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R U OK? calls on Australia to take global lead in suicide prevention
R U OK? Day and World Suicide Prevention Day: Thursday, 10 September 2015

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Suicide prevention organisation R U OK? is calling on Australia to take a global lead in preventing suicide by making more effort to have regular, meaningful conversations with anyone who might be struggling.

This year, R U OK? Day and World Suicide Prevention Day fall on the same date, drawing attention to Australia’s role in addressing this global public health issue. Campaign Director Rebecca Lewis said every 40 seconds someone dies by suicide¹, and we should all be doing as much as possible to prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness occurring in our community.

“To ensure that people are protected from suicidal thoughts, we need to make a concerted and genuine effort to be there for one another and really walk in one another’s shoes,” Rebecca said. “R U OK? Day is a national reminder for us all to start a conversation that could change a life.”

Australian Health Minister, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, said that meaningful conversations with family and friends aren’t about solving someone’s problem; but helping that person feel connected and supported.

“We’ll all grapple with tragedy, loss, and grief through life – and many of us will also live with a mental illness,” Minister Ley said. “Regular, meaningful conversations are one way we can all support each other to cope with change, adversity and illness. If you ask; listen without judgement; encourage action; and follow up, you can make a positive difference to someone’s resilience and wellbeing.”

R U OK? is using its seventh national day of action to urge people to say thanks to anyone who’s been there for them during a rough patch or a tough day. R U OK? Day can be

¹ Preventing Suicide: A Global Imperative World Health Organisation 2014
the day to start a conversation, as well as celebrate the people who already do that on a regular basis.

“Thanks For Asking’ is all about appealing to people’s hearts,” Rebecca said. “Whatever the size of the problem, if someone has been there for you, use today to give them a big old-fashioned thanks. We want as many people as possible to head to ruok.org.au and write a special note of thanks to show the world the power of a conversation.”

As Australians everywhere support R U OK?Day through events in schools, workplaces and local communities, Suicide Prevention Australia will host leaders in mental health and suicide prevention to launch Australia’s first National Research Action Plan. This Plan will help ensure that scarce research dollars are strategically targeted. R U OK? is a member of the National Coalition for Suicide Prevention and supports the Plan.

Images available to download: [https://www.flickr.com/gp/ruokday/RMGs2P](https://www.flickr.com/gp/ruokday/RMGs2P)

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Notes to Editors:

R U OK? is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to inspire Australians to have regular, meaningful conversations throughout the year to help anyone who might be struggling with life. R U OK?Day is a national day of action, held on the second Thursday of September each year.

World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) is held each year on September 10th. WSPD is an initiative of the World Health Organization and supported by the Australian mental health and suicide prevention sector. The international theme of World Suicide Prevention Day this year is Preventing Suicide: Reaching Out and Saving Lives.

Partnerships
Principal Partner Hungry Jack’s are leveraging their vast retail network to promote the R U OK? message across more than 400 stores and with 17,000 crew members. Marketing Manager Rachel Korbel said, “Hungry Jack’s is proud to partner with R U OK? to help the organisation raise awareness among more Australians - including Hungry Jack’s staff - about the importance of regular, meaningful conversations.”

Conversation Partner Virgin Mobile Australia will be offering its customers free calls within Oz on R U OK?Day. Sir Richard Branson says, “I think everyone could recall a bad patch in their life, or simply a bad day. I know I
can! I wouldn’t have been able to get through the hard times without being able to have real and honest conversations with the people around me. I know the power a conversation can have.”

R U OK? is grateful for the funding and support of the Australian Government through the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Facts
- More than 2,500 Australians suicide each year. That’s about 7 people every day.
- 65,000 people attempt suicide each year in Australia
- Suicide is the biggest killer of Australians under 44 years
- Men account for around 75 per cent of all suicide deaths in Australia

For tips on how to report sensitively and accurately on suicide, please visit: http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media