



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into men's suicide rates

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Submission to the Committee: High Rates of Men's Suicide

Submitted by: Jayden Campbell

Date: 13/8/2025

In Memory of: Ashley Martin

Introduction

I wish to make this submission to the Committee examining the high rates of men's suicide in Australia, with the goal of contributing to a more compassionate, effective, and human-centred approach to male mental health and suicide prevention.

This issue is deeply personal to me. My father, Ashley Martin, took his own life as a direct result of the pressures and failures of the workers' compensation system. His story is not an isolated case, but a tragic example of how institutional and systemic shortcomings can compound mental health struggles and push individuals to the edge.

Terms of Reference

a) Engagement with Medical and Health Services

Men often face barriers in accessing medical and mental health services. These include stigma, shame, and a lack of services tailored to the specific needs of men. In my father's case, the system failed to recognise and respond to his mental and emotional distress during his lengthy and stressful workers' compensation process.

Often, health services are not equipped to deal with the complex interplay of psychological, physical, and financial stress experienced by men who are injured, unemployed, or under pressure. There must be targeted training for medical professionals to understand how issues like workplace injury, chronic pain, and financial stress intersect with male mental health.

b) Risk-Taking Behaviours, Including Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders

Men disproportionately engage in risk-taking behaviours, including alcohol and substance misuse, which are often coping mechanisms for underlying emotional distress. These behaviours are also exacerbated by the social stigma around expressing vulnerability or asking for help. Interventions must not only address the behaviours themselves but also the reasons behind them — including the emotional and social isolation many men experience.

c) Social and Emotional Development

From a young age, boys are often discouraged from expressing emotions or vulnerability. This emotional suppression continues into adulthood and can result in difficulty coping with life challenges. Emotional resilience and healthy communication should be fostered from childhood through targeted school programs and parental education.

d) Educational Outcomes and Participation Rates

Educational disengagement is a significant risk factor for young men, contributing to long-term disadvantage and mental health issues. There must be more targeted support for boys at risk of dropping out, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds or those who have experienced trauma, neglect, or learning difficulties.

e) Other Factors: Workers' Compensation and Institutional Failures

I want to highlight how the workers' compensation system can contribute to mental health decline and suicide risk.

My father, Ashley Martin, was an honest, hardworking man who found himself battling not only physical injury but also a system that was adversarial, slow, and dehumanising. The workers' compensation process left him feeling powerless, worthless, and voiceless. It took away his identity as a provider and contributed significantly to his declining mental health.

Despite his obvious signs of distress, he was not provided with adequate psychological support. His death was preventable.

There must be a comprehensive inquiry into how government and insurance systems treat injured workers, particularly men, and how they contribute to suicide risk.

2) Promotion of Positive Health Behaviours

- **Increased Access to Mental Health Services:** Services need to be timely, affordable, and culturally competent. Men should not have to wait weeks or months to see a mental health professional.
 - **Socialisation Opportunities:** Local governments and community organisations should be supported to run men's groups, sports clubs, and mentorship programs to foster connection.
 - **Emotional Support:** Campaigns should actively challenge the stigma around male vulnerability. Education and workplace programs should encourage emotional openness and peer support.
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3) Any Other Related Issue

Human rights must be central in all mental health and suicide prevention strategies. The

right to health, dignity, and life must guide how we treat men who are struggling.

No person should be made to feel expendable or forgotten by the systems meant to support them.

Conclusion

The high rates of suicide among men are a national crisis. While we must address cultural and psychological factors, we must also be brave enough to hold our institutions accountable — especially when they contribute to despair rather than healing.

In memory of Ashley Martin, and countless others who have suffered in silence, I urge the Committee to take a bold, compassionate, and comprehensive approach to this issue.

Sincerely,

Jayden Campbell

