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## **National consultations seek answers to Indigenous suicide**

The Menzies School of Health Research will this week embark on a nationwide consultation on the development of Australia's first national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy.

During August, two teams of researchers will criss-cross the continent, talking to interested people and organisations in locations as diverse as Broome, Brisbane, and Weipa.

Menzies' Associate Professor Gary Robinson said today that a thorough consultation process was critical to the development of the Strategy.

"Indigenous suicide devastates families, local communities and the nation as a whole."

"Suicide rates in Indigenous communities are significantly higher than those for the general Australian population. We need to develop a Strategy based on evidence, so that individuals and communities are able to build on their existing strengths and improve the effectiveness of suicide prevention endeavors," A/Prof Robinson said.

The process will include 16 consultations in all states and territories with a national workshop in October that will provide the groundwork for developing a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy for consideration by the Commonwealth.

"Menzies and our colleagues from the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) look forward to making a significant contribution to the Australian Government's efforts to tackle the issue of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide," concluded A/Prof Robinson

People and organisations interested in Indigenous wellbeing are invited to participate in the community forums, and to submit written input.

More information about the consultations and how to contact the Menzies team can be found at [www.indigenoussuicideprevention.org.au](http://www.indigenoussuicideprevention.org.au)

The Strategy including the consultations have been commissioned by the Department of Health and Ageing.

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### **Background**

Menzies School of Health Research is the national leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. It is the only medical research institute in the NT and the only one in Australia with a major focus on Indigenous health. Menzies has more than 300 staff working in over 60 communities in Central and Northern Australia, as well as developing countries in the region. Menzies is also a significant contributor to health education and research training.