



Inquiry into men's suicide rates

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry MLA

Addressed to: Dr Stephen Leicester, National Clinical Manager Schools and Communities, Headspace National

In relation to: Data enquiry about the number of young people in the ACT experiencing suicidal ideation.

Hearing: 25 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 56-57

Transcript provided: 04 December 2025

Answer Due: 12 December 2025

Dr Leicester took on notice the following question(s):

MS BARRY: I just have a few questions around I think the data that was referenced, either in your submission—I think is is Headspace—but it is around a significantly higher number of young people in the ACT calling in and experiencing suicidal ideations. Do you know why we are higher? Is it because the population is smaller?

Dr Leicester: I cannot comment directly to that, so I will take on notice of why. If we think of other risks and social determinants and so forth, the level of connection, there may be some aspects at play. I am just looking at some of the data we have submitted. Certainly there has been an increase, it looks like. I am just wondering if that may have been from the Kids Helpline data where it looks like there was an increase from—in 2023 regarding the causal association.

I do not want to—I guess one of the things of looking at things like suicidality, I will suggest and put forward we need to be very cautious about single cause theories. I think when we go down that path it can—we start getting awfully subjective and not looking at the whole picture of things, and I am sure Michael can comment on that one as well maybe.

Dr Leicester. The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Based on Kids Helpline counselling data, we do not identify a sustained elevation in suicide related concerns among young people in the ACT when compared with national figures. In 2025, 11.6% of counselling contacts from males in the ACT disclosed current thoughts of suicide, which is below the national proportion of 12.7%. In 2024, the ACT proportion was 15.0% compared with a national figure of 13.5%. This shows that ACT males were higher than the national average in 2024 but not in 2025.

In 2025, 10.4% of ACT male counselling contacts raised suicide related concerns of any kind, compared with 11.5% nationally. This proportion in the ACT has decreased over time, from 13.3% in

2023 to 14.1% in 2024 and then to 10.4% in 2025. Mental health concerns are still the issues most frequently raised by ACT males who disclose current thoughts of suicide.

Because the ACT receives a smaller number of contacts, individual patterns of help seeking can have a noticeable effect on these percentages. If a small number of young people contact the service numerous times during a period, their experiences can influence annual figures. This should be considered when interpreting changes between years.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date: 25/02/2025

Returned via email from Julie Petering, Principal Policy Officer, Headspace National