

Press Release June 2021

Australia's National Mental Health Commission is to partner with the IASP 31st World Congress providing 150 Bursaries to those with Lived Experience of Suicide.

The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) will be partnering with Australia's National Mental Health Commission for the IASP 31st World Congress to be held in Gold Coast, Australia in September this year.

Engagement with a government body such as the National Mental Health Commission is vital in demonstrating not only a local, but a global commitment to reducing suicides.

"IASP's partnership with the National Mental Health Commission demonstrates their unequivocal commitment to further suicide prevention efforts in Australia" states Professor Rory O'Connor, IASP President.

The partnership will also enable greater engagement from those with lived experience of suicide through the provision of 150 bursaries to both the World Congress and the preceding Lived Experience Summit led by Roses in the Ocean, a lead organisation for lived experience of suicide in Australia. This will ensure the participation of those who have experienced suicide or been bereaved by suicide is engrained within the congress content.

"This sets a global precedent for lived experience engagement. The provision of these bursaries to those with lived experience of suicide ensures we place this knowledge and expertise front and center within this World Congress; shaping discussions and encouraging collaborative partnerships that embed lived experience alongside scientific and clinical research; fundamental as we work to advance our understanding and prevention of suicide." says Professor O'Connor.

Suicide is a public health issue that affects individuals, families, workplaces and communities the world over. It remains a universal challenge with millions impacted by suicidal behaviour. Suicide is among the top 20 causes of death globally for people of all ages (approximately 800,000 per year, with over 3,000 in Australia). Indigenous peoples in Australia have among the highest global rates.

Limited data means the true extent of suicidal behaviour remains hidden (approximately 20 attempted suicides per suicide) and suicide is far-reaching, leaving many bereaved and impacted (approximately 135 people per suicide).

The reduction of suicide mortality is of global importance and a vital public health consideration. With a clear, unequivocal commitment from the States and Federal governments and with the Australian Prime Minister taking a leading role in furthering suicide prevention efforts, Australia plays an exemplary role in how nations can fulfil obligations towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and aims within the latest Mental Health Action Plan by the World Health Organisation.

Commission CEO and the National Suicide Prevention Adviser to the Prime Minister, Christine Morgan states:

"The Commission is delighted to be partnering with IASP to bring the 31st World Congress to Australia by providing bursaries for 150 people with lived experience to attend. We believe the voice of lived experience is central to best practice in suicide prevention, that's why it was the leading source of inquiry in developing the National Advice for Suicide Prevention. The clarion call



International Association for Suicide Prevention

from those with lived experience will help Australia create a more connected and compassionate approach to early intervention and suicide prevention that takes support to people where they experience distress. These bursaries will enable people with lived experience to share their expertise directly with researchers, crisis workers, experts and professionals across service delivery – the opportunity to elevate this advice to an international level will help save lives globally.”

The congress takes place on the Gold Coast, Queensland and virtually from 21st – 24th September 2021.

The Congress will be fully hybrid with the full programme available in person and virtually online. Bursary applications will close on 15th June 2021.

For more information and to register for the event, visit:

<https://www.iasp.info/goldcoast2021/registrations/>

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Media talent: Professor Rory O’Conner: has a long-standing interest in suicide research and prevention; he has been working in the field since 1994. He is Professor of Health Psychology at the University of Glasgow in Scotland and Past President of the International Academy of Suicide Research. Rory leads the Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory (www.suicideresearch.info) at the University of Glasgow, one of the leading suicide and self-harm research groups in the UK.

Notes for editors:

The International Association for Suicide Prevention

The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) leads the global effort in suicide prevention having developed an effective forum that is proactive in creating strong collaborative partnerships and promoting evidence-based action in order to reduce the incidence of suicide and suicidal behaviour (www.iasp.info). Established in 1960, IASP is the largest international association dedicated to suicide prevention and to the alleviation of the effects of suicide and collaborates closely with relevant international organisations.

National Mental Health Commission Australia provides evidence and advice on ways to continuously improve Australia’s mental health and suicide prevention system, and act as a catalyst for change to achieve those improvements. The National Mental Health Commission is an official partner for the IASP 31st World Congress. <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/>

Roses in the Ocean, Australia is a lead organisation for lived experience of suicide in Australia, focused on building a safe, trained & supported Lived Experience 'Workforce' with the expertise and skills needed to bring the lived experience as a voice of change in all aspects of suicide prevention. <https://rosesintheocean.com.au/>



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Important note: Journalists reporting on this event are advised to include information on relevant help lines and websites. The following website provides details of Crisis Centres around the globe:
https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres/

Journalists reporting on this event are also advised to adhere to the following guidelines;
Guidelines related to reporting on suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic:
https://www.iasp.info/pdf/2020_Briefing_Statement_Reporting_on_Suicide_During_COVID19.pdf

General guidance for communicating about suicide:
<https://mindframe.org.au/suicide/communicating-about-suicide>