

# Joint Statement for Government Action



## Urgently address mental health and suicide in agriculture

**The below coalition is calling on the next Federal Government to make an immediate investment of \$50m over five years to address a mental health and wellbeing crisis in agriculture.**

Australian farmers die by suicide at up to twice the rate of the general working population.

**A farmer dies by suicide every 10 days.**

Poor mental health also has a significant negative impact on workplace safety (the agricultural industry has some of the highest rates of fatality and injury) and the productivity and profitability of Australian agricultural businesses. Poor mental health and suicide have devastating impacts not just on businesses and families, but on entire communities.

While many of the issues faced by farmers are intertwined with the broader health challenges of rural, regional and remote Australia, the agriculture industry faces its own unique challenges. The mental health and wellbeing of people in agriculture is adversely impacted by increasingly complex and compounding events including weather and natural disasters, financial stress, and geographic or social isolation.

And farmers struggle to get help. Farmers are half as likely to have seen a general practitioner (GP) or a mental health professional in the past 12 months compared to other rural people. Farmers report not feeling comfortable discussing mental health, including not wanting to burden family or friends, and have difficulty accessing suitable mental health services.

This mental health and wellbeing crisis demands a tailor-made, whole-of-industry response that is supported by government – and it must happen urgently.

**We are calling on the Federal Government to invest \$50m over five years to deliver a comprehensive plan to strengthen mental health and wellbeing in agriculture.**

# Principles and Priorities

**There is a clear opportunity and demand for well-supported mental health and wellbeing to drive a safe and productive agriculture industry.**

To meet the pressing mental health and wellbeing needs of agriculture, we call on the Federal Government to invest in line with five key high-level principles.

These principles emerged from the National Forum on Mental Health and Wellbeing in Agriculture in March 2024, attended by over 60 participants representing a broad range of stakeholders and interests.

From the National Forum, hosted by the National Farmers' Federation, emerged a Steering Committee to bring together experts in research, practice, and advocacy.

The industry stands united in its vision for a future where individuals in agriculture are empowered and supported to prioritise and strengthen their mental health and wellbeing, with accessible resources and support tailored to their needs.



## Collaboration

Addressing this crisis will depend on collective effort, with governments, industry, service providers, and the community working together on a basis of mutual respect, transparency and trust.



## Tailored Services

The farming community needs improved access to services which meet their specific needs.

Mental health professionals must have awareness of the unique challenges facing those in the agriculture sector and services must be built in consultation with those with lived experience.



## Community Engagement

Centre agricultural communities in the policy development, planning, and implementation processes. Recognise the unique needs and strengths of rural communities and actively engage community members in co-design, including mental health consumers, families, and local leaders, to ensure their voices are heard and their perspectives are considered.



## Evidence-based

Invest in mental health and wellbeing initiatives that are supported by and consistent with best available evidence, in consultation with individuals and institutions specialising in this research and clinical practice.



## Holistic

Promote an integrated approach to wellbeing, recognising the linkages and interplay between mental, social, and physical health.

Foster collaboration and coordination among different stakeholders, including healthcare providers, community organisations, government agencies, and local communities.

This approach should encompass prevention, early intervention, treatment, and ongoing support.



## Endorsing Organisations



Join the coalition and support mental health and wellbeing in agriculture.

Contact the National Farmers' Federation: 02 6269 5666 | [reception@nff.org.au](mailto:reception@nff.org.au)





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## Endorsing Organisations



**Rural Financial  
Counselling  
Service NSW**  
NORTHERN REGION



**NATIONAL  
Rural & Remote  
Suicide Prevention Service**  
A service of the Healthy Communities Foundation Australia



### Endorsing Individuals

Steph Schmidt - Farm Life Psych

**Join the coalition and support mental health and wellbeing in agriculture.**

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