

# Press Release

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Central Coast  
Division of  
General Practice



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## **R U OK? Could save a life**

A simple question: are you okay? Might be a lifesaver for someone living with depression or anxiety, just reaching out could have a significant impact, says Dr Phil Godden, Chair Central Coast Division of General Practice.

A national day of action has been launched in Australia this year. R U OK? Day on 29 November aims to raise awareness of, and assist in preventing, suicide.

Dr Godden said that while the message was simple, the impact of depression and anxiety on the community and its relationship with other health issues was often under-recognised.

He said that general practice has a vital role to play in treating and managing mental illness which can often trigger suicide.

"I would encourage people to visit their General Practitioner (GP) for any mental health issues, not just their physical health. Often there is a link with physical health impacting on mental health and wellbeing and GPs are well equipped to deal with both," said Dr Godden.

The Central Coast Division of General Practice runs a number of mental health programs supporting GPs to deliver good care in the Central Coast.

"The Division runs an Access to Allied Psychological Services program which enables GPs to refer patients to psychologists easily and offers more patients Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and GPs through the Medicare Benefits Schedule Initiative (Better Access). The *Better Access* initiative is increasing community access to mental health professionals and team-based mental health care, with GPs encouraged to work more closely and collaboratively with mental health professionals.

Dr Godden encouraged the Central Coast community to heed the message of R U OK? Day and to take the time to ask people they care about – R U OK?

For more information on R U OK? Day, visit the website [www.ruokday.com.au](http://www.ruokday.com.au)

**For Media Interviews contact Dr Phil Godden on 0425215840**

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