

SANE AUSTRALIA



**Better off
with you.**

A suicide prevention initiative

MEDIA RELEASE

The 'Better Off With You' campaign takes a new approach to suicide prevention on the Northern Beaches

Sydney's Northern Beaches is one of two Australian communities chosen to appear front and centre of a new suicide prevention campaign pilot delivered by national mental health charity SANE Australia, in partnership with Sydney North Health Network (Northern Sydney PHN). Launching on Wednesday 22 January 2020 for a six-week campaign, *Better Off With You* features three real stories told by people with experience of suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Jack Heath, SANE Australia CEO, said the new campaign takes an innovative approach to reaching local people who may be contemplating suicide. The campaign has been developed to challenge the common misconception held by people with suicidal thoughts that that their friends and family would be better off without them.

"Feeling like a burden on friends and family is an aspect of suicidal thinking that is rarely discussed but arises far more often than people realise," Mr Heath said.

"There are more than 500,000 Australians alive today who have attempted suicide at some stage in their lives. Sadly, we know that for many people who attempt or go on to take their own lives, feeling like a burden can be a major contributing factor. When you feel like a burden, it's easy to lose perspective of the positive things you bring to the lives of those around you."

"By sharing real stories from people who considered ending their lives because they felt they were a burden, we have the opportunity to reach people feeling the same way today, to let them know that they are not alone, inspire hope and encourage them to seek support."

The powerful video stories can be viewed on the *Better Off With You* campaign website, betteroffwithyou.org.au, together with support information and a listing of local services.

The prevention of suicide is an important issue on the Northern Beaches. The *Better Off With You* campaign contributes to community awareness strategies in the Northern Beaches Suicide Response.

Lynelle Hales, Sydney North Health Network CEO, said, *“The loss of lives due to suicide has impacted the Northern Beaches community greatly. We are all working hard to deliver tailored responses with our hospitals and health services, local community organisations and police. Community awareness campaigns such as Better Off With You are helping us reach those who may be feeling suicidal, encouraging them to seek the locally available help and support.”*

Bonnie Vincent, who leads the project at SANE Australia, added, *“It’s been a true collaborative effort working with local groups to develop the campaign, including those with lived experience, ensuring the campaign is safe, effective and makes a real difference on the Northern Beaches.”*

The *Better Off With You* pilot initiative is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

Visit betteroffwithyou.org.au for more information. **#BetterOffWithYou #BOWY**

ENDS

The following people are available for interview:

- Jack Heath - CEO, SANE Australia
- Bonnie Vincent - Project Lead, *Better Off With You*, SANE Australia
- Lynelle Hales - CEO, Sydney North Health Network
- Craig Parsons, Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Commissioning Manager, Northern Sydney PHN
- Sergeant Dave Darcy, Chair of the Northern Beaches Suicide Response Steering Group

SANE Australia is managing all media requests.

To request an interviews, please contact the SANE Media Centre: media@sane.org

Monday or Tuesday: Ellen Sproule – M: 0407 367 215

Wednesday, Thursday or Friday: Bianca Lapins – M: 0439 708 381

ABOUT BETTER OFF WITH YOU

Better Off With You is an innovative, evidence-informed suicide prevention campaign pilot, delivered by [SANE Australia](http://sane.org.au) in partnership with two Primary Health Networks (PHNs) – [Northern Sydney PHN](http://northernphn.org.au) and [Northern Queensland PHN](http://northernqueenslandphn.org.au). The campaign seeks to challenge the perceptions of those who are contemplating suicide that they are a burden on their family, friends and other people. The pilot initiative includes a research component to ensure the campaign’s safety, measure impact and to inform future national suicide prevention activities. The project commenced in October 2018 and will conclude in May 2020, with a six-week public campaign wave taking place from 20 January to 28 February 2020. *Better Off With You* is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

ABOUT [SANE AUSTRALIA](#)

Better Off With You is a pilot initiative delivered by SANE Australia. SANE Australia is a national mental health charity dedicated to making a real difference in the lives of people affected by complex mental health issues. People living with complex mental health issues are 11 to 45 times more likely to die from suicide than the general population.

ABOUT [SYDNEY NORTH HEALTH NETWORK \(Northern Sydney PHN\)](#)

The Northern Sydney Primary Health Network, operated by the Sydney North Health Network – a not for profit organisation, is one of 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) established by the Australian Government to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. Our focus is on patients who are at risk of poor health outcomes. We work to improve the co-ordination of their care, so they receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

<https://sydneynorthhealthnetwork.org.au/>