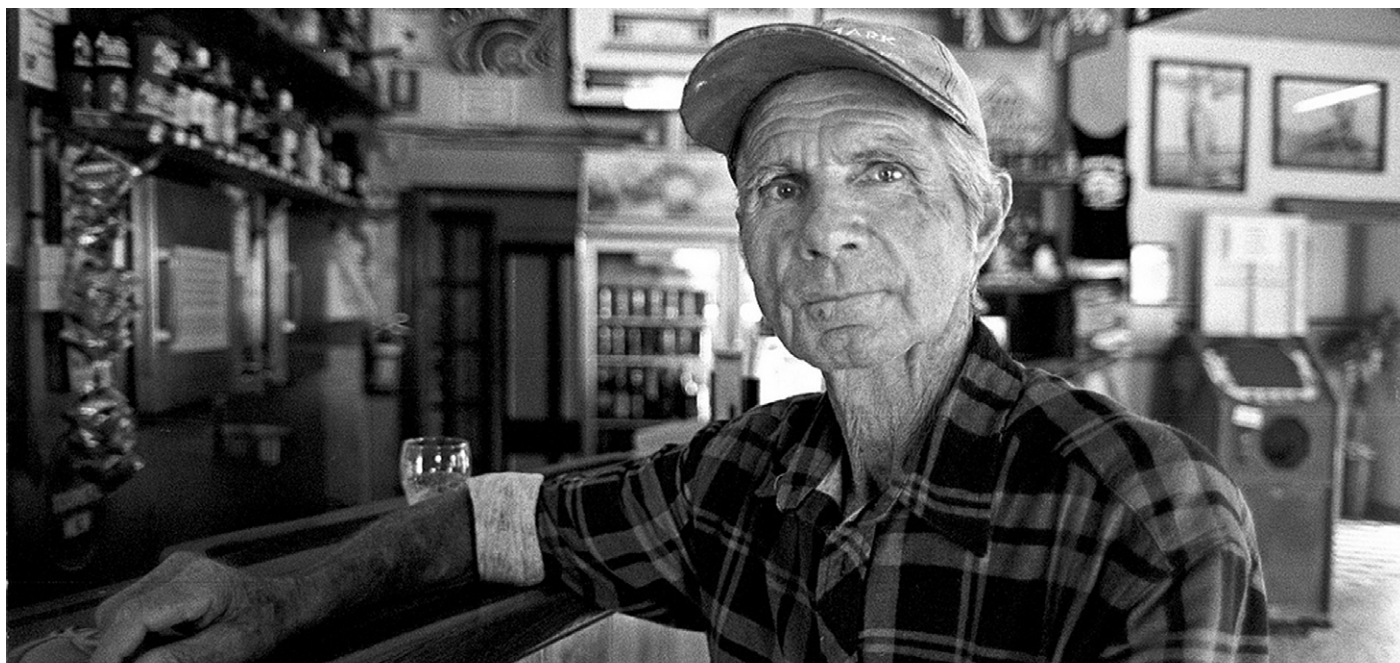


Talking about suicide



In rural Australia suicide rates are more than double the national average.

In rural areas of Australia suicide rates are around double the national average. [Inverell Community College](#), one and a half hours from Armidale in rural New South Wales, recently hosted a free community based education program to help prevent suicide among farmers.

The program is known as SCARF which stands for Suspect, Connect, Ask, Refer and Follow Up. It's aimed at professionals and local business people who deal with farmers in their daily work. The Inverell course attracted around 40 people including vets, bankers, livestock agents, and local business people.

Course facilitator Meg Perceval, coordinator of the Farm-Link Suicide Prevention Project says the course aims to teach community members to recognise warning signs and develop the confidence and skills to initiate conversations about suicide or mental health problems with people they are concerned about.

The reasons for higher suicide rates in rural areas are complex, but Meg says some risk factors have been suggested. 'We know that people living in rural areas are less inclined to seek help for mental health problems, and may not only be geographically isolated but emotionally isolated too. ►

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