



Early intervention key to reducing suicide

• Health

BY KATE MURPHY

Community agencies and charities could have an even bigger role to play in the prevention of youth suicide if recommendations in the recent report on youth suicide are adopted.

The federal health and ageing committee tabled

the report *Before It's too Late* on suicide prevention in parliament on July 4.

The report had 10 recommendations including government to collaborate with community agencies, making mental health classes a part of primary and high school curriculum, training teachers to recognise and assess suicidal risk and data collecting and sharing across the states.

Chief executive of Burswood-based organisation Youth Focus Jenny Allen said there were several recommendations imperative for immediate adoption.

"This report definitely benefits all organisations working with young people to prevent youth suicide as it recognises the gravity of the problem and puts in place strategies for the government to work collaboratively with agencies like Youth Focus," she said.

"We should not have people in a country like

Australia contemplating youth suicide.

"As stated in the report suicide is the second most common cause of death in young people.

"These are very worrying statistics as it is affecting the young people and impacting on the future of our community."

Ms Allen said the report was important in reinforcing the importance of early intervention measures.

"This will provide pertinent information on the various risk factors affecting young people and educate the community where help can be sought when young people or their families are faced with mental health issues," she said.

Federal member for Swan and deputy chair of the committee Steve Irons initiated the inquiry because of his work with charities.

"Local charities are doing the best they can on the resources they have available but there needs to be more of a national approach," he said.

"The committee has taken evidence from many stakeholders and included a public hearing in Perth.

"In particular I praise the young people who had the courage to come forward and give evidence about their own situations."

The Federal Government was considering the recommendations.



Chair of the health and ageing committee Steve Georganas with Federal member for Swan and deputy chair Steve Irons discussing the report.