



Engaging the community

When someone dies by suicide, people around them often say they had a sense something might have been wrong, that “they weren’t quite their usual self”. And yet, for fear of saying the wrong thing, people often say nothing. The Collaborative wanted to change this culture of avoiding conversations about suicide.

The Collaborative partnered with the Illawarra Mercury to run the **most significant multi-media suicide prevention campaign ever undertaken** in the region.

The **Care to QPR campaign** went for over eight weeks between July and September 2018. It included **more than 20 articles**, each featuring deeply personal accounts of suicide and recovery. Whether from a 50-year old man who has had a number of close mates suicide, from a young woman who attempted suicide five years ago, or from a police officer or GP, these stories communicated powerful messages of hope and recovery.

The campaign also highlighted the work currently being done in suicide prevention locally, emphasising that **there are things we can all do to prevent suicide**.



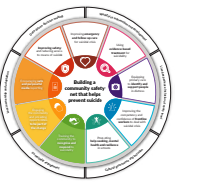
What made the Illawarra Mercury's campaign unique is that it wasn't simply about raising community awareness; it also translated that awareness into action. Articles promoted locally available supports and encouraged community members to complete the **Question Persuade Refer (QPR) online training**.

As Mercury Editor, Julian O'Brien, put it: “This campaign showed how the media can play a positive role in sharing people's life stories and encourage their community to actively make a difference.”

The campaign attracted \$20,000 in donations from NSW and Federal Health Ministers to make the QPR online training available to community members free of charge. It also provided a template that supported the South Coast Register and Milton Ulladulla Times to publish a further 12 stories on suicide prevention between October and December 2018.



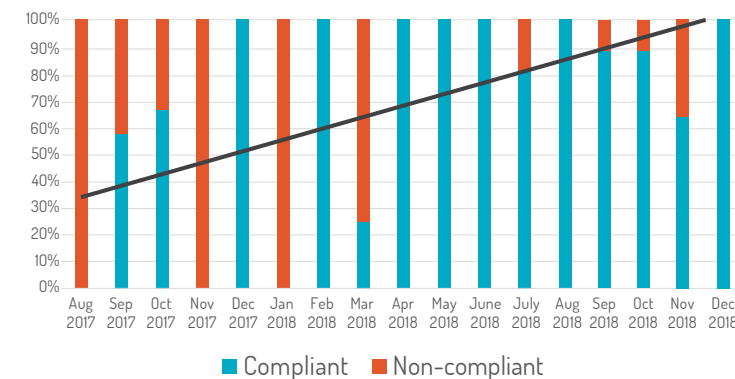
to take up their role



What's been the impact?

Quality of media

The media can play an important role in suicide prevention by promoting stories of hope and recovery. But it can also have a negative impact if reporting isn't safe and responsible.

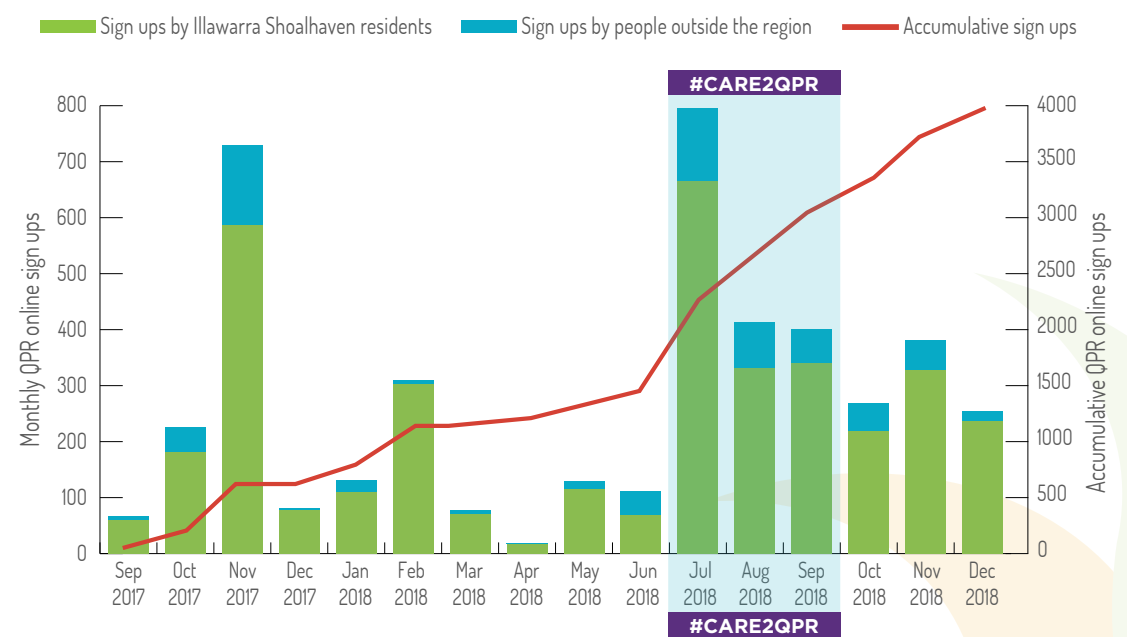


The Illawarra Mercury worked closely with **Mindframe** and the Collaborative to ensure their stories adhered to the nationally recognised **Mindframe media guidelines**. As a result of the work we've done with local media, the **quality of stories significantly improved**.

Community training uptake

In just two months, the **campaign reached 200,000+ people** and **over 2,900 people** signed up to do QPR online training.

Community members and organisations did a great job spreading the message across social media with **#care2qpr**.



The #care2qpr campaign resulted in a marked jump in people signing up to do QPR online training.

The quality of the Illawarra Mercury's campaign has been recognised in the form of two major national awards:

- Suicide Prevention Australia's LiFE Award for media
- The Mental Health Services Award for text journalism

