10 October 2022

Caitlin Bambridge
Senior Policy Advisor
Suicide Prevention Australia

By email to: caitlinb@suicidepreventionaust.org

Dear Caitlin

Re: Feedback on policy position: Suicide among carers

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) welcomes the opportunity to take part in the consultation process for the Suicide Prevention Australia draft policy position: Suicide among carers.

The RANZCP is the principal organisation representing the medical speciality of psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand and is responsible for training, educating and representing psychiatrists. The RANZCP represents more than 7700 members, including more than 5500 qualified psychiatrists and over 2100 members who are training to qualify as psychiatrists.

The RANZCP commends Suicide Prevention Australia for acknowledging the important issue of suicide among carers. The RANZCP’s Position Statement 76: Partnering with carers in mental healthcare recognises that carers are at the heart of a compassionate, empathetic and supportive society.

The draft policy position has also rightly acknowledged the high rates of psychological distress and social isolation experienced by carers. The RANZCP’s Position Statement 101: Suicide prevention – the role of psychiatry highlights that loneliness is a risk factor for a range of health consequences and social impacts including risk of suicide, and social connectedness and inclusion are a protective factor. Loneliness is often a central experience for people with mental illness, as well as their families/carers. The RANZCP emphasises that families/carers are at a high risk of experiencing loneliness, social isolation and the associated health consequences and social impacts.

The draft policy position acknowledges the unique and important understanding provided by people with lived and living experience. The RANZCP’s Position Statement 62: Partnering with people with a lived experience also recommends working in partnership with people with lived experience so they can have genuine input in research, planning, monitoring, and

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implementation of treatment and care.

The RANZCP welcomes any opportunity to provide feedback on future Suicide Prevention Australia resources. If you have any queries, please contact Nicola Wright, Executive Manager, Policy, Practice and Research Department via nicola.wright@ranzcp.org.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Vinay Lakra

President

Ref: 3305