

Monday, 26 August 2013 – **Embargoed until 4pm, 26 August 2013**

### **Chief Coroner releases annual suicide figures**

Chief Coroner Judge Neil MacLean today released the provisional annual suicide figures for the year ending 30 June 2013.

The total number of suicides for the year was 541, which is a decrease of six from last year, and two less than the average number of suicides over the last six years.

Judge MacLean said the annual suicide total has been stubbornly consistent since records began in July 2007 with between 531 and 558 suicides a year.

“Sadly this year is no different and it is frustrating that we cannot seem to make inroads into our unacceptably high suicide rate.

“In spite of this, there have been some positive trends observed in the year. Maori suicide has dropped for the first time since records began in July 2007, and the number of pre-teen and teen suicides is down from last year.”

In the last year, 69 people in the 10 to 19-year-old age cohort took their own lives compared to 91 the year before. The average annual number of suicides for this age cohort over the past six years is 69.

In the last year, 105 Maori died by suicide, which is a significant drop after a spike last year of 132 suicides. The average annual number of Maori suicides for the past six years is 104.

#### **The 2012/13 figures show:**

- The highest number of female (153) and lowest number of male (388) suicides since records began in 2007. Prior to 2012/13 the average male to female suicide ratio was about 3 to 1, while in the last year it was about 2.5 to 1.
- The highest number of suicides in the 20 to 24-year-old age cohort since records began in 2007 with 75 suicides (the annual average over the past six years is 66).
- The lowest number of suicides in the 30 to 34-year-old age cohort since records began in 2007 with 31 suicides (the annual average over the past six years is 43.5).
- The drop in Maori suicide was largely accounted for by a decrease in male Maori suicide, in particular young male Maori suicide. In 2011/12 there were 94 male Maori suicides, while in 2012/13 there were 72.

- Suicides in Christchurch city have dropped. In 2012/13 there were 68 suicides, compared to 81 the year before and 67 in 2010/11. Prior to the February 2011 earthquake, the Christchurch suicide rate oscillated between 69 and 90 a year since 2007.

“We experienced an immediate drop in suicide in Christchurch post-quake but last year those numbers began creeping upwards. This trend has been observed elsewhere after a large-scale natural disaster, where there is an immediate drop,” Judge MacLean said.

ENDS

**Note:** The information provided relates to Provisional Suicide figures and will differ from the Ministry of Health figures. They include active cases before Coroners where intent has yet to be established therefore may eventually be found not to be suicides. In addition Ministry of health figures are recorded by calendar year.