



Senator Sue Boyce
Queensland

MEDIA RELEASE

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SUICIDE IN QUEENSLAND

One Queenslanders every week commits suicide by jumping in front of a train according to evidence given to the Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into suicide in Brisbane today.

The Chair of the National Advisory Committee on Mental Health, Professor John Mendoza, told the inquiry into suicide that apart from the victims' families and emergency personnel, this meant that 50 to 60 train drivers were traumatised each year by suicide.

Queensland Liberal Senator Sue Boyce, a member of the Committee, said the burden of suicide on the Australian community was equal to that of breast cancer and road accidents.

"But it's still not being treated as seriously as it must be," Senator Boyce said.

Evidence already given to the Committee show:

- The best evidence is that there are between 2,500 and 3,000 suicides in Australia every year
- The cost of suicide has been calculated at \$17.5 billion (in 2007-08 dollars) which is about 1.3 per cent or \$795 per person, per year
- Every year, 65,000 Australians attempt suicide and more than 32,000 are admitted to hospital as a result of self harm
- Suicide is already the leading cause of death for males under the age of 44 and for females under the age of 34

Senator Boyce said evidence also showed that suicide was significantly under-reported.

"There are complex reasons for this – the stigma of having a relative die this way, religious beliefs, a lack of expert investigations, the burden of proof for coroners and the belief by relatives that reporting a death as a suicide might jeopardise life insurance payouts and other financial compensation." Senator Boyce said.

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