

YOUTH INSEARCH FOUNDATION — END YOUTH SUICIDE CAMPAIGN

Statement

HON PETER FOSTER (Mining and Pastoral) [5.37 pm]: I want to acknowledge and thank the members of this chamber who this week have been wearing blue hearts as part of the Youth Insearch Foundation's End Youth Suicide campaign, which this year is in its fifth year. The Youth Insearch Foundation's end suicide campaign encourages Australians to defy the stigma associated with mental health and start open conversations about suicide among friends, families and communities to spread hope and save lives. Suicide continues to be the biggest killer of younger Australians aged between 14 and 25 years.

In 2021, 402 young Australian lives were lost to suicide. Each one of those deaths was preventable. These young people have been described as the "missing middle", but they are not missing; they are just forgotten. Suicide remains the biggest killer of young people, and it disproportionately affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the LGBTQIA+ community, and young people living in our rural and regional communities.

The Youth Insearch Foundation, established in 1985, is a peer-led youth trauma recovery group that is working hard to change our national youth suicide statistics. All Australians deserve the very best chance to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives, yet despite a record \$11 billion invested by governments, businesses and private funders, youth suicide rates are far too high, and many young Australians are simply not receiving the support they need. Since its inception, Youth Insearch Foundation has supported 32 000 at-risk youth. Its model of lived experience and peer workforce is the key ingredient in both prevention and early intervention for youth suicide. Research tells us that a young person is much more likely to disclose their distress and suicide intent to a peer, as opposed to an adult health professional.

The Youth Insearch program has proven successful for 37 years. In 2019, 91 per cent of participants who felt suicidal prior to the program felt suicidal no longer. Eighty-nine per cent of participants who had attempted self-harm previously had not attempted self-harm following the program. This year's End Youth Suicide campaign encourages all of us, particularly young people, to defy stigma by openly talking about suicide. If people know a young person doing it tough, consider referring them to the program so they can be supported—from trauma to triumph. Need help? Who can you call? There is Kids Helpline at 1800 551 800; Lifeline at 13 11 14; Suicide Call Back Service at 1300 659 467 and Beyond Blue at 1300 22 4636.

I commend the work of the Youth Insearch Foundation in saving and rebuilding lives. If people want to learn more about its good work, make a donation towards its good work, or even learn more about the campaign, please visit its website. I know we have a number of great organisations here in Western Australia and I just want to acknowledge a couple of those. In particular, I want to acknowledge WAAC, Headspace, Youth Focus, and YMCA WA; and, in the north west, how could I not acknowledge Maz and her team at the Tom Price Youth Support Association, who counsel our local kids on a regular basis. This End Youth Suicide Week, let us recommit ourselves to doing what we can, whether it is speaking in support of young people, sharing resources on social media—I have done that today and I encourage people to do the same—or by making a donation to one of those organisations. Let us work together to end youth suicide.

Members: Hear, hear!