Master of Ceremonies (MC) speaking points and run sheet

*Note: Further detail is provided in the next section*

**MC Notes: World Suicide Prevention Day 2023 — <<City/Town>>**

**Date: <<date of event>>**

**Venue: <<event location>>**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **WHO** | **Activity** |
| 11.00am |  | **Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders**  “I would like to respectfully acknowledge the *<<name of Group if known>>* Traditional Owners of the land *<<and/or sea>>*on which this event is taking place, and Elders past and present.  I also recognise those whose ongoing effort to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures will leave a lasting legacy for future Elders and leaders.”  **Acknowledgement of Lived Experience**  “I would also like to acknowledge everyone here today with a lived experience of suicide – those who have experienced suicidal thoughts, made an attempt on their life, cared for loved ones through crisis, or been bereaved through suicide. We remember those we have lost to suicide.  We also acknowledge the contribution of people with a lived experience of suicide to innovate, transform, drive and deliver suicide prevention.”  **Welcome to WSPD event**   * Acknowledge VIPs or other special guests * About WSPD and importance of observing WSPD * Why conversations matter * Acknowledge that talking about suicide can affect people in unexpected ways. Reference to <<counsellor and/or peer support workers>> available. |
| 11.10am | MC introduces entertainer 1 | <<Entertainer details>> |
| 11.30am | MC interviews service provider 1 & 2 | * Introduce <<provider name>> with a brief summary of what they do * MC asks 2-3 questions (max 2-3 mins per provider) * Reminder: Acknowledge that talking about suicide can affect people in unexpected ways. Reference to <<counsellor and/or peer support workers>> available. |
| 11.40am | MC introduces entertainer 2 | <<Entertainer details>> |
| 11.55Am | MC interviews service provider 3 & 4 | * Introduce <<provider name>> with a brief summary of what they do * MC asks 2-3 questions (max 2-3 mins per provider) * Reminder: Acknowledge that talking about suicide can affect people in unexpected ways. Reference to <<counsellor and/or peer support workers>> available. |
| 12.05pm | MC Introduces entertainer 3 | <<Entertainer details>> |
| 12.45pm | MC interviews service provider 5 & 6 | * Introduce <<provider name>> with a brief summary of what they do * MC asks 2-3 questions (max 2-3 mins per provider) * Reminder: Acknowledge that talking about suicide can affect people in unexpected ways. Reference to <<counsellor and/or peer support workers>> available. |
| 12.45pm | Lived experience speaker | Introduce lived experience speaker <<name>>.  Suggested topics —   * Provide some ideas about the signs and signals of suicidality the community can be alert to; * Suicidality can be an ongoing experience for many, i.e. the ‘recovery’ process can be non-linear and unique to each person; * The importance of reaching out for help and offering help; * Why using appropriate language is so important; * What to say to someone who is suicidal. |
| 1.00PM | MC introduces entertainer 4 | <<Entertainer details>> |
| 1.20pm | MC interviews provider 7 & 8 | * Introduce <<provider name>> with a brief summary of what they do * MC asks 2-3 questions (max 2-3 mins per provider) * Reminder: Acknowledge that talking about suicide can affect people in unexpected ways. Reference to <<counsellor and/or peer support workers>> available. |
| 1.30pm | MC introduces entertainer 5 | <<Entertainer details>> |
| 2.00pm | Wrap of event | * Thank you to <<name all participating dignitaries and service providers>> * We have loads of information still available — please don’t hesitate to get some information before leaving * Most of all, thank you, the community of <<town>> for participating in World Suicide Prevention Day, learning about suicide prevention and Creating Hope Through Action. |

**MC Speaking Points (further detail)**

Welcome to Country

## What is a Welcome to Country?

A **Welcome to Country** is a protocol where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners welcome others to the land of their ancestors.

The Welcome to Country ceremony is carried out at significant events and formal functions involving people from other parts of the country or from overseas. This practice shows respect for the Traditional Owners and Elders of a particular area or region.

## When is a Welcome to Country required?

A Welcome to Country should be conducted at major public functions. Appropriate functions include government organised, funded and co-funded events such as:

* openings of festivals
* award programs
* conferences
* significant community engagement forums.

A Welcome to Country should be incorporated into events where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, programs or services are being promoted.

## What is an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders?

The **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders** differs from a Welcome to Country in that it can be delivered by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

This practice demonstrates respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and recognises the importance of acknowledging Traditional Owners of the land and/or sea.

A master of ceremonies either introduces the Traditional Owner representative to provide a Welcome to Country or makes an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders. Other key speakers and participants may wish to take the opportunity to also precede their discussions with an Acknowledgement.

A short pause should be taken after the acknowledgement as a sign of respect, before proceedings continue.

## An example of an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders

“I would like to respectfully acknowledge the <<name of Group if known>> Traditional Owners of the land <<and/or sea>>on which this event is taking place, and Elders both past and present.

I also recognise those whose ongoing effort to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures will leave a lasting legacy for future Elders and leaders.”

## Is there a fee for a Welcome to Country?

Most Traditional Owner groups or representative groups will require a nominal fee to cover the cost of conducting the Welcome to Country ceremony.

A Welcome to Country that includes a traditional dance or smoking ceremony will generally involve a more substantial payment.

**Source:** [**https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/welcome-to-country/index.html**](https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/welcome-to-country/index.html)

World Suicide Prevention Day

**What is World Suicide Prevention Day?**

World Suicide Prevention Day is an international awareness day observed on 10 September each year to provide a focus for commitment and action to prevent suicide.

The [International Association for Suicide Prevention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Association_for_Suicide_Prevention) (IASP) collaborates with the [World Health Organisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Health_Organization) (WHO) and the [World Federation for Mental Health](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Federation_for_Mental_Health) to host World Suicide Prevention Day. Here in Queensland our event is supported by our Primary Health Network and Roses in the Ocean.

For community organisations and individuals committed to preventing suicide, this annual awareness day is an opportunity to share a message of hope in the community. Events and activities organised by volunteers like those here today are occurring in local communities across Australia.

**Suicide touches us all.**

Suicide is among the most prominent of international health issues. The number of people dying by suicide is significantly higher in most countries than the number of people dying in vehicle accidents.

There were 3,144 deaths possibly by suicide in Australia in 2021 — 2,358 men and 786 women. Suicide is the leading cause of death among Australians aged between 15 and 44 years.

Beyond the statistics, suicide leaves profound emotional, social and economic impacts for families, friends and communities. Suicide challenges us to do as much as possible to prevent these events and reduce harm. That is why we are here today to <<WSPD Theme – Create Hope Through Action>>.

**Conversations matter**

Suicide is a challenging and complex issue. There is no single solution, service or initiative that will reduce suicide and its impact. It requires all of us to play a role and share responsibility to support those at risk, their families and communities.

Suicide prevention encompasses a range of interventions, including health promotion, early intervention, crisis support and ongoing support for people experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviour, as well as supporting families and communities impacted by suicide.

**Safety and wellbeing support**

For many people, it's not easy to talk about suicide. The effects on family and friends can be devastating. Suicide provokes strong, sometimes contradictory, emotions and reactions.

If we are to bring suicide out of the shadows, encourage people to talk about suicide, learn about suicide prevention and connect with each other to save lives, we must ensure that discussions are safe and based on accurate information that leads to people feeling more empowered.

We understand that talking about suicide can affect people in unexpected ways. Today we have <<a professional counsellor/peer worker>> available for people who may feel the need for additional support throughout the event. Please reach out if you need assistance, we understand, and there are many people here today who have experienced what you may be feeling.