicide rates using coronial data | NRHA - National Rural Health Alliance](#)

⁵ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-17/veterinary-industry-grapples-with-high-suicide-rate/100142650>

It is clear to see that PIRSA has an opportunity to support those at risk, both internal and external to our organisation. The intersectionality of the suicide risk factors listed above, along with the impact of financial hardship, relationship stress, bullying and discrimination, insecure housing and alcohol and other drug use within our community creates a compelling narrative for change.

In terms of PIRSA's workforce, close to 50% are men, 2% are Aboriginal Australians, 2% are people with disability, 2% are Veterinary professionals and 28% are located regionally. We have a direct impact and influence in terms of supporting and improving wellbeing outcomes for all our staff, and particularly those from high-risk groups.

We also work closely with a number of industry and regional associations through which we can extend support to farmers, primary producers, veterinarians, and regional communities.

Our vision for suicide prevention

PIRSA is committed to creating meaningful relationships and connections with our staff and the community, so no one feels alone, or unsupported. We will be considerate and compassionate with each other and the community, proactive in raising awareness to prevent suicide, and will be there to support those impacted by suicide. We are committed to building a wellbeing -focused culture and managing psychosocial and physical risks to protect mental and physical health.

We acknowledge the heightened risk to some of our staff and community members, and will focus on promoting wellbeing, resilience, and strengthening the protective factors for:

- Our staff, ensuring we extend support to those from high-risk groups
- Primary producers, agribusinesses and regional communities experiencing difficulties such as industry pressures or adverse events
- Veterinary professionals

We will work to equip our staff with the skills and resources to provide necessary support to our stakeholders and community, in the discharge of their duties in a respectful and compassionate way. We will build partnerships to increase our impact and reach, continually building our knowledge and capability, as well as that of the people, organisations and service providers involved in supporting suicide prevention within our community.

Development of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan

The development of our inaugural PIRSA Suicide Prevention Action Plan has been a time of learning and understanding. We are incredibly grateful for the patience, goodwill and insight received throughout the consultation process.

The Human Resources Governance Committee, consisting of key executive members and stakeholders across various divisions played a significant role in providing inputs and ensuring PIRSA's strategic context and sphere of influence was understood and incorporated into the plan.

In developing the Action Plan, our internal consultation process involved conducting focus groups with our staff, ensuring representation of individuals from high-risk groups. This enabled a greater level of understanding and appreciation of the risk and contributing factors along with the protective factors, to help understand what PIRSA can do to make a difference.

We also provided the draft Action Plan to key external industry stakeholders and partners and invited their views on whether the Plan will be effective and meaningful. We also sought feedback from peak bodies representing people with lived and living experiences to ensure the Plan's actions were relevant and impactful.

The plan was updated basis feedback from our staff and stakeholders and posted on the YourSAy website, with the other prescribed agencies' Action Plans for broader community consultation. Feedback received through public consultation will be considered, and the Action Plan amended accordingly.

PIRSA's Suicide Prevention Action Plan

ACTION	MEASURES	RESPONSIBILITY
STRATEGY 1 - PARTNER - Enable multisectoral and whole of community approaches to suicide prevention		
Collaborate and leverage relationships, industry partnerships and relevant forums to raise awareness on suicide prevention and support those affected by suicide. (Example: Screening of movie "Just a Farmer", fundraiser/s to support training/suicide prevention networks)	Partnership and support extended to Industry	Industry, Strategy and Partnerships
Work collaboratively with other agencies, local health networks, NGOs, and not for profit community groups on suicide prevention initiatives to support the public at risk of suicide	Number of collaborations initiated	All Divisions
Partner with industry stakeholders and subject matter experts (including the Suicide Prevention Council) to assist in addressing risk and implementing protective factors for those in primary industries and regional communities, to reduce and prevent distress well before a suicide crisis occurs	Number of partnerships initiated	All Divisions
Contribute to the Suicide Prevention website as a hub of resources to facilitate sharing of best practice and leverage existing resources to support mental health and suicide prevention strategies	Number of resources provisioned to the Hub	All Divisions
STRATEGY 2 – RESPECT – Promote social and emotional wellbeing and prevent and respond to suicide risk for Aboriginal South Australians		
Implement the SA Work Health Safety Framework for Cultural Safety (led by OCPSE) and take agreed action at an agency level	Number of actions implemented	People and Culture
In developing PIRSA's RAP and associated strategies, include actions that can enhance social and emotional wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal staff and communities, including culturally appropriate wellbeing training and/or resources to the Aboriginal Staff Network	% of actions included	Chair, Reconciliation Action Plan
Integrate the actions arising out of the State Anti-Racism Strategy and action-plan into PIRSA RAP actions and associated strategies, as a way of proactively removing racist barriers in the workplace.	RAP implementation and progress report	Chair, Reconciliation Action Plan People and Culture

Develop a South Australian Aboriginal business strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal businesses and build capacity and capability in Primary Industries	Completion of the Strategy	Chair, Reconciliation Action Plan
Review the Cultural Awareness and Anti-Racism training modules (on myCareer) to identify how it can help staff to support social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal staff. Advise OCPSE of review and identify ways to compliment the training content as needed.	Review completed and feedback shared with OCPSE for consideration	People and Culture
Mandate Cultural Awareness and Anti-Racism training for all staff	90% of staff complete the training	People and Culture
Contribute to cross-agency working groups focused on implementing the Anti-racism strategy and actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workforce and training working group - Policy & Systems Working Group - Evaluation and Quality Improvement Working Group 	Number of working groups led Number of working groups participated in	PIRSA staff represented in the various Working Groups
STRATEGY 3 - PREVENT - Create compassionate, safe and resilient communities		
Undertake activities to increase staff awareness on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channels to raise health and wellbeing concerns • Help seeking and care planning • Wellbeing resources, toolkits and training • Safe and consistent language • The proactive and crisis services available within and external to PIRSA 	Number of activities undertaken Levels of wellbeing and awareness of staff, as assessed via pulse surveys	Industry, Strategy and Partnerships People and Culture
Undertake activities to support leaders and managers to identify, respond to and support staff experiencing mental health issues or distress with compassion and empathy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to identify early warning signs • Information on support services available, across a range of needs and stages • Tools and resources to build safety within teams to discuss mental health issues and raise awareness of support services, including Wellbeing Check-ins • How to consider and support diversity, cultural and individual needs 	Number of activities undertaken	People and Culture

Implement the Compassionate Foundations program as part of PIRSA's WH&S induction program for managers and other relevant roles to increase suicide prevention awareness and knowledge on how to respond to signs of distress	% of staff trained	People and Culture
Continue to acknowledge and promote World Suicide Prevention Day and RUOK Day to raise awareness and promote support services	Number of promotion activities undertaken	Industry, Strategy and Partnerships People and Culture
Commit to the use of safe and consistent language when discussing mental illness and suicide through the signing of Everymind's National Communications Charter	Signing of Charter Communications on suicide prevention and mental health, aligned with the principles outlined in the Charter	Industry, Strategy and Partnerships
Establish the following staff wellbeing support groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PIRSA Wellbeing Working Group to support engagement and implementation of wellbeing initiatives PIRSA Wellbeing Support Network to provide proactive wellbeing support to staff PIRSA Wellbeing Support Officers 	Support groups established and active	People and Culture
Review policies and procedures to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate management of psychosocial hazards and risks, including the development/implementation of psychosocial risk assessments and appropriate mitigation strategies Grievance and complaints management processes are clear and underpinned with empathy and compassion in how the people are treated Wellbeing debriefs are held for situations that could be distressing or confronting for staff 	Relevant policies and procedures are updated/ developed (as needed)	Corporate Services
Review the Management Development Program to ensure topics such as employee wellbeing, mental health, management of psychosocial risks and hazards are included	Program updated and current % of Managers trained	People and Culture
Identify opportunities (such as senior leaders forum) to create awareness and build capability of senior leaders in managing mental health problems in the workplace, such as conducting a session on Mental Health wellbeing principles as part of Senior Leaders Forum.	Number of activities undertaken	Industry, Strategy and Partnerships People and Culture

<p>Implement the agreed actions from the People Matter Employee Survey to improve wellbeing of staff and priority populations.</p>	<p>% agreed activities implemented</p>	<p>Executive Leadership Team/Exec Sponsor People and Culture</p>
<p>Continue to work with and support Industry Associations, Universities, Local Health Networks, Not-for-profit organisations and Local Community Groups on mental health and suicide prevention programs and initiatives, and spreading awareness of available support services as required, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The free Family and Business mentors service (FaB mentors) for farmers and primary production businesses impacted by adverse events • River Murray Flood LMRIA Irrigation Trust Recovery Grant • River Murray Floor Primary Producer Recovery Grant • 2024 Weed Control Equipment Subsidy • Red Wine Grape Growers Support Grants • Bushfire Recovery Programs • Healthy Vines Healthy Minds Podcast • The ifarmwell program and associated ag-focused mental health support resources • Community wellbeing events for sectors experiencing hardship • Australian Veterinarian Association's Thrive program • The Seafood industry's 'Stay Afloat' program 	<p>Number of programs delivered to community/industry annually.</p>	<p>All Divisions</p>
<p>STRATEGY 4 - RESPOND - Meeting the needs of people and communities when, and in the ways, they are needed</p>		
<p>Ensure appropriate training and resources are available to staff with community facing roles in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding immediately to distress or disclosures of suicide • Delivering distressing information or news to community members • Identifying early warning signs of mental illness or distress. 	<p>Number of activities to train community facing staff</p>	<p>All Divisions</p>
<p>Provide visibility and awareness of Mental Health First Aiders in each location, and encourage and support more managers and staff to participate in mental health support training</p>	<p>Number and site coverage of Mental Health First aiders Number of staff attending mental health support training</p>	<p>People and Culture All Divisions</p>

<p>Review HR and WHS policies and procedures to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers and members of the public who disclose thoughts of suicide are treated confidentially and provided with safe, inclusive and compassionate responses - Adequate support is provided to staff exposed to suicidal distress and suicide related events - Site specific response and postvention practices for suicide related events are clear - Potential agency specific 'means of suicide' are listed on the risk register 	<p>HR/WHS policies and procedures updated and current</p> <p>Number of site specific suicide prevention & response plans in place</p> <p>Risk register updated and reviewed by WHS Governance Committee</p>	<p>People and Culture</p>
<p>Provide active wellbeing support services to staff undertaking emergency responses, recovery and compliance activities</p>	<p>Number of events/compliance programs with active support provided.</p>	<p>All Divisions</p>
STRATEGY 5 - REVIEW - Monitor and evaluate suicide prevention strategies and support evidence informed practice		
<p>Provide governance and oversight of this plan, to provide sponsorship, advocacy, executive leadership and ensure compliance and continuous improvement</p>	<p>Governance and arrangement in place</p>	<p>HR Governance Committee</p>
<p>Review the services provided by the EAP related to suicide prevention and postvention, and identify if complementary and supplementary services are required to support staff across all levels of wellbeing and distress</p>	<p>EAP review conducted and supplementary services identified (as needed)</p>	<p>People and Culture</p>
<p>Engage with the Suicide Prevention Council and other peak bodies to source relevant data on emerging trends and priority populations to improve preparation, prevention, response and recovery protocols</p>	<p>Engagement with peak bodies</p>	<p>People and Culture</p>
<p>Use the employee pulse survey and other workforce data to monitor 'moment in time' employee wellbeing and take timely action</p>	<p>Employer of Choice Action Plan and Wellbeing Plan progress report</p>	<p>All Divisions</p>
<p>Consult and review this plan every two years (or as required) to reflect changing needs and embed continuous improvement</p>	<p>Plan to be reviewed every two years</p>	<p>HR Governance Committee</p>
<p>Annual progress reporting to the Suicide Prevention Council on implementation of the Suicide Prevention Action plan</p>	<p>Annual Reporting by October 31st each year</p>	<p>People and Culture</p>

Relationship to other policies, strategies, frameworks

This Action Plan has strong links to a number of other plans including the:

- PIRSA Wellbeing Plan
- PIRSA Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
- PIRSA Employer of Choice Action Plan
- PIRSA and State Workplace Health and Safety Strategies
- PIRSA's commitments under Closing the Gap
- PIRSA and State Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plans
- PIRSA and State People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) Action Plan (TBD)

As the abovementioned plans are reviewed and updated, actions that contribute to the Suicide Prevention Action Plan will be included. Consultation with stakeholders, including those within the priority populations and with lived and living experience will be engaged as part of this process. The Department's Employee Assistance Program provides critical incident briefings and acute support following the death by suicide of a person.

Implementation, monitoring, and reporting

The Human Resources Governance Committee is responsible for the oversight and monitoring of this Action Plan. This sub-committee of Executive will champion the Action Plan across the various divisions of PIRSA. Updates on the progress of the Action Plan will be provided six-monthly, and support will be provided where barriers to achievement are encountered.

Suicide prevention is not an isolated topic, and the Work Health Safety and Injury Management Governance Committee will also play a role in ensuring key deliverables in the Action Plan are achieved. The monitoring, evaluation and progress of actions will help inform the workplans for the HR Governance Committee and the WHS and Injury Management Governance Committee and PIRSA Divisions.

PIRSA is highly sensitive to the distress that primary producers, Agribusinesses, and regional communities experience from time to time. PIRSA's Resilience and Recovery programs have a wellbeing element, providing support to primary producers following adverse events. This support includes funding wellbeing activities and linking them to key support services. All emergency events have a Recovery Functional Lead to ensure wellbeing is considered at all stages of the response program.

Similarly, PIRSA provides support (both financial and non-financial) to organisations and programs supporting primary producers and regional communities. This includes the Rural Business Support, who deliver free independent and confidential financial counselling services for primary producers and rural businesses. Another example is the South Australian Assistance Guide for Grape growers and Winemakers. This regularly updated resource is circulated through regional associations and industry bodies for the grape and wine sector to understand the support services and resources available.

PIRSA will continue to advocate for, support aligned organisations and enable access to adversity and emergency support programs as part of its primary functions and programs.