



**The Hon Jenny Macklin MP  
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services  
and Indigenous Affairs**

**The Hon Mark Butler MP  
Minister for Mental Health and Ageing  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform**

**The Hon Warren Snowdon MP  
Minister for Indigenous Health**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**10 September 2011**

### **World Suicide Prevention Day – Bringing Experts Together To Tackle Suicide**

On World Suicide Prevention Day, the Gillard Labor Government announced a range of new measures aimed at strengthening its efforts to tackle suicide in the community.

The Government announced it will:

- continue and expand the membership of the Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council (ASPAC) until 2014;
- develop Australia's first Indigenous Suicide Prevention Strategy; and
- establish a new Indigenous Suicide Prevention Advisory Group.

Mr Butler said the ASPAC would build on its achievements from its first term and continue to provide expert advice to the Government.

“The ASPAC will provide advice on the implementation of our *Taking Action to Tackle Suicide* package and National Suicide Prevention Program, which together will deliver \$231.6 million to vital programs and services over the next four years.”

The Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, said the new Indigenous Suicide Prevention Advisory Group will provide critical advice to the Government.

“The group will focus on what needs to be done to reduce the impact of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – including improving prevention, early intervention and support services.

“The former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, will chair the group. Mr Calma has extensive experience in Indigenous policy development and is the Australian Government’s National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking.”

Mr Butler said the Government has specifically allocated \$6 million to support new community based prevention services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities under the *Taking Action to Tackle Suicide* package.

“The new Advisory Group will also advise the Government on the best way to prioritise and allocate this \$6 million investment,” Mr Butler said.

“Together, the new Advisory Group and ASPAC will also develop a Suicide Prevention Strategy specific to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and their communities – an Australian first.”

“The establishment of this Advisory Group is a clear signal that the Government is taking an approach to suicide prevention based on collaboration, respect and a genuine willingness to listen.”

“The high rate of indigenous suicide is a tragedy which we are determined to tackle,” Ms Macklin said.

“Today’s initiatives will make a difference to people’s lives and build on our investments in mental health in the 2011-12 Budget, as well as the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Healing Foundation.”

The Gillard Labor Government recognises the importance of preventing suicide and is making the largest investment in mental health in the nation’s history, doubling efforts in this area.

Today’s announcement further demonstrates our resolve to tackle suicide in the community and make mental health a priority for this term of government.

NOTE: Biographical details of members of the Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council and the Indigenous Suicide Prevention Working Group are attached.

**Media contact: Virginia Kim, 0407 415 484**

## AUSTRALIAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ADVISORY COUNCIL (ASPAC)

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### 2011-2014 – Members

- \***Chair – Professor Ian Webster**, Emeritus Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of NSW;
- Mr Jorge Aroche** – Executive Director, NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors;
- Dr Siva Bala** – Regional Psychiatrist, Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service;
- \***Ms Adele Cox** - Member for Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention WA;
- \***Professor Diego de Leo** - Director, Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention;
- Ms Jenna Denley** – Youth Ambassador and advocate for young people’s mental health;
- \***Dr Michael Dudley** – Chair, Suicide Prevention Australia;
- \***Ms Barbara Hocking** – Executive Director, SANE Australia;
- Dr Maggie Jamieson** – CEO, Lifeline;
- \***Professor Brian Kelly** – Professor of Psychiatry, University of Newcastle;
- Mr Paul Martin** – Chair, National Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI) Health Alliance;
- \***Ms Janet Meagher** – Division Manager Inclusion, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia;
- Associate Professor David Ranson** – Deputy Director, Victorian Institute for Forensic Medicine; and
- \***Associate Professor Morton Rawlin** – Vice President and Chair, RACGP.

\* Denotes members who have been reappointed from the 2008-11 ASPAC

### SHORT BIOS

**Chair - Professor Ian Webster AO**, is a physician and Emeritus Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales and patron of the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia. Professor Webster was Chair of the National Advisory Council on Suicide Prevention and the 2008-11 Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council.

**Mr Jorge Aroche** is the Executive Director of the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS). Trained as a clinical psychologist, he is Secretary General of the International Society for Health and Human Rights and the Vice President of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims.

**Dr Siva Bala** is a Consultant Psychiatrist with the Kimberly Mental Health and Drug Service and provides clinical services in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia.

**Ms Adele Cox** is a Bunuba and Gija woman from the Kimberley region of Western Australia. She has spent the majority of her earlier working life in the Kimberley region in media and in suicide prevention, and has been an active member of several committees at both state and national levels.

**Professor Diego de Leo** is Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention at Griffith University, Brisbane, where he also directs the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention.

**Ms Jenna Denley** is an advocate for young people's mental health and has a particular interest in support for young people in rural and regional Australia. She has been a Youth Ambassador for [ReachOut.com](http://ReachOut.com) and involved with headspace Central West.

**Dr Michael Dudley** is Chair of Suicide Prevention Australia and works as a psychiatrist at Prince of Wales and Sydney Children's Hospitals, and is a conjoint senior lecturer in psychiatry at University of New South Wales. He has long-standing clinical, public health and research interest in suicide, self-harm and depression in young people.

**Ms Barbara Hocking** is Executive Director of SANE Australia, a national organisation helping people affected by mental illness (consumers, their family and other carers), through education, applied research and campaigning for improved services and attitudes.

**Dr Maggie Jamieson** is the CEO of Lifeline and former CEO of the Greater Southern Area Health Service. She has over 20 years experience in the health and community sector.

**Professor Brian Kelly** is Chair in Psychiatry, Faculty of Health University of Newcastle. He has previously been Director of the NSW Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, Orange and continues to play a major leadership role in the Centre's research, education and service development programs.

**Mr Paul Martin** is Chair of the National LGBTI Health Alliance and General Manager of the Queensland Association for Health Communities. He has worked and volunteered for LGBT/HIV communities since 1990 in Queensland and nationally, as well as various positions in the United Kingdom.

**Ms Janet Meagher** is the Divisional Manager Inclusion for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia. She is active in the Consumers' Health Forum of Australia and a founding member of the NSW Consumer Advisory Group, as well as having been a mental health consumer activist and advocate for almost 30 years.

**Associate Professor David Ranson** is a forensic pathologist, Deputy Director of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Forensic Medicine at Monash University. He is an expert in coronial law, medico-legal informatics and the analysis of intentional injury.

**Associate Professor Rawlin** is a Melbourne based General Practitioner who has extensive experience in general practice medical education at all levels, including as a general practice supervisor and medical educator.

## **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUICIDE PREVENTION EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP**

- Chair – Dr Tom Calma**, national coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking;  
**Ms Adele Cox**, member of the Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council and the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention WA;  
**Professor Ernest Hunter**, regional psychiatrist and Adjunct Professor, University of Queensland;  
**Mr Tom Brideson**, consultant on Social and Emotional Wellbeing for Indigenous HealthInfoNet;  
**Dr Noritta Morseu-Diop**, social worker with experience in bereavement counselling and support and community development initiatives for communities;  
**Dr Pat Dudgeon**, psychologist and chair of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA); and  
**Ms Mary Victor O'Reeri**, convenor of the inaugural Blank Page Summit at Billard.

## **SHORT BIOS**

**Dr Tom Calma, Northern Territory (Chair):** Dr Calma is an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and a member of the Iwaidja tribal group. Dr Calma is a former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, the current National Coordinator for Tackling Indigenous Smoking.

**Ms Adele Cox, Western Australia:** Adele Cox is a Bunuba & Kija (Gija) woman from the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Adele is a current member of Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council (ASPAC) and past member of National Advisory Council on Mental Health (NACMH).

**Prof. Ernest Hunter, Queensland:** Ernest Hunter is an Australian medical graduate trained in adult, child, cross cultural psychiatry and public health. He is Regional Psychiatrist with Queensland Health and Adjunct Professor with the University of Queensland based in Cairns.

**Mr Tom Brideson, New South Wales:** Tom Brideson is a Kamilaroi man. Tom is a Visiting Fellow with NSW Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health at Newcastle

University; past Program Leader for the CRC for Aboriginal Health; consultant on Social and Emotional Wellbeing for Indigenous Health/InfoNet.

**Dr Noritta Morseu-Diop, Thursday Island:** Torres Strait Islander woman from Thursday Island who has worked at the grass roots level as a social worker. Dr Morseu-Diop has extensive experience on the areas of grief, loss, bereavement counselling and support and community development initiatives for communities.

**Dr Pat Dudgeon, Western Australia:** Pat Dudgeon is from Bardi people of the Kimberley. She is a psychologist and is known for her role in Indigenous higher education. Pat is the current Chair of Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA); first convener of the Australian Psychological Society Interest Group, Aboriginal issues and Aboriginal People and Psychology.

**Mary Victor O'Reeri, Western Australia:** WA Local Hero 2011. Mary Victor O'Reeri lives in the Billard and Beagle Bay Aboriginal communities in the remote north-west Kimberley region of Western Australia. Mary convened the inaugural Blank Page Summit in her remote community at Billard in the north west Kimberley in 2009.