

The Way Back Support Service

An initiative providing non-clinical care and practical support to individuals following a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis.



On average, 65,000 people attempt suicide in Australia each year¹, and eight per day will die².

Those who have previously attempted are among the most at-risk of attempting again. These are the people The Way Back Service supports.

After a person has been referred to the service by clinical staff, they're contacted by a Practitioner within one working day of receiving the referral. The Practitioner then guides them through safety planning and a personalised aftercare program for up to three months.

This includes engaging them with services addressing some of the issues leading to their distress. This can mean anything from financial advice, to connecting them with community groups, or helping them attend health care appointments.

A recent Australian study found coordinated assertive aftercare is among the most effective strategies for reducing suicide reattempts, providing a potential reduction of up to 19.8 per cent³.

The Way Back Support Service has run in trial locations since 2014. Encouraging results led to a 2018 Australian Government announcement of

Commonwealth funding for a national rollout to up to 30 sites.

We believe this service will help save lives.

Encourage. Support. Connect.

The Way Back Support Service aims to prevent further suicide attempts by providing proactive, non-clinical support and coordinating access to community services.

Practitioners:

- maintain contact and provide encouragement and support
- facilitate access to a range of community support services (eg legal support services, housing or social support services)
- encourage uptake of hospital discharge plans and safety plan utilisation
- support attendance at medical and allied health appointments
- assist clients to connect with support networks (e.g. friends, family and other community and social supports)

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Who is eligible?

Individuals presenting to the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) following a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis and residing in Southern Tasmania will be eligible for the service (subject to service capacity).

The Way Back Practitioners will work with staff at the RHH and with the Statewide Mental Health Services (SMHS) Acute Care Team (ACT), to engage with clients while they are in hospital (where admitted) and after discharge, to arrange for follow-up contact.

Referrals

The Way Back Support Service operates during business hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm (excluding public holidays). The service is based in Anglicare Tasmania's Sorell, Glenorchy and Hobart offices with Practitioners being available to the RHH daily to meet with new clients.

Presentations to hospital on weekends or after hours will be followed up via phone call during the next business day.

Crisis intervention is redirected to existing clinical pathways including the Acute Care Team (ACT). Clients are routinely provided with information on emergency mental health contacts and are encouraged to use 24/7 crisis helpline services if they feel suicidal or are concerned about someone else's safety.

How are clients linked in?

The referral pathway is integrated within the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH). Following a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis will have the opportunity to be part of the service. This is not a clinical service and will be offered free of charge, in addition to any existing services (subject to service capacity).

Some exclusions will apply:

If an individual is already being supported by an intensive assertive outreach service that includes support for their mental health needs. Examples include (but aren't limited to):

- Mental Health Mobile Support Services
- Intensive National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Package
- any other intensive assertive outreach service

(Discretion may be applied in considering the suitability of existing services to support the individual through their suicide crisis.)

Support for partners, family and friends

To assist in the client's recovery, Guiding their way back is an online booklet that provides education and advice to partners, family members and other support people. You can find a link to this report on the Anglicare website. Use the QR Code.

Further information

You are welcome to call The Way Back Support Service at Anglicare Tasmania on **1800 243 232** or email wayback@anglicare-tas.org.au



- 1 Slade, T., Johnston, A., Teesson, M., Whiteford, H., Burgess, P., Pirkis, J., Saw, S. (2009) The Mental Health of Australians 2. Report on the 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra
- 2 Causes of Death, Australia, 3303.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, September 2018
- 3 Krysinska K, Batterham PJ, Tye M, et al. Best strategies for reducing the suicide rate in Australia. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry. 2016;50(2):115-118.

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