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**YOUTH Suicide prevention plan**

The Commissioner for Children, Mark Morrissey said the State Government’s strategic plan for preventing suicide provided a positive framework to better address youth suicide in Tasmania.

Mr Morrissey said the plan highlighted the importance of early intervention to improve children and young people’s mental health.

“This plan is released against a national backdrop where the latest ABS data shows that suicide remains the leading cause of death for young people. There will always be more work to do in this important area,” Mr Morrissey said.

“We must continue to ensure that services are accessible and that they have sufficient capacity, so that young people can access help promptly.”

Mr Morrissey said children and young people have particular needs when engaging with mental health service providers, so training needs to be provided to ensure their engagement methods are relevant.

“We also need appropriately skilled professionals who can engage with young people, in a relevant, non-judgmental way.”

Mr Morrissey said young people consulted about the plan had identified a need for more information and support online and through social media. He encouraged all organisations who work with young people to ensure they are regularly and meaningfully consulting with young people.

“Young people have told me that in addition to specialist services, we need to also give them access to information that will help them to help themselves, their friends and their families,” he said.

“They want to discuss, learn and promote mental health awareness and strategies for wellbeing for themselves and their peers.”

***For 24/7 crisis support, call Beyondblue 1300 224 636; Lifeline 131114 or Kids Helpline 1800551800***

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