



Inquiry into men's suicide rates

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

Addressed to: Mr Benjamin Fitzgerald, Team Leader

In relation to: St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn and NSW mandatory reporting guide

Hearing: 16 October 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript p 62

Transcript provided: 22 October 2025

Answer Due: 29 October 2025

Mr Benjamin Fitzgerald, took on notice the following question(s):

MISS NUTTALL: Now forgive me. Please feel free to say, "Laura, check the Hansard", as I missed a little bit there. But I am interested in understanding what the New South Wales mandatory reported guide, the impact that that has had since its release? And whether you think there has been any sort of conversations with the ACT government to provide something similar?

Mr Fitzgerald: I can take that question on notice, primarily. Because that is something that more our team has kind of worked on. But where I see it, as benefit from that kind of Street to Home lens, is making sure that there is the consistency across the sector. That all homelessness organisations or community organisations preside in that consistent care. I think it is something that we are starting to see work really positively with mandatory reporting and safeguarding. I think something like that in the homelessness sector around mental health and suicide ideation would see that consistent level of care across programs.

I think we are quite lucky in the Street to Home Program that we have got a lot of experience in the sector. And I am quite lucky to have a background in the emergency services, that it is something I have dealt with quite a lot, and I am able to provide that training to my team. But I think making sure that there is that consistent approach to mental health could be really beneficial.

As well as making sure that there is consistent tools. At the moment, each program is using their own tools to make sure that people are safe and safety plan, and all these different tools. If there was a body or a worker that could work with us to implement a consistent tool that is used across all programs, it would take a lot of that inconsistency in support and approaches out of the picture.

Mr Benjamin Fitzgerald. The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

[In context, the *NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide* serves a similar purpose to the ACT's *Keeping Children and Young People Safe* guide. Both provide essential information to assist mandatory reporters in NSW and the ACT in fulfilling their statutory reporting obligations.

For the purposes of our submission to the Inquiry into Men's Suicide Rates, our interest lies specifically in the *Decision Tree Functionality* embedded within the *NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide*. This online tool offers mandatory reporters rapid, clear, and practical guidance when they have concerns about potential child abuse or neglect.

We believe that, in the context of suicide reporting, a comparable *Decision Tree Functionality* could provide significant benefits to the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) sector in the ACT. For SHS case workers, volunteers, and managers who may interact with individuals at various stages of suicidal ideation, such a tool could offer critical, immediate support in their decision-making processes.

At present, we are not aware of any impact evaluation of the *NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide* relating to child protection outcomes, nor of any discussions between the NSW and ACT Governments regarding this tool]

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date: 28 Oct. 25

By [Benjamin Fitzgerald], [Team Leader, Street to Home program, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn]