



Media Release



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New project will save lives of Australian men

A world-first research project involving thousands of men, including former Australian rules footballers, refugees and fly-in-fly-out workers, will aim to end the embarrassment that stops them from getting help for conditions such as depression and anxiety.

The STRIDE (Stigma Reduction Interventions: Digital Environments) project is comprised of six smaller projects that use technology, such as apps and websites, along with evidence-based techniques to show men that taking action on mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. It is funded by *beyondblue* with donations from The Movember Foundation and has been unveiled to coincide with Men's Health Week this week.

***beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman** said STRIDE was a response to the shocking number of men who die by suicide in Australia each year, which is almost double the number who die on our roads.

"Nearly 2000 men die by suicide each year, with men three times more likely to die this way than women," she said. "This is a national tragedy and is fuelled by the fact that men don't seek help for mental health problems as much as women because they don't want to be seen as weak or as a burden on others. In recent years there have been increases in awareness about depression and anxiety but we now need to focus on using digital tools to reduce the stigma that prevents men from seeking support and keeps the suicide rate high. We must focus on stigma reduction within the digital environment because this is where men spend an increasing amount of time, and STRIDE aims to do this by challenging the attitudes of participating men, showing them the benefits they can reap if they tackle these conditions and analysing which elements of each of the six smaller projects has worked best. I have no doubt this project will save men's lives, while teaching us the best ways to reduce the stigma of mental health conditions among men."

The Movember Foundation's Executive Director of Programs, Paul Villanti, said STRIDE's scope meant it would include a wide range of at-risk men.

"Each of these six projects will drive men within the target communities to confront any negative or stigmatising attitudes they hold about mental health conditions," he said. "Stigmatising beliefs can be the biggest barriers to men getting help but STRIDE will aim to remove these barriers and save lives.

"In the *Tell Your Story* project, 600 refugees with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) will hear stories in their first language, from fellow refugees with PTSD who have sought support. Participating men will learn why their fellow refugees sought help and how it made them feel better. The program will challenge common myths, support men to reach out for assistance and to tell their own story.

"Another project, *Real Courage*, will have up to 1,000 former Australian rules players, coaches and construction workers involved. These men come from male-dominated environments, where traits such as self-reliance and stoicism are celebrated and where men can suddenly find themselves sidelined due to injury or other factors, which can lead to loss of self-esteem and shifts in the way they see themselves. To encourage conversations, ambassadors from these communities will share their stories.

"As a catalytic funder of men's health programs globally, the Movember Foundation is proud to donate funds to this ground-breaking program. It's thanks to funds raised by the Mo community that we are able to support innovative programs such as this."

The projects commence on July 1 and will run for two years before being evaluated. The results will be analysed to find the most effective ways to reduce stigma around mental health conditions in men. For a list of each of the six projects, please see the next page. More detailed information can be found here:

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/stigma>

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The six projects that comprise STRIDE are:

- Title:** Y Fronts
Partners: CGA Consulting, Indigenist Consulting, Sydney University, Terem Technologies, Led By Design, Mr David McGrath
What it is: An app for regional and rural workers including fly-in fly-out workers
- Title:** Tell Your Story
Partners: UNSW Refugee Trauma and Recovery Program, Settlement Services International, Black Dog Institute
What it is: An online education program for refugees
- Title:** The Ripple Effect
Partners: Deakin University, National Centre for Farmer Health, Victorian Farmers Federation, AgChatOz, Mental Health Fellowship North Queensland, Western District Health Service, SandPIT
What it is: An online education program for farmers affected by suicide
- Title:** Contact & Connect
Partners: Incolink, McCaughey VicHealth Centre for Community Wellbeing, Deakin University, Publicity Works
What it is: An education program for unemployed construction workers delivered by SMS which is linked to a website
- Title:** Real Courage
Partners: AFL Player's Association, La Trobe University, Mates In Construction, AFL Coaches Association, Keepers
What it is: An online education program for past AFL players, past coaches and construction workers
- Title:** Out of the Blue
Partners: Victorian AIDS Council, Centre for Social Research in Health, ACON Health, Gay & Married Men Association, Living Positive Victoria, Liquorice
What it is: Dedicated websites for both men living with HIV and for gay men in heterosexual relationships