

Unique smartphone app to reduce suicide deaths

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Suicide is now the greatest killer of Australians aged 15 to 44 according to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

A [collaboration](#) between Monash University and beyondblue – with [funding](#) from the Movember Foundation – has led to the development of a world-first smartphone [app](#) and website to help save lives when people feel hopeless and helpless, and want to die.

Dr Glenn Melvin, Senior Lecturer and Clinical Psychologist at Monash University's Centre for Developmental Psychiatry & Psychology was central to developing the app's safety plan format. He believes the app is a practical [suicide](#) prevention that can help save lives. "The safety planning app documents a series of steps that the person can use to keep themselves safe when they have suicidal thoughts," he said.

"It starts with things they can do themselves, then moves onto people they can contact for support. All this information is with them constantly on their phone and they can access it privately."

Called the BeyondNow app, which is free and can be downloaded onto a smartphone, it shows people how to create a plan to refer to when they are experiencing suicidal thoughts or are in a suicidal crisis, according to beyondblue CEO, Mr Jeff Kennett.

"A tool like this has been needed for a long time. We know that having access to a safety plan in crisis situations can save lives. Now, we've used technology to convert written suicide safety plans, which have been used successfully with American service veterans, into a free app," he said.

"I hope that men, in particular, will work with their GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists and carers to personalise the safety plan on the BeyondNow app and refer to it when they feel at risk of harming themselves."

It is estimated 76,000 people attempt suicide each year in Australia. Research shows 15 to 20 per cent of those who try once will try again. The first three months after an attempt are regarded as the highest risk period.

The free BeyondNow App can be downloaded from the App Store and Google Play store.

Provided by Monash University

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