

## Athletes walk to support Lifeline Australia

6 September 2019

The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) is taking the next step in its partnership with Lifeline Australia, with Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games athletes participating in Lifeline's Out of the Shadows walks over the coming week to remember those lost to suicide and raise awareness ahead of National Suicide Prevention Day on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September.

The community events, coordinated by local Lifeline centres and volunteers, are taking place from September 7-14 across the country and are designed to bring together people from different backgrounds and communities who have been impacted by the death of a loved one through suicide.

The athletes participating in the walks are part of the Lifeline Community Custodian program, an initiative of the AIS and Lifeline Australia. Launched earlier this year, the program raises awareness of mental health and promotes the positive contributions athletes and sport can make to their communities.

AIS CEO Peter Conde said it was great to see athletes using their profile and collective voice to help spread this important message.

"The AIS is committed to supporting Lifeline in its endeavours to reduce suicide rates in Australia," Conde said.

"The number of deaths in Australia to suicide each year is startling and we are proud to be supporting the Out of the Shadows walks to shine a light on the great work that Lifeline are doing to support those who are doing it tough.

"Many of the athletes involved have a lived experience with mental health, whether be it themselves or someone close to them, and are passionate about sharing their story in the hope it will inspire others to reach out and get the help they need."

In 2017 alone, 3,128 people in Australia lost their lives to suicide which equates to one life lost every three hours.

Australian diver and Tokyo 2020 hopeful Laura Hingston will attend the walk in Hobart and hopes that events such as these continue to spark change.

"I really wanted to participate in the walk to show my support and continue to encourage people to start conversations about mental health," Hingston said. "I am so grateful to be aligned with Lifeline who are really making a difference, but they cannot do it alone.

"Because to me, one life lost to suicide is one life too many."

To find out more about the Lifeline Community Custodian program - visit [www.ais.gov.au/custodians](http://www.ais.gov.au/custodians)

To find out more about Out of the Shadows – visit [www.outoftheshadows.org.au](http://www.outoftheshadows.org.au)

### Out of the Shadow Events

*Athletes available to interview on request*

#### Perth

**Date:** Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September



**Location:** Kings Park, Perth

**Time:** 5:00am

**Who:** Jaime Roberts (Paddle)

### **Hobart**

**Date:** Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September

**Location:** Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Hobart

**Time:** 6:00am

**Who:** Anabelle Smith (Diving) and Laura Hingston (Diving)

### **Newcastle**

**Date:** Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September

**Location:** Dixon Park Surf Club, Newcastle

**Time:** 6:00am

**Who:** Declan Stacey (Diving) and Gordon Allen (Cycling)

### **Launceston**

**Date:** Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September

**Location:** City Park, Launceston

**Time:** 6:00am

**Who:** Belle Brockhoff (Snowboarding) and Jo Brigden-Jones (Paddle)

To find a walk near you and to register – visit [www.outoftheshadows.org.au/planning-your-walk/local-walks](http://www.outoftheshadows.org.au/planning-your-walk/local-walks)

Media Contact – please contact [sarah.browne@ausport.gov.au](mailto:sarah.browne@ausport.gov.au) or 0402 494 503

