2026

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Suicide Prevention Bill 2026

Explanatory Statement

Presented by

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SUICIDE PREVENTION BILL 2026

Overview
The Suicide Prevention Bill 2026 establishes a legislative framework for coordinated suicide prevention across the Australian Capital Territory. It provides for a Territory-wide suicide prevention plan, suicide prevention plans for government directorates and agencies, a Suicide Prevention Council, annual reporting to the Legislative Assembly, and a register and information-sharing framework intended to support monitoring, evaluation, research and prevention.

Policy objectives
Clause 5 sets out the objectives of reducing suicidal distress and suicide in the Territory; strengthening the capability and capacity of government directorates and agencies; promoting evidence-informed and best-practice prevention, early intervention, response and postvention; recognising suicide prevention as a shared responsibility; addressing the needs of priority population groups; and ensuring policy and services are informed by evidence, data and lived and living experience.

Part 1 — Preliminary
Clauses 1–4 provide for the short title, commencement, the absence of amendments to other Acts, and the use of Schedule 1 to define terms used in the Act. Clause 5 sets out the Act's objectives.

Part 2 — Suicide Prevention Plans
Clauses 6–8 require the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing to prepare and support implementation of a Territory-wide plan within two years after commencement. The plan must be published and must be prepared having regard to evidence, priority population groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, lived and living experience, relevant national and jurisdictional frameworks, measurable indicators and public reporting. Consultation is required with specified groups and stakeholders. The Territory Plan must be reviewed at least every five years, with review outcomes and any revised plan published.

Clauses 9–12 require government directorates and agencies, ACT Policing and any additional entities prescribed by regulation to prepare and implement plans within one year after completion of the Territory Plan. Plans must address staff wellbeing and suicide prevention among community members who interact with or are affected by the entity, to the extent relevant to its functions. Plans must involve consultation, include actions and capability development, and set out performance measures and monitoring arrangements. Plans and review outcomes must be published. The Office may provide advice or review a plan if requested.

Clause 13 requires the Minister to prepare and present an annual report to the Legislative Assembly within six months after the end of each financial year. The report must address progress on the Territory Plan and agency plans, relevant indicators and data, actions concerning priority population groups, and Council advice and the Government's response. The Office must also publish at least annually a summary of Council advice and recommendations, including whether each was accepted or acted on and reasons where advice was not accepted.

Part 3 — Suicide Prevention Council
Clauses 14–16 establish the Suicide Prevention Council to advise the Minister and the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Its functions include advising on the Territory Plan and broader suicide prevention policy, promoting collaboration and lived-experience participation, raising awareness, and identifying emerging issues and gaps. The Council must have between seven and twelve members and includes specified representation, including the Chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the head of the Office, government representatives, and a

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person appointed on the recommendation of the Leader of the Opposition. The Council has co-chairpersons. Appointed members may serve terms of up to three years, subject to the six-year cumulative limit, and are entitled to fees and allowances determined by the Minister.

Part 4 — Information Sharing
Clauses 17–18 allow the Minister to keep, or arrange for another person or entity to keep, a register relating to confirmed or suspected deaths by suicide and, if prescribed by regulation, suicide attempts and other suicidal behaviour. The register is intended to support monitoring, identification of trends, evaluation, policy development and research. The Bill provides for information to be disclosed for specified purposes, subject to legal, privacy, confidentiality and information-handling requirements. Research publication and public release of register information must protect identity so that a person is not apparent or cannot reasonably be identified. The Chief Psychiatrist, Territory Coroner and specified entities may provide information for the register, subject to applicable law.

Schedule 1 — Dictionary
Schedule 1 defines key terms including Chief Psychiatrist, Council, lived and living experience, Office, postvention, priority population group, suicide prevention, Territory Plan and government directorate or agency.

Financial implications
The Bill may have financial implications arising from the preparation, implementation, publication, review and reporting of plans; operation and administration of the Council; and establishment, maintenance or administration of the register and associated information-sharing arrangements. The Bill provides for member fees and allowances to be determined by the Minister. The Minister may instruct the relevant authority to complete detailed costing analysis to distinguish Council remuneration from secretariat, consultation, data, IT, privacy, research and evaluation costs. No total implementation cost is asserted in the bill.

Human rights considerations
The Bill's purposes engage important interests in life, health, equality and access to services. The register and information-sharing provisions may engage the right to privacy and other rights protected by the *Human Rights Act 2004*. The Bill includes purpose limitations, a requirement that personal or health information disclosure be reasonably necessary and permitted by law, and protections for publication of research and register information

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