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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Reducing veteran and defence suicide takes conference centre stage**

Reducing veteran and defence suicide rates will be a key focus for a major international prevention conference being held in Australia in May.

The upcoming [Asia Pacific conference hosted by the International Association on Suicide Prevention \(IASP\)](#) is also encouraging those from the veteran and Defence community to take part by applying for one of 10 bursaries to attend the event on the Gold Coast for free.

Professor Rory O'Connor, President of The International Association for Suicide Prevention said, "Suicide among military and veteran communities around the world remains far too high. There is a real need for focus in this area to support service men, women and their families and to encourage more coordinated responses to reduce veteran and defence suicide rates.

"Through support from LivingWorks Australia, IASP is proud to be able to offer this bursary for the 10th IASP Asia Pacific Conference to military and veteran personnel to enable better conversations focused on the targeted needs of these vulnerable communities," he said.

[LivingWorks Australia](#) CEO Shayne Connell said the conference was timely as the Australian Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide probes the systematic issues and risk factors within this community.

"Through our work over the last few decades training veterans and the military in suicide intervention skills, LivingWorks understands the need for forums such as the IASP Asia Pacific Conference to spotlight this critical issue," Mr Connell said.

"LivingWorks is proud to be a major Partner for this year's IASP Asia Pacific Conference and to not only provide sponsored bursaries but to host a special live symposium on veteran and defence suicide at the conference which will include those with lived experience, Defence and prevention experts," he said.

Veteran Brendan Barry served in the Australian Army for seven years and is hoping to attend the conference himself.

"The important thing about this conference is coming together with the broader community. Veterans come from all walks of life, when we get out of Defence we're back in the world with everyone else. It's important for us to see mental ill health isn't veteran specific and we can learn from people outside our community," Mr Barry said.

To apply for one of the bursaries available for the IASP Asia Pacific Conference, or to learn more about the event, visit: <https://www.iasp.info/apac-home/bursaries/>

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**Media reminder** to follow Mindframe best practice communications [www.mindframe.org.au](http://www.mindframe.org.au). Please also add help seeking info to stories (suggested): Lifeline 13 11 14 [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au); Beyondblue 1300 22 4636 [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au).



**Media contact:** LivingWorks Australia Communications Specialist, Kristy Tass 0409 352 861. Interviews are available with LivingWorks Australia CEO, IASP President and Conference organisers and veteran representative Brendan Barry.

**\*Note for editors:**

**LivingWorks Australia** has been providing training in suicide intervention across the country since the early 1990s, being part of the first National Suicide Prevention Strategy and plan with our world-leading ASIST two-day training program. LivingWorks has grown to more than 700 trainers across the country with a headquarters in NSW and offices in every state and territory. LivingWorks Australia has a footprint within the following settings: workplaces, education, clinical and allied health, Defence, veterans, veterinarians, First Responders and community.

**The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP)** leads the global effort in suicide prevention having developed an effective forum that is proactive in creating strong collaborative partnerships and promoting evidence-based action in order to reduce the incidence of suicide and suicidal behaviour ([www.iasp.info](http://www.iasp.info)). Established in 1960, IASP is the largest international association dedicated to suicide prevention and to the alleviation of the effects of suicide and collaborates closely with relevant international organisations.

HELP AND SUPPORT FOR  
**MILITARY/VETERANS**

<b>LIFELINE</b>	<b>1311 14</b>
Lifeline Text/SMS and accessibility options - see <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>	
<b>OPEN ARMS</b>	<b>1800 011 046</b>
<b>BEYOND BLUE</b>	<b>1300 224 636</b>
<b>MENSLINE</b>	<b>1300 789 978</b>
<b>QLIFE - LGBTQ+</b>	<b>1800 184 527</b>
<b>NATIONAL ALCOHOL &amp; OTHER DRUGS HOTLINE</b>	<b>1800 250 015</b>
<b>KIDS HELPLINE</b>	<b>1800 55 1800</b>



Anyone can learn the skills to keep someone safe from suicide. LivingWorks offers free skills training through Open Arms for veterans and their families, friends and communities. Visit [www.openarms.gov.au](http://www.openarms.gov.au).