

## Media Alert

25 March 2022

### **Safer conversations and use of language in the lead-up to the 2022 Federal Election**

With the Federal Budget set to be released on Tuesday and a national election due by 21 May, Members of Parliament, candidates, journalists and other commentators are urged to be mindful of how they publicly discuss mental ill-health and suicide.

*Mindframe* guidelines recommend avoiding harmful and stigmatising language and ensuring that all information is accurate and shared within context.

While robust debate and discussion is important, the heightened political discourse at such times can often result in emotive or hyperbolic references to stereotypes and stigmatising terms associated with mental ill-health and suicide.

Repeated publishing of sensationalist, outdated or out of context terms may trivialise mental illness, cause alarm to communities and discourage people from seeking help when they need it.

The use of sensationalist language such as 'suicide epidemic', 'mental health nightmare', 'suicide predicted to soar', for example, can negatively impact communities by implying these issues are insurmountable or inevitable.

Descriptive phrases such as 'political suicide', 'suicide economy', 'crazy decision', 'political madness' and 'psycho polities', among others, can have harmful, stigmatising effects on those living with mental health conditions, and on their carers and loved ones.

Everyone has an important role to play in decreasing stigma within our communities. Sitting and prospective Senators and MPs are encouraged to lead by example in using safe, inclusive and respectful language.

Australian media are encouraged to remove or paraphrase quotes that may include outdated language and to refer to the *Mindframe* guidelines for alternative phrasing.

Budget and election cycles can also be stressful. Everyone involved, including those working in the media, political staff, candidates and many others, are reminded to take time out, when possible, to practise self-care.

For more information on *Mindframe* guidelines, visit: [mindframe.org.au/guidelines](https://mindframe.org.au/guidelines) or contact Everymind: [mindframe@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mindframe@health.nsw.gov.au) or 02 4924 6900

Helpful resources on self-care can also be found at: [mindframe.org.au/need-help/self-care](https://mindframe.org.au/need-help/self-care)

Information for help-seeking services can be found on the following page.

# Support services

## Adult

**Lifeline:** 13 11 14 | Text 0477 13 11 14  
lifeline.org.au

**Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467  
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

**Beyond Blue:** 1300 224 636  
beyondblue.org.au/forums

**MensLine Australia:** 1300 789 978  
mensline.org.au

**StandBy Support After Suicide**  
1300 727 247

## Youth

**Kids Helpline:** 1800 551 800  
kidshelpline.com.au

**headspace:** 1800 650 890  
headspace.org.au

**ReachOut:** ReachOut.com

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:** healthinonet.ecu.edu.au

**Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex:** 1800 184 527 qlife.org.au

**Culturally and linguistically diverse:** mhima.org.au

## Other resources

**Head to Health:** mental health portal  
headtohealth.gov.au

**Life in Mind:** suicide prevention portal  
lifeinmindaustralia.com.au

**SANE:** online forums saneforums.org



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