

Submission to Productivity Commission

From Anthony Smith, co – author of The **Situational Approach** series of papers ¹

Despite large amounts of funding going into the suicide prevention / mental health sector, suicide deaths are at a completely unacceptable level and continue to rise.

And quite simply, the majority of all people who kill themselves are not employed^{2, 3}.

A priority and responsibility of the Productivity Commission should be the development of appropriate support for unemployed / underemployed people – of all ages.

An analysis by the National Coronial Information System (NCIS) (2016) shows that overall, at least 55.05 % of all suicide deaths were people of working age who were NOT Employed. For women the rate is even higher – 68.38%.

That amounts to at least 1,500 suicide deaths EVERY YEAR in Australia.

To avoid this issue is to abnegate responsibility for the welfare of large numbers of people.

The people who suffer this callous indifference are not only the large numbers of men and women who kill themselves – imagine the level of torture they must go through with the multiple stresses that unemployment brings...

- but the cold hearted dismissal of this key national challenge impacts terribly on many others as well; the even larger numbers of people – parents, family and friends who are left to grieve for their lost love ones . There is no consolation for these people.

Unless we address this issue properly -the large numbers of suicide deaths among people who are unemployed or underemployed - and make it a priority of suicide prevention, we cannot possibly hope to reduce the toll of suicide deaths.

¹ Ashfield, J., Macdonald, J. and Smith, A. "A 'Situational Approach' To Suicide Prevention". (2017): n. pag. Web. 31 May 2017. <https://doi.org/10.25155/2017/150417>
<http://malesuicidepreventionaustralia.com.au/resources/resources/>
<http://malesuicidepreventionaustralia.com.au/papers/>

² Saar, E., Burgess, T., Intentional Self-Harm Fatalities in Australia 2001-2013. Data Report DR16 – 16 (2016) National Coronial Information System http://malesuicidepreventionaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/NCIS-Report-2016_FINAL.pdf See Table 1: Intentional Self-Harm Fatalities in Australia by Employment Status and Age Range. Page 6

³ McPhedran, S. & De Leo, D., 2013. Miseries Suffered, Unvoiced, Unknown? Communication of Suicidal Intent by Men in "Rural" Queensland, Australia. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 43(6), pp.589–597. <https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/handle/10072/57604> See Table 1 Demographic and Psychiatric Descriptive Data Page 5

Some useful relevant research papers

Coope, C., Gunnell, D., Hollingworth, W., et al. (2014). Suicide and the 2008 economic recession: who is most at risk? Trends in suicide rates in England and Wales 2001-2011. *Social Science & Medicine* 117: 76-85.

Haw, c, Hawton, K, Gunnell, D, Platt, D., Economic recession and suicidal behaviour: Possible mechanisms and ameliorating factors. *International Journal of social Psychiatry* 2015, Vol. 61(1) 73–81

Knox, K. (2014). Approaching Suicide as a Public Health Issue. *Annals Of Internal Medicine*, 161(2), 151.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7326/m14-0914>

Macintyre, A., Ferris, D., Gonçalves, B., & Quinn, N. (2018). What has economics got to do with it? The impact of socioeconomic factors on mental health and the case for collective action. *Palgrave Communications*, 4(1). doi: 10.1057/s41599-018-0063-2

Nordt, C., Warnke, I., Seifritz, E., & Kawohl, W. (2015). Modeling suicide and unemployment: a longitudinal analysis covering 63 countries, 2000–11. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 2(3), 239-245.

Platt S, Stace S, Morrissey J (eds) (2017) *Dying From Inequality: Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Suicidal Behaviour*. Samaritans, London

Reeves et al., 2015. Economic shocks, resilience, and male suicides in the Great Recession: cross-national analysis of 20 EU countries. *The European Journal of Public Health*, 25(3), pp.404–409.