



# Media Release

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13 September 2017

## Waste trucks prompt meaningful conversations

Council waste trucks will inspire people to make meaningful connections with new signage unveiled as part of RUOK? Day.

In an Australian first, Camden Council has branded its four waste collection trucks with the RUOK? message, designed to prompt life changing conversations and prevent suicide.

“Asking how someone is feeling can have a real positive impact on their emotional health and wellbeing,” said Mayor Lara Symkowiak.

“Simply asking the question can start a conversation that strengthens a sense of belonging and feeling relevant that could change a person’s life,” Cr Symkowiak said.

“The waste collection trucks will provide maximum exposure of this important message across our community,” she said.

This month, Council is also promoting the campaign through its email signatures, a number of staff initiatives and have planted yellow RUOK themed planter boxes in Argyle Street.

In 2015, more than 3000 Australians died by suicide, with 75 per cent of those deaths, men. That is more than eight people per day or one person every three hours.

“With the suicide rate increasing every year it is imperative that we support one another especially when someone is going through a difficult time. While people are often reluctant to intervene – concerned they might say the wrong thing – the evidence shows that emotional support is far more likely to reduce distress than exacerbate it,” said Lifeline Macarthur Executive Manager Crisis Support and Suicide Prevention, Jacky Moore.

“In fact, it just might be the turning point that helps someone on the path to recovery, giving them strength and confidence to address the issues in their lives,” Mrs Moore said.

“Take a minute to think about the role you can play – whether it’s in your school, workplace or sporting club – to be there for your friends and family. Taking a minute might just save a life,” she said.

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R U OK? is proud to partner with Camden Council to raise awareness around suicide prevention and in a national first, display messages on Council waste trucks.

CEO Brendan Maher is thrilled that Camden Council has taken the initiative to brand their trucks in the suicide prevention charity's messaging.

"We couldn't be happier to be a part of this initiative. The more people who learn the skills to start a difficult conversation, the more people's lives we can impact and potentially save," Mr Maher said.

"We applaud Camden for being proactive within their council area and hope this idea catches on around the country," he said.

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