
MEDIA RELEASE

RACV AND NRMA INSURANCE PROVIDE \$2M FUNDING BOOST FOR LIFELINE SUICIDE PREVENTION SERVICES IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

LIFELINE'S 13 11 14 LINE NOW RECEIVING A CALL FOR HELP EVERY 30 SECONDS FROM AUSSIES IN NEED AS A RESULT OF BUSHFIRES AND COVID-19

RACV and NRMA Insurance have joined forces to provide \$2 million dollars in funding to Lifeline Australia to help enable critical tele-health suicide prevention services for vulnerable communities affected by the summer bushfires and COVID-19.

The joint RACV and NRMA Insurance funding will enable Lifeline Australia to:

- Provide more than 8,000 tele-health Counselling sessions for people in communities affected by drought, bushfire, flood and COVID-19.
- Provide e-learning Accidental Counsellor training for up to 3,000 people in communities across Australia, with a focus on those who have regular contact with other community members. This training will equip people with the skills to recognise the signs of mental distress or ill health and the ability to respond effectively and refer people to the most appropriate services.
- Distribute thousands of tool-kits and resources within affected regions so that people are aware of the support that is available to them.

Lifeline Australia Chief Executive Officer, Colin Seery said it was critical to ensure tele-health services are available to Australians in disaster-affected regions.

“COVID-19 restrictions have meant the ability to provide tele-health services is more important than ever. We are extremely grateful for this support from RACV and NRMA Insurance which will enable us to pivot our on-the-ground services to tele-health delivery so our counsellors can continue to connect with their communities and offer vital mental health supports.

“The funding from RACV and NRMA Insurance means Lifeline will be able to continue to work with people who have relied on our financial and psychological counselling services to support them through bushfires, floods and now COVID-19, and extend those essential services to help thousands more people who are struggling in those communities,” Mr Seery said.

Fifty percent of Lifeline’s centres are based in rural, regional and remote communities of Australia, many of which have recently been devastated by drought, fire and flood.

RACV Managing Director and CEO, Neil Taylor, said “RACV looks forward to partnering with Lifeline and NRMA Insurance to provide support to vulnerable communities across Victoria impacted by the devastating summer bushfires and COVID-19”.

“Today’s announcement will enable Lifeline’s tele-health service to broaden its reach into the regions and respond to the need of individuals and communities who have been impacted the most. We hope that this new partnership will help make a meaningful difference to those at risk of negative mental health outcomes.”

NRMA Insurance CEO Mark Milliner said the \$2 million funding support forms part of NRMA Insurance's ongoing program of work to support initiatives that help make communities safer, more connected, and resilient.

"We can already see the deep affect COVID-19 is having on our communities and as an insurer, we know that the personal and emotional impact of a crisis can last for years. That's why we are proud to partner with RACV to donate \$2 million to help Lifeline expand its important work.

"The donation will be used to extend Lifeline's national tele-health service and help create local networks of support by providing tailored community resilience training in areas impacted by the bushfires and COVID-19. We look forward to working closely with Lifeline in the months and years ahead," Mr Milliner said.

Mr Seery said the support from RACV and NRMA Insurance and will go a long way to reducing the long-term mental health impacts of disasters, which will save lives.

"Research has shown that communities which have experienced consecutive trauma are likely to experience longer-term psychological impacts. The recent devastation caused by bushfire, drought and flood has left many people vulnerable to negative mental health outcomes in this time of COVID-19 and physical distancing measures.

"It's essential we increase the level of support we can provide these communities. The earlier we can intervene when a person is struggling, the greater the chance we have of reducing the devastating risk of suicide or other long-term mental health impacts," Mr Seery said.

"As always, it is important that we take the opportunity to remind people of the importance of looking out for and connecting with each other. If you, or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed or in need of support, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 at any time of the day or night."

Lifeline is Australia's leading suicide prevention service, operating the 13 11 14 telephone line, text and chat services within 40 centres around the nation. The service expects to respond to well over one million requests for support this year, creating an average of 120 safety plans to keep a person experiencing suicidal ideation safe every day.

To donate to Lifeline, visit: <https://fundraise.lifeline.org.au/emergency-appeal>

To arrange an interview, please contact:
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About RACV

Founded in 1903, RACV exists to improve the lives of Victorians by delivering valued benefits to members and their communities. RACV addresses the needs of Victorians by informing, advising and representing them through products and services spanning motoring, mobility, leisure, travel, insurance and the home. RACV seeks to help shape a smarter, safer and more connected future for Victoria.

About NRMA Insurance

NRMA Insurance has been helping customers protect the things they care about for almost 100 years. This includes a range of cover, including car, home and small business insurance.

NRMA Insurance is one of Australia's most trusted insurance providers and has a long and proud history of helping to build more resilient communities by working with experts to protect homes from severe weather and teach the community about road safety.

NRMA Insurance is backed by IAG, the largest general insurer in Australia and New Zealand. IAG operates some of Australia's biggest insurance brands including CGU, SGIO, SGIC and WFI.