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More to do despite reduction in national suicide rate

beyondblue CEO Georgie Harman today acknowledged the reduction in suicide deaths in Australia, saying the drop was a step in the right direction, but the real danger was complacency.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data released yesterday shows 2811 people died by suicide in 2016, compared to 3027 in 2015.

The number of suicide deaths each day remains at eight. The ABS reported an average 7.9 deaths per day in 2016 compared to 8.3 in 2015.

“While it is encouraging to see a small decrease in these statistics, the fact is that suicide remains the leading cause of death among those aged under 44 in Australia,” Ms Harman said.

“Suicide rates are still unacceptably high, particularly among young Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“Every life matters. This is not about statistics, it is about people. There is more work to do when it comes to suicide prevention.”

Three times as many men as women took their lives in 2016. There were 2151 male deaths by suicide while 715 women chose to end their lives.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are twice as likely to die by suicide as non-Indigenous Australians, with respective rates of 23.8 and 11.4 per 100,000. Last year, 162 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.

Suicide accounted for over one third of all deaths among all Australians aged 15-24 and a quarter of deaths among those aged 25-34.

Ms Harman said suicide prevention was a priority for *beyondblue*, with a number of its suicide prevention programs being expanded.

One such program, The Way Back Support Service, supports people in their recovery following a suicide attempt. It is operating at three sites around Australia, with four more to commence in the near future.

Learn how to have a conversation about suicide by visiting www.beyondblue.org.au/talk-about-suicide.

Mental health professionals are available at the *beyondblue* Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 224 636 or via <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support> for online chat (3PM-12AM AEST) or email responses (within 24 hours).