



nsw commission for
children & young people

Mr Elton Humphery
Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Reference Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Humphrey

I am writing regarding the Inquiry into Suicide in Australia.

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to the inquiry. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Committee for their interest in this important issue.

The Commission promotes the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people in NSW. A key function of the Commission is to support children and young people to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Unfortunately, the Commission is unable to lodge a submission to your current inquiry. The timeframe does not allow us to work with children and young people so that they can participate meaningfully on this issue. I am however able to provide the following information which I hope will be of interest to the Committee.

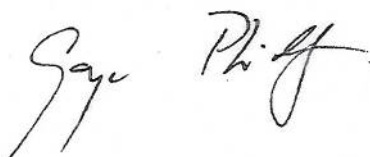
In 2003 the Commission released the report into suicide and risk taking deaths of young people in NSW. This detailed the findings of a collaborative study undertaken by the Commission, the Child Death Review Team and the Centre for Mental Health. The study examined the deaths of 187 children and young people aged 12 to 17 years who died from suicide and risk-taking from January 1996 to December 2000 in NSW. The report provided new information about children and young people's behaviour. In particular the report revealed the young people who died in this way were not a homogenous group, 124 had experienced enduring difficulties, 26 had experienced a pivotal life event and 26 died as a result of adolescent experimentation. I have included a copy of the report for your information.

One of the recommendations arising from this report was that NSW develop a suicide prevention strategy. A whole-of-government Suicide Prevention Strategy is currently being prepared by NSW Health and will reflect state and national priorities. It is my understanding that the NSW whole-of-government submission will provide information on the strategy.

As this issue is one that impacts on children and young people I would like to encourage the Committee consider ways to facilitate their participation in this inquiry.

If you have any further questions, please contact Ms Lou-Anne Lind, A/Manager Policy, on 9286 7205 or at lou-anne.lind@kids.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gaye Phillips'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gaye Phillips
Commissioner
2 November 2009