

# The Way Back Support Service

**A Beyond Blue 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 year<sup>1</sup>, and eight per day will die<sup>2</sup>.

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

After a person has been referred to the service by clinical staff, they're contacted by a Support Coordinator within one working day of receiving the referral. The Support Coordinator 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 cent<sup>3</sup>.

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 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.

Support Coordinators:

- maintain contact and provide encouragement and support
- facilitate access to a range of community support services (e.g. housing, finance, family support, cultural and spiritual support, education and employment)
- 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)

## **Who is eligible?**

Individuals who have presented to the Darling Downs Health or West Moreton Health emergency departments following a suicide attempt or experiencing a suicidal crisis, and residing within the Toowoomba or Ipswich regions, will be eligible for the service. The Way Back Support Coordinators will work with hospital staff at Darling Downs Health or West Moreton Health to engage with clients while they are in hospital and arrange for follow-up contact following discharge.

# Referrals

The Way Back Support Service operates Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm. The service has locations in Ipswich and Toowoomba with Support Coordinators attending the Toowoomba Base Hospital and Ipswich Hospital daily to meet with new clients when a referral has been received.

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 000, Lifeline, Mental Health Access Line (1300 642 255), Suicide Call Back Service, Kids Helpline and MensLine Australia. 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 **refeRHEALTH portal**, phone: **1300 168 839** or email: **thewayback@rfq.com.au** for more information. All presentations to Darling Downs Health and West Moreton Health emergency departments following a suicide attempt or experiencing a 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.

## 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 available at [beyondblue.org.au/thewayback](http://beyondblue.org.au/thewayback)

## Further information

You are welcome to call the **Richmond Fellowship of Queensland** during business hours on **1300 168 839** or email **thewayback@rfq.com.au**

**The Way Back Support Service**  
PO Box 655, Annerley QLD 4103

<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> Causes of Death, Australia, 3303.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, September 2018

<sup>3</sup> Krysinaka 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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