

20 May 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to write this letter in support of Albie House to seek any government or other funding or in kind support.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in 2014, Tasmania suffers the second highest rate of suicide in Australia. For every person lost to suicide, there are up to 100 people directly affected by this loss, escalating their risk for suicidal ideation and behaviour. For every death to suicide there are many more people who attempt to take their own life and many, many more who are thinking about it.

Suicide is a major a public health issue and while requiring a public health approach, we know that suicide occurs at a grass roots level. Therefore we also need a grass roots service such as Albie House, able to provide a 24/7 respite centre for at risk youth.

I had the privilege to implement and for 5 years to manage an Australian government funded 24/7 crisis outreach service supporting people bereaved by suicide in Tasmania, working closely with emergency responders and the coroner's office. Subsequently I have worked with various communities nationally which have been experiencing a cluster (higher than normal numbers) of or contagion suicides, assisting those communities to develop and implement their own After Suicide Plans and increasing their capacity to respond to suicide loss. I had frequent contact with youth whose suicide risk had increased, due to their exposure to suicide loss and in coordinating their and their families care, first became aware of the lack of available safe respite facilities particularly for youth.

As a member of the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network since its inception, there has been ongoing discussion among the members regarding the lack of respite services in Tasmania for those in crisis. As a non clinical model, Albie House would address a service gap through which too many of Tasmania's youth are currently falling. The proposed provision of care in the transition to reintegration is also currently lacking.

The underpinning principles of service being offered by Albie House; the intention to offer a safe haven in crisis, empowerment through education and safe, coordinated reintegration to family and community life, meet best practice crisis intervention principles and I am happy to endorse and support this endeavour.

I lend my voice in requesting that consideration be given to providing the necessary funding and support to operate this much needed service.

Please contact the writer on the number below for any further information if required.

Yours Sincerely,

Wendy French  
Managing Consultant  
Talking About Suicide