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## Young men's mental illness costing the Australian economy \$3b

Young men's mental illness in Australia is costing the economy more than A\$3 billion each year in lost productivity according to the landmark report from the Inspire Foundation and Ernst & Young, 'Counting the Cost: The Impact of Young Men's Mental Health on the Australian Economy', launched today in Canberra.

The Report highlights that mental illness in young men costs the Australian economy A\$387,000 per hour and over nine million working days lost per annum – figures which cannot be ignored by the business sector.

The Report reveals that the Federal Government bears 31 per cent of this cost via direct health costs, disability welfare payments, unemployment benefits and the direct costs of imprisonment, but the remainder is carried by companies, organisations and individuals.

Engaging employers and business groups in the development and delivery of mental health initiatives will assist in cultivating a larger, higher skilled and more productive Australian labour force while addressing the issue of young men's mental illness.

Jonathan Nicholas, CEO of the Inspire Foundation, the non-profit organisation behind leading online youth mental health service, [ReachOut.com](http://ReachOut.com), said it is well recorded that young men have higher rates of completed suicide, antisocial behaviour and drug and alcohol problems than young women. However, there is a need to understand and explain the economic impacts of young men's mental health to the business community.

"For the first time we are starting to understand that there are productivity opportunities and risks associated with the mental health of young men. The failure to act presents a serious threat to Australia's future productivity and to the individual prosperity of young men affected by poor mental health," Nicholas said.

"Until such impacts are made clear, the mental health of young men would continue to be seen as primarily a health issue for the attention of the government and community sectors. Helping young men with mental illness with education and training opportunities will assist higher wages and productivity for the economy," added Nicholas.

David Roberts, Lead Partner Health Advisory Ernst & Young, sees the need to address the issue from a corporate level.

"This report reveals the huge impact mental health has on the Australian economy and our country's productivity. If we want to help prevent suicide among young Australian men, we as businesses need to act urgently," Roberts said.

“Addressing poor mental health in the workplace through early detection and diagnosis has clear benefits to business including avoiding the costs of absenteeism and potentially reducing the flow-on effects to co-workers by not having to carry additional work tasks.”

The ‘Counting the Cost’ report was developed with the support of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre and will be launched at Australian Parliament House today at 10am by the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Hon Mark Butler MP.

Associate Professor Jane Burns, CEO of the Young and Well CRC said, "We cannot waste another young life – a generation of young men lost to suicide, incarceration or addiction. As a nation we need to prioritise young men's mental health as a considerable asset, as valuable to Australia's economy as iron ore and coal. The Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre calls on the industry and business community to invest in the mental health of the nation and ensure our prosperity for future generations."

The full report can be downloaded at [www.inspire.org.au](http://www.inspire.org.au) and [www.youngandwellcrc.org.au](http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au)

**ENDS**

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#### **About the Inspire Foundation**

The [Inspire Foundation](http://www.inspire.org.au) is an Australian non-profit established in 1996 and is the organisation behind leading online youth mental health service, [ReachOut.com](http://www.reachout.com). We exist because mental health difficulties in young people are one of the biggest challenges of our time: 1 in 4 young people have a mental health disorder, and suicide is the leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24 in Australia. [ReachOut.com](http://www.reachout.com) gives young people the skills and confidence to overcome life's obstacles, from the everyday to the significant. We collaborate with young people to create the service that is most relevant to them, and delivers personalised, actionable help where, when and however they choose.

#### **About Jonathan Nicholas, CEO of Inspire Foundation**

Jonathan Nicholas has been with the non-profit organisation since 1997 and has been CEO of Inspire Foundation since 2010. He helped to establish [ReachOut.com](http://www.reachout.com) in 1998, a leading online mental health service for youth and also found the Foundation's consulting business, Inspire Digital. He has also been instrumental in the international growth of the Foundation and in 2008, founded Inspire Foundation in Ireland. Jonathan has a background in child and adolescent psychology, having spent the large part of his career working in the area of adolescent mental health.



#### **About the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre**

The [Young and Well CRC](http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au) is an Australian-based, international research centre that unites young people with researchers, practitioners, innovators and policy-makers from over 70 partner organisations. Together, we explore the role of technology in young people's lives, and how it can be used to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 25. The Young and Well CRC is established under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program.

#### **About the ‘Counting the Cost – The Impact of Young Men’s Mental Health on the Australian Economy’ report**

The ‘Counting the Cost – The Impact of Young Men’s Mental Health on the Australian Economy’ report is the result of a partnership between the Inspire Foundation (Inspire) and Ernst & Young to demonstrate the impact of costs associated with poor mental health amongst young men on the Australian economy. The project was undertaken as an initiative of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre.