Media Release

R U OK? Could save a life

A simple question such as “Are you okay?” might be a lifesaver for someone living with depression or anxiety. “Just reaching out could have a significant impact”, says General Practice Queensland (GPQ) media spokesperson Dr John Kastrissios.

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 Kastrissios 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 result in 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 and trained to recognise the symptoms and to deal with both,” said Dr Kastrissios

The Queensland General Practice Network runs a number of mental health programs supporting GPs to deliver good care.

Dr Kastrissios said that Queensland has set up four headspace centres assisting youth aged 12-25 years to deal with mental health issues. Eight Divisions of General Practice in Queensland are now delivering local mental health support services for rural and remote communities affected by environmental circumstances, such as the ongoing drought and floods in early 2009. Many Queensland divisions of General Practice link GPs with highly skilled mental health nurses, who work in conjunction with the GP to provide patients with appropriate mental and physical health care. All Queensland divisions of general practice provide their local eligible communities with access to subsidised and accessible psychological services.

Dr Kastrissios encourages the Queensland community to embrace “R U OK? Day” and to take the time to ask this question to people they care about.

For more information on “R U OK? Day” visit the website www.ruokday.com.au

For further information please contact:
Dr John Kastrissios GPQ Board Director and media spokesperson on 07 3105 8300.

General Practice Queensland provides strategic leadership, advocacy and representation for its member divisions and general practice.

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