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### Phone calls to support suicide survivors in the Central Highlands

People at risk of, or who have recently attempted, suicide in the Central Highlands area will be placed in regular phone contact with qualified mental health facilitators, with the launch of a new non-emergency telephone support program.

The Anglicare Warmline program will use regular telephone calls as a means to connect trained facilitators with people going through a vulnerable time.

Jenny Smith from Anglicare Central Queensland said calls would be made to participants in the service at an agreed time and frequency Wednesday to Saturday between 4pm and 8pm.

“Research shows those times are when people can feel most vulnerable, and so these phone calls aim to provide reassurance and understanding as well as a way to offer emotional regulation, and to identify and respond to suicide risk,” Mrs Smith said.

“Our facilitators will be asking questions throughout the conversation like: are you safe, what sort of a day have you had, if they take medication - have you taken medication, have you eaten, who have you connected with today?”

“It’s about care, keeping the person connected and making sure they’re safe by using mindfulness and reframing techniques, and other skills.

“If we’re concerned, there’ll be a suicide risk assessment completed, and other pathways to care will be explored if necessary.”

People who may be at risk or who have recently attempted suicide will be referred into the Warmline by their general practitioner, hospital service, youth and mental health program or through self-referral.

Mustafa Elkhishin, Senior Manager at Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN, the funding body who commissioned the service, said the Anglicare Warmline was a way of reinforcing the care already offered by the provider making the referral.

“These phone calls are in addition to the care and support offered by, for example, a participant’s GP, and will work in with the referrers to what we call a collaborative care model,” Mr Elkhishin said.

“Initiatives like this are geared towards creating better mental health within our community, and it all helps; a similar service has been run previously on the Sunshine Coast with great results.

“We don’t expect people will need to continue with the program indefinitely, but the Warmline will add another safety net for those who need support, when they most need it.”

The Warmline service is one of several mental health and suicide prevention initiatives currently operating in the Central Highlands region. A full-size headspace centre providing mental health support to young people aged 12-25 was announced for Emerald earlier this month, and is expected to be operational as soon as December.

Jenny Smith from Anglicare Central Queensland is available for comment.

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**For more information contact:**

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