2026

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

(As presented)

(Mark Parton MLA)

Suicide Prevention Bill 2026

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THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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(As presented)

(Mark Parton MLA)

Suicide Prevention Bill 2026

A Bill for

An Act to reduce and prevent the incidence of deaths by suicide in the Australian Capital Territory, to establish the Suicide Prevention Council, to provide for the preparation and implementation of suicide prevention plans, to require the training of persons and organisations in suicide prevention and postvention, and for other purposes.

The Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory enacts as follows:

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Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Act

This Act is the *Suicide Prevention Act 2026*

2 Commencement

This Act commences on the 7th day after its notification day or no later than 30 June 2027.

3 Legislation amended

No amendment to another Act is made by this Act.

4 Definitions

The dictionary in Schedule 1 defines words used in this Act.

5 Objectives

The objectives of this Act are as follows—

(a) to reduce suicidal distress and the incidence of suicide in the Australian Capital Territory;

(b) to increase the capability and capacity of government directorates and agencies to prevent suicide, including through education, training, evidence-informed practice and continuous improvement;

(c) to promote evidence-informed and best-practice approaches to suicide prevention, early intervention, response and postvention;

(d) to ensure suicide prevention is recognised as a shared responsibility across government, community and relevant sectors;

(e) to address the needs of populations disproportionately impacted by suicide, including by requiring the development and implementation of appropriately targeted initiatives for priority population groups; and

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(f) to ensure suicide prevention policy, programs and services are informed by evidence, data and people with lived and living experience of suicide, suicidal distress, suicide attempts and bereavement by suicide.

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Part 2 Suicide Prevention Plans

Division 1 Territory Plan

6 Requirement for the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing to prepare and implement the Territory Plan

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing must prepare and support the implementation of the following plan (The Territory Plan)—

(a) The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing must prepare and support the implementation of a Territory-wide suicide prevention plan (the Territory Plan).

(b) The Territory Plan must be completed within 2 years after the commencement of this Act.

(c) The Office must ensure the Territory Plan is implemented as soon as practicable after it is completed.

(d) The Minister must publish the Territory Plan on an ACT Government website as soon as practicable after it is completed.

7 Preparation of the Territory Plan

1. In preparing the Territory Plan, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing must have regard to the following—

(a) The objectives of this Act;

(b) The needs of priority population groups;

(c) The specific needs and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;

(d) The need to increase the capability and capacity of government directorates and agencies in relation to suicide prevention;

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(e) Evidence and data relating to suicide prevention;

(f) The lived and living experience of suicide, suicidal distress, suicide attempts and bereavement by suicide;

(g) Relevant suicide prevention strategies, plans and frameworks of the Commonwealth and other Australian jurisdictions, including opportunities for alignment, coordination and cooperation;

(h) Measurable performance indicators and outcomes for assessing the implementation and effectiveness of the Territory Plan, having regard to relevant national outcomes and evaluation frameworks; and

(i) Mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and publicly reporting progress against the performance indicators and outcomes.

2. In preparing the Territory Plan, the Office must undertake consultation with—

(a) People with lived and living experience of suicide, suicidal distress, suicide attempts and bereavement by suicide;

(b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and representative bodies;

(c) People from population groups disproportionately impacted by suicide;

(d) Relevant government directorates and agencies;

(e) Suicide prevention, mental health and community organisations;

(f) Health and community service providers;

(g) Relevant professional and research bodies; and

(h) Any other person or organisation the Office considers appropriate.

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3. The Territory Plan must set out—

(a) The priorities and objectives for suicide prevention in the Territory;

(b) Actions to be undertaken to achieve those priorities and objectives;

(c) The responsibilities of relevant government directorates and agencies;

(d) Arrangements for coordination and collaboration across government and with community and other relevant sectors;

(e) Measures for building suicide prevention capability, including education and training;

(f) Measures for engaging people with lived and living experience;

(g) Performance indicators and outcomes against which implementation and effectiveness may be assessed; and

(h) Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and public reporting.

8 Review of the Territory Plan

1. The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing must review the Territory Plan—

(a) at least once every 5 years; and

(b) at any other time directed by the Minister.

2. A review under subsection (1) must consider—

(a) Progress against the Territory Plan's objectives and performance indicators;

(b) Available evidence and data relating to suicide prevention;

(c) The effectiveness of actions taken under the Territory Plan;

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(d) Feedback from people with lived and living experience and relevant stakeholders; and

(e) Relevant changes to Commonwealth and other Australian jurisdictional strategies and frameworks.

(f) The Office must publish the outcome of each review, including any revised Territory Plan, on an ACT Government website as soon as practicable after the review is completed.

Division 2 Government Directorate and Agency Plans

9 Requirement for government directorates and agencies to prepare and implement plans

1. The head of each of the following government directorate or agency must ensure the directorate or agency prepares and implements a suicide prevention plan—

(a) Each Australian Capital Territory government directorate or agency;

(b) ACT Policing; and

(c) Another government directorate or agency prescribed by regulation.

2. A government directorate or agency must complete its suicide prevention plan within 1 year after the Territory Plan is completed.

3. A government directorate or agency must implement its suicide prevention plan as soon as practicable after the plan is completed.

4. The head of a government directorate or agency must publish the directorate or agency's suicide prevention plan on the directorate or agency's website as soon as practicable after the plan is completed.

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10 Preparation of directorate and agency plans

1. In preparing a directorate or agency suicide prevention plan, a government sector directorate or agency must have regard to the Territory Plan.

2. Without limiting subsection (1), the government directorate or agency must have regard to—

(a) The objectives of this Act;

(b) The needs of sections of the population served by the government directorate or agency that are disproportionately impacted by suicide;

(c) The effects of infrastructure and urban design, if relevant;

(d) The need for measures to enhance suicide prevention capability by addressing systemic drivers of suicide and strengthening systems, policies, advice, education and training;

(e) The need for measures to promote access to advice, education, information and training for relevant staff in relation to suicide prevention;

(f) The lived and living experience of suicide, suicidal distress, suicide attempts and bereavement by suicide;

(g) The functions and responsibilities of the directorate or agency in relation to the prevention of suicide among its own staff and among members of the community who interact with, receive services from, or are otherwise affected by the directorate or agency; and

(h) Relevant Commonwealth and other Australian jurisdictional strategies, plans and frameworks.

3. Directorate or agency suicide prevention plan must address, to the extent relevant to the functions of the directorate or agency—

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(a) Suicide prevention and wellbeing among persons employed or engaged by the directorate or agency; and

(b) Suicide prevention among members of the community who interact with, receive services from, or are otherwise affected by the directorate or agency.

4. In preparing a directorate or agency suicide prevention plan, the government directorate or agency must undertake consultation, to the extent relevant to its functions, with—

(a) People with lived and living experience of suicide, suicidal distress, suicide attempts and bereavement by suicide;

(b) Population groups disproportionately impacted by suicide;

(c) Relevant staff and employee representatives;

(d) Relevant service providers and community organisations; and

(e) Any other person or organisation the directorate or agency considers appropriate.

5. A directorate or agency suicide prevention plan must set out—

(a) The actions the directorate or agency will take to prevent suicide and suicidal distress;

(b) Measures for training and capability development of relevant staff;

(c) Measures for engaging with relevant communities and people with lived and living experience;

(d) Performance indicators or other measures for assessing implementation and effectiveness; and

(e) Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

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6. The regulations may provide for a government directorate or agency's suicide prevention plan to apply to another government directorate or agency.

7. In this section—

Relevant staff, of a government directorate or agency, means—

(a) staff of the government directorate or agency; and

(b) If a regulation has been made under subsection (6)—staff of another government directorate or agency to which the plan applies.

11 Review of government directorate and agency suicide prevention plans

1. The head of a government directorate or agency must ensure the directorate or agency's suicide prevention plan is reviewed at least once every 5 years.

2. A review under subsection (1) must consider—

(a) Progress against the plan's objectives and performance measures;

(b) Available evidence and data relating to suicide prevention;

(c) The effectiveness of actions taken under the plan;

(d) Feedback from people with lived and living experience and relevant stakeholders; and

(e) Relevant changes to the Territory Plan and other relevant strategies and frameworks.

3. The head of the government directorate or agency must publish the outcome of each review, including any revised

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plan, on the directorate or agency's website as soon as practicable after the review is completed.

4. The regulations may provide for additional reviews of directorate or agency suicide prevention plans in particular circumstances.

12 Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing to assist with directorate or agency suicide prevention plans if requested

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing's functions include reviewing or giving advice to the head of a government directorate or agency about, a directorate or agency's suicide prevention plan if requested by the head of the directorate or agency.

Division 3 Reporting and Accountability

13 Annual suicide prevention report

1. The Minister must, within 6 months after the end of each financial year, prepare and present to the Legislative Assembly a report on the implementation of this Act.

2. The report must include—

(a) Progress against the Territory Plan;

(b) Progress against relevant performance indicators and outcomes;

(c) The status of government directorate and agency suicide prevention plans;

(d) Progress in implementing those plans;

(e) Advice or recommendations made by the Council and the Government's response;

(f) Relevant suicide prevention data and trends;

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(g) Actions taken in relation to priority population groups; and;

(h) Any other matter prescribed by regulation.

3. The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing must, on at least an annual basis, publish on its website a summary of advice or recommendations given by the Council to the Minister or the Office since the last summary was published.

4. The summary must include—

(a) Whether each item of advice or recommendation was accepted, rejected or otherwise acted on;

(b) If accepted, a statement about implementation; and

(c) If not accepted, a statement about why the advice or recommendation was not accepted.

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Part 3 Suicide Prevention Council

14 Establishment

A Suicide Prevention Council (the Council) is established to advise the Minister and the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing about the preparation, implementation and review of the Territory Plan and suicide prevention in the Territory.

15 Functions

1. The Council has the following functions—

(a) Advising the Office about the preparation, implementation and review of the Territory Plan;

(b) Providing advice to the Minister and the Office about suicide prevention in the Territory;

(c) Providing advice about improvements to suicide prevention policy, programs, services and outcomes;

(d) Promoting collaboration between government, community organisations, service providers, researchers and suicide prevention networks;

(e) Promoting the participation of people with lived and living experience in suicide prevention policy and activities;

(f) Supporting opportunities to share and promote the experiences and perspectives of people with lived and living experience, where appropriate and with their consent;

(g) Promoting awareness of suicide prevention activities and initiatives in the Territory;

(h) Identifying emerging issues, gaps and opportunities in suicide prevention; and

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(i) Any other function prescribed by regulation.

16 Membership

1. The Suicide Prevention Council must consist of at least 7 and no more than 12 members.

2. The members of the Council must consist of—

   (a) members appointed by the Minister by written instrument;

   (b) The Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body;

   (c) The head of the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing;

   (d) 2 persons representing government sector directorates or agencies, nominated and appointed by the Minister; and

   (e) A person appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the Leader of the Opposition.

3. The following members are the Co-Chairpersons of the Council—

   (a) An appointed member appointed by the Minister as Co-Chairperson; and

   (b) The Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

4. The Minister must ensure the appointed members are representatives of—

   (a) People with lived and living experience of suicide, suicidal distress, suicide attempts, bereavement by suicide and caring for a person impacted by suicide;

   (b) Population groups disproportionately impacted by suicide;

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(c) people with professional or academic expertise in suicide prevention, mental health or related fields; and

(d) other individuals or organisations with expertise relevant to suicide prevention, response or postvention.

5. An appointed member holds office for the term, not more than 3 years, specified in the member's instrument of appointment, but may be reappointed.

6. A person is ineligible for appointment or reappointment as an appointed member if the person has held office as a member of the Council for a total of 6 years, whether consecutive terms or not.

7. The procedure for the calling of meetings of the Council and the conduct of meetings must be determined by the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, subject to any requirements prescribed by regulation.

8. An appointed member is entitled to be paid the fees and allowances determined by the Minister.

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Part 4 Information Sharing

17 Register

1. The Minister may keep, or arrange for another person, directorate or agency to keep, a register in relation to—

   (a) Confirmed or suspected deaths by suicide; and

   (b) If prescribed by regulation, suicide attempts and other forms of suicidal behaviour.

2. The purposes of the register are—

   (a) To monitor and report on deaths by suicide, suicide attempts and, if prescribed, other forms of suicidal behaviour;

   (b) To identify potential risk factors, patterns and emerging trends;

   (c) To enable the identification and monitoring of suicide prevention and response strategies;

   (d) To inform suicide prevention policy, programs and services; and

   (e) To support research and evaluation relating to suicide prevention.

18 Sharing of information

1. The Minister may disclose information in the register to a government sector directorate or agency or another entity for the following purposes—

   (a) Monitoring and preventing suicide and suicidal distress;

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(b) Evaluating services relating to, and responses to, suicide, suicidal distress and suicide prevention;

(c) Conducting research into suicide, suicidal distress and suicide prevention; and

(d) Exercising a function under this Act.

2. The Minister may disclose personal or health information in the register to a government directorate, agency or other entity only if—

(a) The disclosure is reasonably necessary for a purpose mentioned in subsection (1); and

(b) The disclosure is permitted by law and is subject to any applicable privacy, confidentiality and information-handling requirements.

3. Information may be disclosed for research only if any publication of the information is in a form that ensures the identity of a person—

(a) Is not apparent; or

(b) Cannot reasonably be ascertained.

4. The Minister may disclose information in the register to—

(a) The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing for the purpose of exercising the Office's functions; and

(b) The Council for the purpose of exercising the Council's functions.

5. The following persons and bodies may disclose information to the Minister for the purposes of the register, subject to applicable law—

(a) A government directorate or agency;

(b) The Chief Psychiatrist;

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(c) The Territory Coroner; and

(d) Another entity prescribed by regulation.

6. The Minister may enter into an agreement with a government directorate or agency or another entity for the purposes of establishing, maintaining or administering the register.

7. A disclosure of information under this section may be subject to conditions the Minister considers necessary and appropriate.

8. A person must not contravene a condition imposed under subsection (7).

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.

9. The Minister may publish information in the register only if the information is published in a form that ensures the identity of a person—

(a) Is not apparent; or

(b) Cannot reasonably be ascertained.

10. This section does not limit any other lawful power or obligation to collect, use or disclose information.

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Schedule 1 Dictionary

Agency—means a government directorate or agency.

Chief Psychiatrist—means the person appointed as the Chief Psychiatrist under the Mental Health Act 2015.

Council—means the Suicide Prevention Council established under section 14.

Lived and living experience—includes direct or indirect experience of suicidal distress, suicide attempts, suicide, bereavement by suicide or caring for a person affected by suicide.

Office—means the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Postvention—means activities undertaken after a suicide, suspected suicide or suicide attempt to support affected individuals, families, communities, workforces or organisations and to reduce further risk.

Priority population group—means a population group identified in the Territory Plan as being disproportionately impacted by suicide or suicidal distress.

Suicide prevention—includes measures to prevent suicidal distress, suicide attempts and suicide deaths and measures for early intervention, response and postvention.

Territory Plan—means the Territory-wide suicide prevention plan prepared under section 6.

Government directorate or agency—has the meaning prescribed by regulation or, in the absence of a prescribed meaning, means a directorate or agency of the Australian Capital Territory government sector.

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Endnotes

1 Presentation speech

Presentation speech made in the Legislative Assembly on 28 October 2026

2 Notification

Notified under the Legislation Act 2026.

3 Republications of amended laws

For the latest republication of amended laws, see www.legislation.act.gov.au.

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