

2021

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**Government Response to the Review of Children and Young People Who Have Died as a
Result of Intentional Self-Harm**

STATEMENT

**Presented by
Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA**

Minister for Families and Community Services

May 2021

Madam Speaker, today we are tabling the Government's response to the ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee Report, titled the 'Review of Children and Young People Who Have Died as a Result of Intentional Self-Harm'.

Since 2004, an average of one to two young people have taken their own life each year in the ACT. Sadly, in 2018, this number rose to five young people. This tragic figure was the basis for the Committee's Review. The ACT Government recognises that a single life lost to suicide is one too many. We remain strongly committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We also acknowledge the deep loss that is experienced by family and friends when a young person takes their own life.

I would like to thank the Committee for its considerable efforts and comprehensive report on this important issue. The ACT Government acknowledges the inherent challenges in service availability, continuum of care and in knowing how to reach young people who are at risk of intentional self-harm. It is vital that - as a community - we continuously seek to strengthen our responses to children and young people who experience mental health challenges, distress or trauma.

There is significant alignment between the recommendations of the Review and actions that Government and community services have been undertaking to prevent intentional self-harm in young people. Of the seven recommendations, five are agreed and two are agreed in-principle. Where they are agreed in-principle, the Government supports the policy intent of the recommendation, but recognises further exploration and planning may be needed to implement effective, evidence-based changes in the current landscape of mental health services.

While much important work is underway, the Government recognises there is more to be done. We are committed to continuously improving the ACT's mental health and suicide prevention services and programs for young people.

Ensuring that children and young people are supported to find the help they need is a whole-of-community responsibility. The insights and recommendations contained in this Review highlight a best practice approach to shape our efforts to better support children and young people, as well as their families, care givers, educators and friends.

This Review will help us to focus our continued, collective efforts to reduce the risk of self-harm and suicide in young people. We will continue to work across government and the community to strengthen our mental health and suicide prevention responses and improve outcomes for young people and their families and communities.

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