

Foundation for Positive Masculinity

2023 Conference

Dr Kylie King



What kind of programs are out there? What might be working for young men?



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I wish to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people, on whose land we are gathered today.

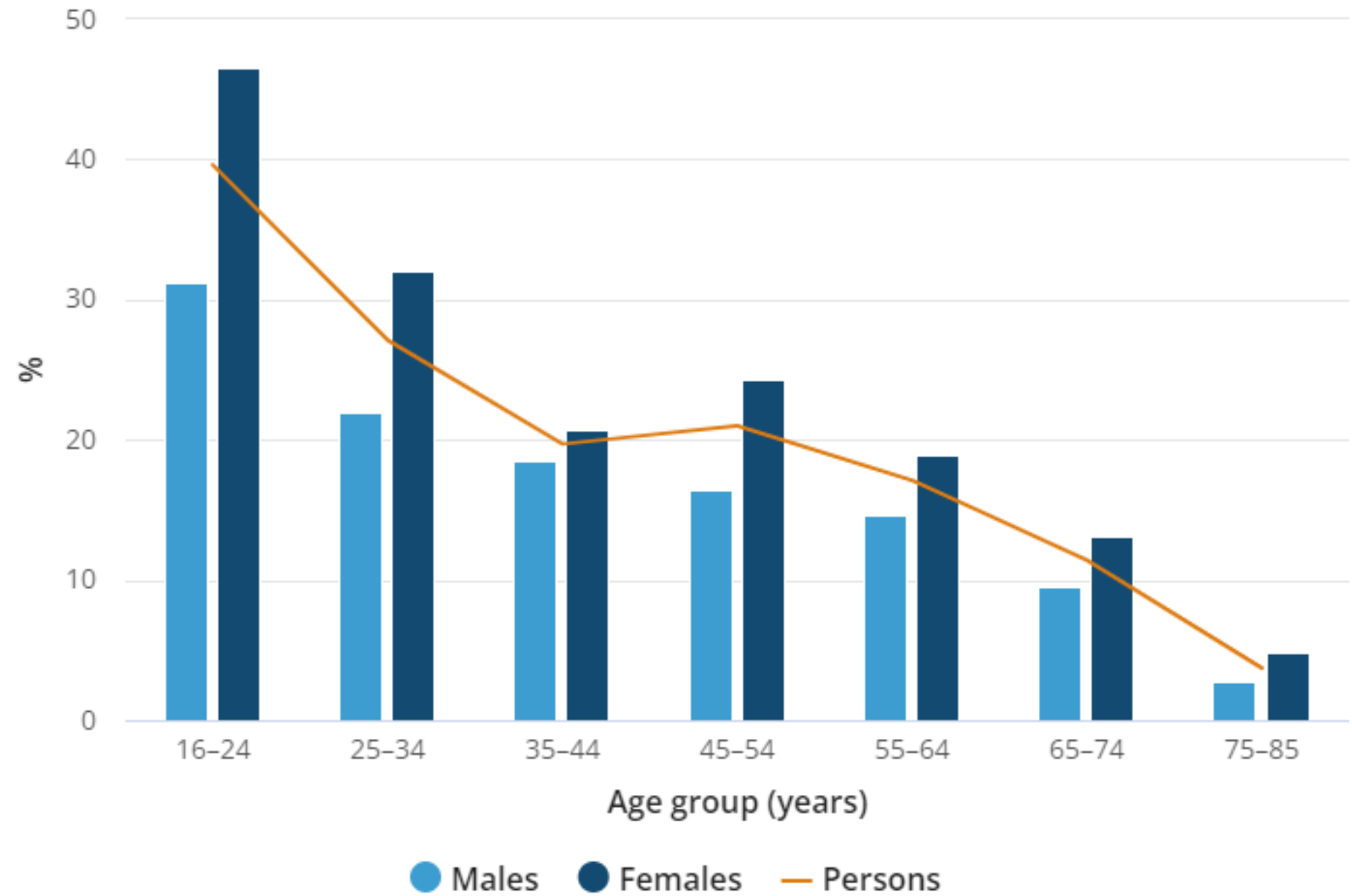
I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present. I acknowledge the unequal burden of suicide experienced by Indigenous men, and their resilience and innovation in suicide prevention and social and emotional wellbeing.

I acknowledge those who have lived and living experience of mental health and suicide.

I acknowledge those of diverse gender, who are often misrepresented in research and health care.

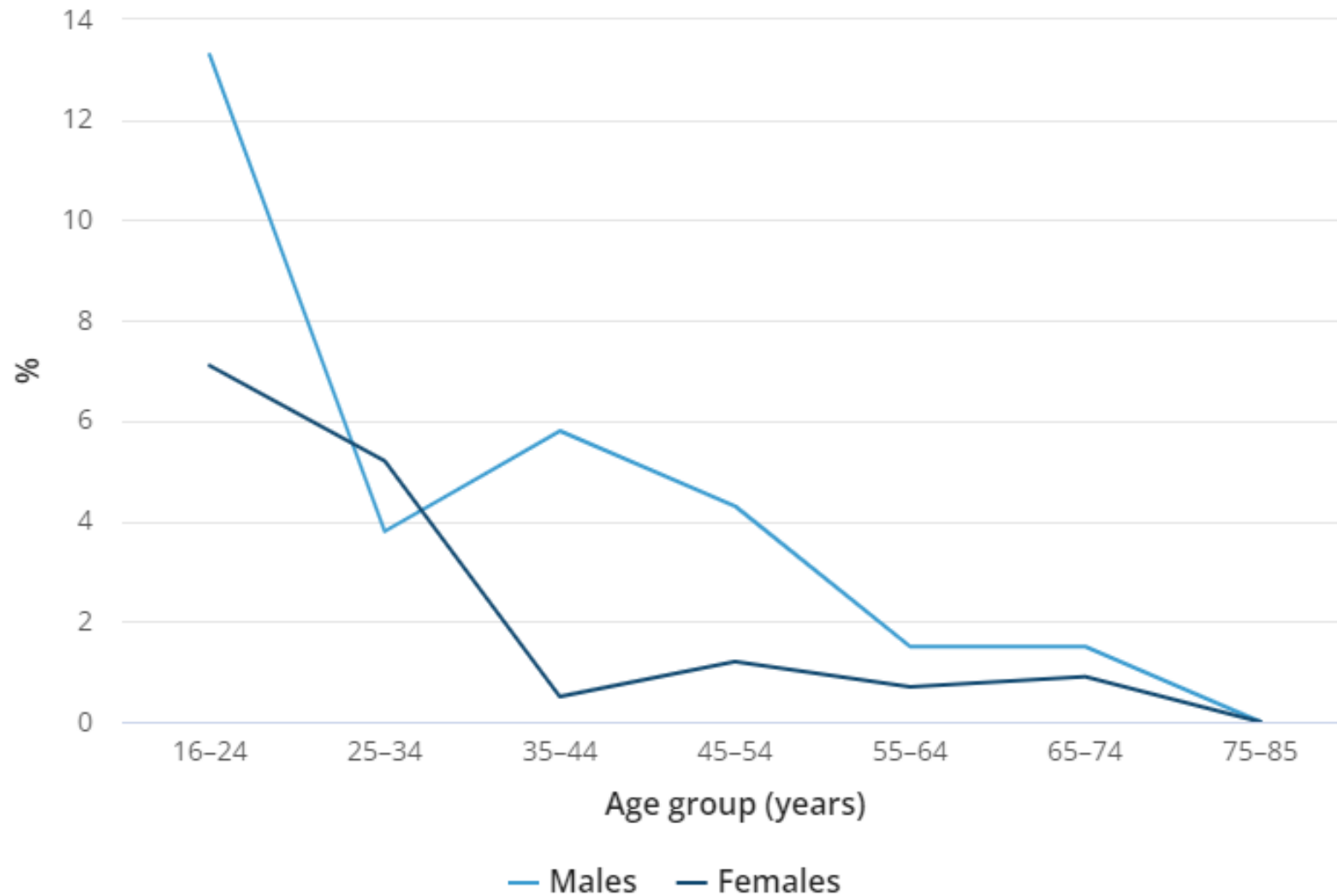
Mental Health

Any 12-month mental disorder, by age and sex, 2020-21



Substance Use

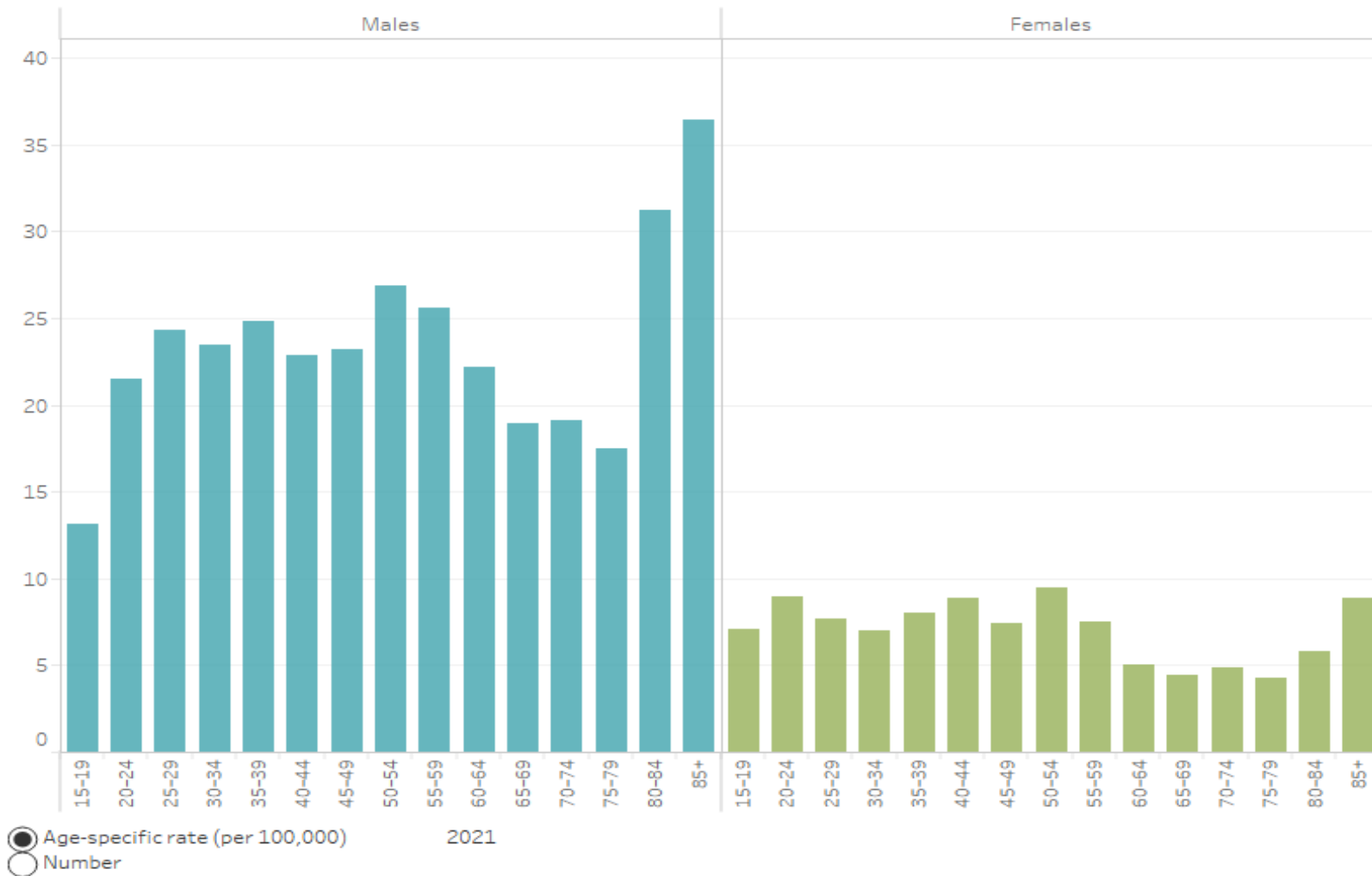
Any 12-month Substance Use disorder, by age and sex, 2020-21



Suicide

Suicide deaths by age and sex, Australia, 2021

Age-specific rate (per 100,000)



Why is the suicide rate higher among males?

More lethal means

- Acquired capability
- Stronger intent to die
- Gendered expectations around suicide

Externalising of depression

- Aggression, substance abuse, risk taking
- Alienates people, reduces help-seeking, increased capability for suicide
- Less identified by health professionals

Substance use

- Increased distress, impulsiveness, disinhibition

Social connectedness

- High levels of social disconnection among men
- Social connection is protective
- Self-reliance

Help-seeking

- Negative attitudes towards help-seeking
- Reduced help-seeking

Masculine norms

- Likely underpinning – self-reliance, emotional expression

Young men's relationships are key



- ▶ Masculine norms are crystalised in adolescence
- ▶ Parents and friends are critical for positive masculinity
- ▶ Where masculine norms are socialised, internalised and maintained
- ▶ Where healthy acts of resistance take place [behaviour counter to traditional masculine norms]
- ▶ Scholarship on adolescent masculinity applies learnings from adult men - factors salient to adolescent development are neglected [Rogers et al., 2021]

‘Boys not only share their deepest secrets and feelings with their closest male friends, they claim that without them they would go “wacko”. Yet as boys become men, they become distrustful, lose these friendships, and feel isolated and alone’

–Deep Secrets, Niobe Way

Our research about what might be working



<https://manup.org.au/>



<https://www.tomorrowman.com.au/>



<https://aheadofthegame.org.au/>



<https://themenstable.org/>



EPISODES



EPISODE 1

Suicide is the #1 killer of Aussie men under 45. Triple M's Gus Worland is on a mission to find out why.

WATCH NOW



EPISODE 2

Gus travels Australia in search of solutions and discovers some organisations that give him hope.

WATCH NOW



EPISODE 3

Gus creates a campaign to show suicide is not a solution. And he's singing his message for all to hear.

WATCH NOW



642,000 viewers/episode



10 million people



2.4 million people

Changes in:

- ▶ Help-seeking intentions and behaviour
- ▶ Masculine norms
- ▶ Awareness
- ▶ A desire for things to be different for boys and young men



Findings ETA 2023-2024

Testing the impact of 'Breaking the Man Code' workshops on teenage boys' help-seeking, masculinity and suicide risk factors

Our Education Programs



Student Program

A highly engaging, relatable and immersive learning journey, training young men how to walk their own path, talk with gravity and engage actively, with purpose, in all areas of their lives. This workshop can be run for boys from Year 10 upwards.

[Download brochure](#)



A Night with the Folks

An engaging and memorable exploration of the work of Tomorrow Man, allowing participants to have greater understanding of what their young persons experience of the workshop may be.

[Download brochure](#)



Teacher Training

Our Teacher Training Program gives an insight into what participants experience and how teachers can best support them before, during and after the workshop.

[Download brochure](#)

[ENQUIRE / BOOK](#)

Research funded by Australian Rotary Health and the National Health and Medical Research Council

WHAT IS MOVEMBER AHEAD OF THE GAME?

Movember Ahead of the Game is a youth mental health program. It teaches players, parents, coaches and volunteers to understand mental health, build mental fitness and strengthen resilience. Players learn how to deal with challenges in both sport and life.

Movember is excited to be teaming up with the Australian Football League (AFL), and a host of community organisations to bring Ahead of the Game to local footy clubs across Australia. Visit movember.com to find out more about the partnership.

Curious to find out how the Ahead of the Game program works?



Research 2019-2021

- ▶ Stewart Vella, Christian Swann, **Sarah Liddle**, Diarmuid Hurley and others
- ▶ Improved knowledge about mental illness, societal and self-stigma, intentions to help a peer, intentions to seek help from formal sources, confidence to seek mental health information, and resilience
- ▶ Not all young men have low help-seeking intentions. More willing to refer others for help than seek help for themselves.

Research

- ▶ Findings ETA 2024
- ▶ Early insights:
 - ▶ Role models, diversity



THE MEN'S TABLE

MEN SERVING MEN

[About Us](#)

[Get Involved](#)

[Why join?](#)

Our story

In 2011, a group of men decided to have dinner with the intention of having a place to connect with other men, and talk about the highs and lows of their lives.

They've been meeting once a month ever since to talk, laugh and share about what's going on for them, and have forged meaningful relationships based on trust and acceptance of each other.

Belonging to a Men's Table contributes to mental, emotional and social wellbeing whilst being a powerful support to individual members travelling their life journeys.

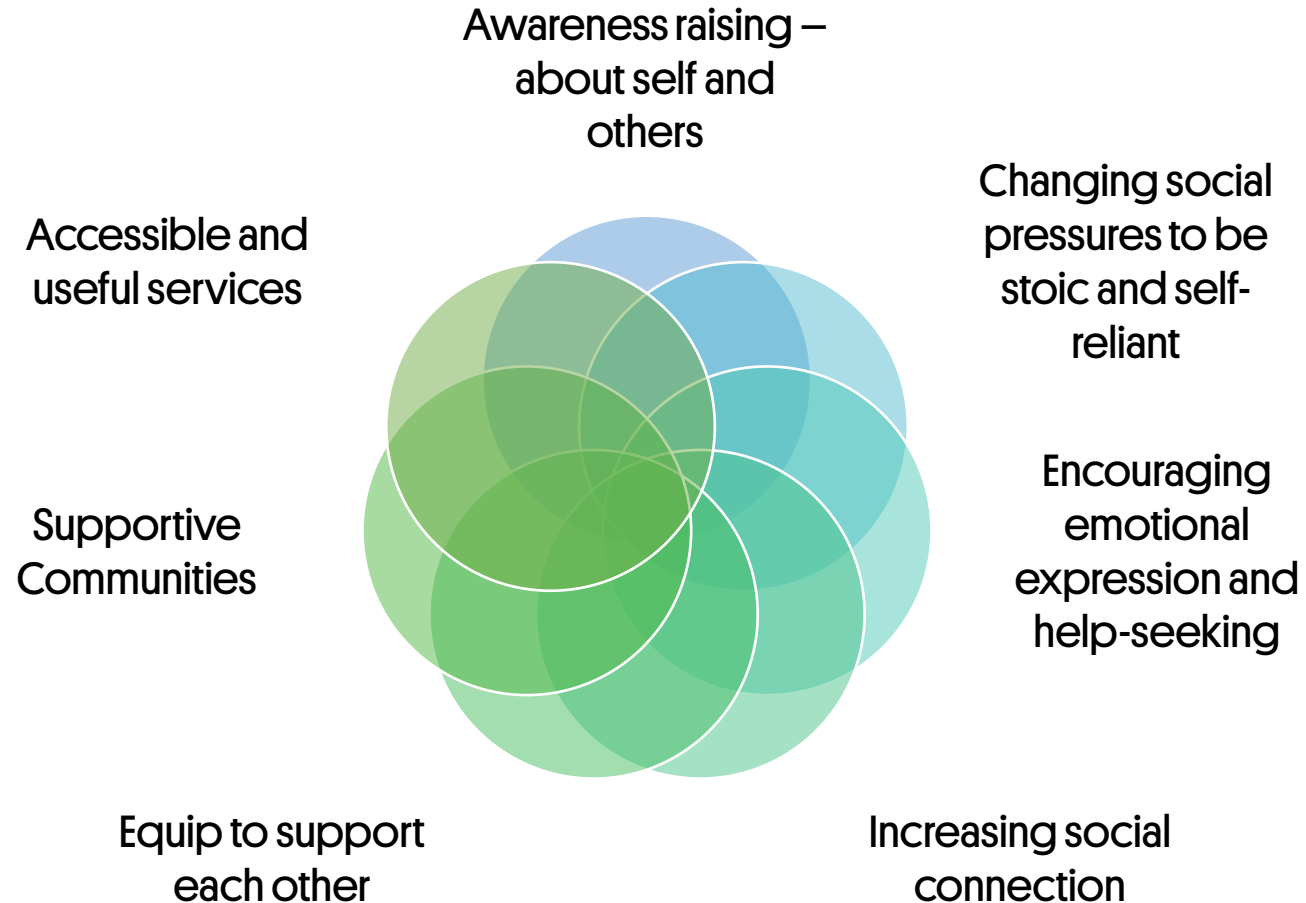
Each Table is distinct and has its own personality , guided by the lessons learned through the experience of existing Men's Tables, and supported by the Kitchen (central office) of The Men's Table, a registered not for profit organisation.

What have we learnt through doing this research?

- ▶ Gender sensitive interventions are showing promise for males of all ages
- ▶ Boys and young men are capable of much more than we think
- ▶ Create safe spaces and position them as the experts
- ▶ Young men will surprise you
- ▶ Social context is critical
 - ▶ Role models – walking the talk
 - ▶ Champions within schools - supporting change
 - ▶ Program facilitators - guides and role models
 - ▶ Parents - trusted supports
 - ▶ Community - enabling change
- ▶ There is a lot we don't know

We all hold biases that get in the way of positive masculinity for young men

A gender sensitive approach for young men



Challenges and opportunities

- ▶ How can interventions benefit everyone?
- ▶ Intersectionality and gender diversity
- ▶ Unequal responsibility for change - individual change isn't always fair or possible
- ▶ Supportive friends, families, and communities aren't always available
- ▶ Unintended or negative impacts – particularly for vulnerable people
- ▶ Working alongside young men
- ▶ Uni research is slow



Collective change

Monash University

Kylie King, Sarah Liddle, Anna Clark, Dana Meads, Jordan Vella, Julian Madsen, Kristina Kannellopoulos

Our collaborators at other Universities

Jane Pirkis, Stuart Vella, Simon Rice, Patty Chondros, Judy Trevena, Matt Spittal, Krista Fisher, Michael Wilson, Alison Cleave, Zac Seidler

Our community and funding research partners

Tomorrow Man, Gotcha4Life, Men's Table, Ahead of the Game, Movember, Australian Rotary Health, National Health and Medical Research Council

Champions in schools, sporting clubs, communities

Other programs

Man Cave, Silence is Deadly



THE BUOY PROJECT
Preventing Suicide in Boys and Men

The boys and men who take a chance with something new and contribute their voices to our research

