



THIRRILI

Thirrili Ltd

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

21 APRIL 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

New funding for SA 2

COVID 19 Free Training 2

Yes, our work is difficult but we are up for it 3

Hear from one of our own 3

Getting the right information about COVID-19 4

Don't be scammed 4

Taking care of yourself 5

The sad statistics 5

Crisis numbers 5

Contact us 5

CEO update: we are ready

When a CEO leaves an organisation, it can strike fear into every employee and concern for each board member and stakeholder. For staff members, there will be questions such as "will there be a role for me in the future?" For Board, the focus will be on getting the best possible replacement to take the organisation to the next stage of its development. For our communities, they may ask "are they still there for us?" For other stakeholders including funders, the question will be "are they still able to deliver what they are funded to do?"

What I can tell you is that an amazing amount of work has occurred in the last couple of weeks from all of our people to ensure we can give positive responses to all of your questions. We have reviewed our operations to ensure that service delivery can continue,

albeit within the confines of COVID 19 restrictions. We have readied the organisation to do many things including:

1. deliver the best possible service we can during this pandemic and beyond
2. to make the best possible appointment to the CEO position



Kerry Arabena, Interim CEO

3. to ensure the organisation is both nimble and strong and in the best shape it can be for the new CEO
4. ensure we capitalise on opportunities to innovate and develop during this period, including securing available funding
5. ensure the dignity of our employees whether they

remain with us or move on. Of course there are other tasks, but you get the picture: we are using the challenges we currently face to ensure that the organisation is better placed to do its work than before. With that in mind, I must say thanks to the Board and the staff team for their support through this period and a special thank you to those who will not be continuing on the journey with us.

Saying goodbye to colleagues is never easy, particularly when some have worked together for several years. In the last few days, we have said goodbye to team members from across the country. On behalf of the people we work to support, we want to thank the following: (alphabetically) Jane Blunden; Kevin Cox; Tovani Cox; Tina Hayden; Tony Lee ; Munya Mugari; Leon Ruri; and Donna Smith.

Until next time
Kerry

Advocacy for funerals/Sorry Business

We are aware of the distress that COVID 19 restrictions have placed on our communities in relation to the conduct of funerals and Sorry Business.

Thirrili staff have met with representatives from the Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) and individual funeral services from

QLD and the NT to understand the requirements regarding the restrictions in place for funerals.

We are seeking to identify safe and culturally appropriate ways to support families and communities to continue funerals /Sorry Business throughout the COVID 19 Pandemic. We will keep you

informed through this newsletter.

We encourage families and communities bereaved by suicide and other traumatic events to contact us, if you need additional information, advocacy or support in relation to funerals/Sorry Business, please email funeralmatters@thirrili.com.au



Rachael Schmerl, CRSA and Community Capacity Building Project Officer (South Australia)

“These roles are important and I have no doubt they will save lives”

New funding in South Australia

Congratulations and a big thank you to our Critical Response Support Advocate (CRSA) and Community Capacity Building Project Officer (South Australia) Rachael Schmerl for her continued leadership and innovation. Her recent efforts have resulted in Thirrili gaining funding from the South Australian Government for two workers focused on the specific risks of COVID 19 to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in South Australia. Well done Rachael!

It would be remiss not to say to the South Australian Government “Thank you bigtime” for recognising the needs of vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in South Australia during this Pandemic. According to Rachael, “These roles are important and I have no doubt they will save lives”.

The roles will be in the mould

of community development workers and would involve providing ‘wrap around’ support services (similar to what we currently do) to ensure health, safety and wellbeing around mental health and grief and loss, inclusive of other trauma, for:

- people who are isolated from their families through being incarcerated, interstate, in hospital or intrastate
- released prisoners who can’t return to their respective communities due to quarantine or closure of Aboriginal Remote Communities
- extended family members taking on additional burdens
- advocacy on behalf of clients to enable them to access the supports they need
- working with local agencies to ensure responsive coordinated care for transient individuals and families, including emergency housing for released prisoners
- providing education to vulnerable individuals and families—including young people, transient or isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the streets, or in emergency accommodation—about COVID 19 including risks, precautions to take and what to do if family members /friends become sick
- advising and supporting affected families about the impact of COVID 19 quarantine and other policies on funerals and Sorry Business when a loved one passes away
- providing information about the risks of attracting severe penalties for breaking COVID 19 social distancing rules and elevated likelihood of child notifications if children and young people under 16 are exposed to risk of contracting COVID 19.

Staff will be in place shortly and more details on the operation of this program including contact numbers will be provided in the next issue of this newsletter.

COVID 19 Free Training opportunity

This 30-minute online training module in COVID-19 infection control training is for health care workers in all settings. It covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19.

This training is for care workers across all health care settings, including:

- hospitals
- primary care
- aged care (both in residential aged care facilities or with visiting carers at home),

including cleaners and cooks)

- disability (both in residential/shared care facilities or part-time carers in people’s homes, including cleaners and cooks)

- allied health
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- pharmacies
- dental practices, including dentists, nurses, cleaners and receptionists

This training module covers the fundamentals of infection prevention and control for COVID-19 including:

- COVID-19 – what is it?
- Signs and symptoms
- Keeping safe – protecting yourself and others
- Myth busting

Users must register, but registration is open to anyone.

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>





Our staff know how to support you through all the stages of grief and loss...

“We want you to know, that every time we get a text, or an incident is reported to Thirrili, we are ready to offer families compassion, knowledge and sensitive support”.



Dr Gracelyn Smallwood OAM
Thirrili Senior Cultural Adviser

Yes, our work is difficult, but we are up for it

Over any weekend, our staff get text messages similar to the following:

*****Confirmed Suicide, young female. Name and details pending.**

*****Confirmed Suicide, 4 April 2020.**

*****15 year old suicide, limited info, trying to get more details.**

Each of these texts represent a person whose lives have ended in terrible circumstances.

Families, friends, relatives and colleagues are left to deal with the consequences: the pain of unbearable sadness; dismay and confusion; empty feelings of abandonment; anger and guilt.

Each person left behind are likely to face necessary but unwelcome intrusions from the police and coronial system.

For some, there may be resented, “in your face” experiences with the media.

For others, family shame is one of the feelings often associated with suicide.

These experiences are difficult to negotiate on your own when you may be overwhelmed by unfamiliar very intense emotions, feelings of vulnerability and

We want you to know, that every time we get a text, or an incident is reported to Thirrili, we are ready to offer families compassion, knowledge and sensitive support.

We are a culturally strong workforce, with personal and professional experiences of sitting with families after ‘suicide knocks at the door’

Our staff know how to support you through all the stages of

grief and loss and they know how to access information to help you to find and use other resources as needed.

Every text is the start of a long and difficult journey for those who are left behind. We are here for you every hour, every day, every week and every month.

If you are a member of a first responder team, try calling Thirrili to see if we can provide immediate support to you and families.

If you work in a Coroner’s Office, or Funeral Home and families need culturally sensitive support, call Thirrili.

If you or your family are affected by suicide and you need someone to talk to, please call Thirrili.

We are here, and we care.

Phone: **1800 805 801**

Hear from one of our own!

Our very own Dr Gracelyn Smallwood AM was a guest of Mundanara Bayles on her podcast *Black Magic Woman*, on 17 April. A Birrigubba, Kalkadoon and South-Sea Islander woman, Aunty Gracelyn has been advocating against racism and violation of human rights against First Nations people for the past 45 years. Hear Aunty Gracelyn yarn with Mundanara about growing up and her amazing journey through life. The 45 minute podcast can be heard here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/black-magic-woman/id1505283659?ign-mpt=uo%3D4> and on linked in (you may need to be a member to listen). https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A6657051905874894848/?midToken=AQH6cur_QljLCA&trk=eml-email_notification_single_mentioned_you_in_this_01-notifications-l-hero%7Ecard%7Efeed&trkEmail=eml-email_notification_single_mentioned_you_in_this_01-notifications-l-hero%7Ecard%7Efeed-null-1101nj%7Ek94t0x6u%7Ei9-null-voyagerOffline

Highly recommended listening!

Getting the right information about COVID-19

While the internet and social media can provide us with a wealth of information and keep us connected to friends and family (and in these days of social distancing, even our employers), it is important that we choose reputable sites to gather information about the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is so important to our own health, the health of our loved ones and our communities that we act on factual information rather than myths, half truths and in some cases, even lies. It is important too, that you are aware of the current laws in your particular location in relation to leaving your homes.

The following sites provide reputable information based on the best available medical and scientific knowledge:

Commonwealth

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-at-a-glance> This site provides a pictorial representation of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in Australia, updated every afternoon based on the data they receive by 3.00pm from states and territories.

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources> This site provides a collection of resources for the general public and industry about coronavirus (COVID-19).

Victoria

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19> This Victorian Department of Health and Human Services site gives Information and advice about coronavirus (COVID-19) - symptoms, travel and what to do to reduce the risk of infection.

New South Wales

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19> This site has a wide range of information including how to protect yourself and others, what to do if you feel symptoms and what you can and can't do under the current rules that apply in NSW.

Queensland

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19> This site provides links to all manner of resources relating to COVID-19 and includes a quiz to see if your symptoms and recent travel history suggest you need to be tested.

South Australia

<https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/> This site gives information about how to stop the spread of the disease, updates on numbers of cases in SA, restrictions in place and common questions.

Western Australia

https://www2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus This site gives a range of information and updates and provides links to further resources.

Tasmania

<https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/> This is the 'go to' site for all information about COVID-19 in Tasmania

Northern Territory

<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/home> The 'go to' page for Territorians to get information about COVID-19

Australian Capital Territory

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/> The 'go to' page for those living in Canberra get information about COVID-19

Don't be scammed!

Please be aware that there are many scammers who will try and take advantage of situations such as COVID-19 to steal your money or personal information.

Scamwatch, a program of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has received over a thousand coronavirus-related scam reports since the outbreak.

Common scams include phishing for personal information, online shopping, and superannuation scams.

To protect yourself, don't click on hyperlinks in text/social media messages or emails, even if it appears to come from a trusted source

Go directly to the website through your browser. For example, to reach the MyGov website type 'my.gov.au' into your browser yourself.

Never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for personal or government authority — just press delete or hang up.

For more information about how to protect yourself from these lowlife scammers, go to:

<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/types-of-scams/current-covid-19->



Taking care of yourself while ‘restricted’

Staying well physically is an important part of staying well mentally, particularly in these days of restricted movement and social distancing. Here are a few tips for staying on top of your physical and mental health.

1. Maintain a routine: get up at the same time everyday and prepare as you would for work (but wear the tracksuit if you wish)
2. If you are working from home, working, instil discipline into the work routine and avoid distractions
3. Ensure you get up from the desk and move around regularly
4. Eat well including plenty of fruit and vegetables. Fruits are essential in your daily diet to get your dose of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Fruits like apples and oranges are full of vitamin C while bananas are good for gut health, as well as providing ‘bucketloads’ of vitamins and minerals required each day. Oranges, apples and bananas are almost always plentiful and reasonably priced.
5. Don’t overdo the alcohol and avoid nasties like tobacco and other substances
6. While its nice to have take away once in a while, try not to get on first name terms with the ‘uber eats’ drivers.
7. Get plenty of sleep (but remember tip 1)
8. Get some exercise every day
9. Sunshine is important too: try and catch some ‘rays’ every day for at least 10 minutes
10. Be kind to yourself and spend some time doing things you enjoy
11. Keep in touch with friends and loved ones through social media, facetime and zoom for example.
12. Remember, this won’t go on for ever!

NICRS notifications 2020: updated every issue

	Gender		State or Territory*				Total
	Male	Female	QLD	WA	VIC	All other	
Completed suicides	31	10	13	12	6	10	41
Other incidents#							23

Notes: To ensure that individual cases cannot be identified:

* Figures for states or territories with less than 4 completed suicides have been aggregated into ‘All other’

‘Other incidents’ show a national total and include: attempted suicide or other traumatic incidents with or without

Crisis contact numbers

- ⇒ Lifeline: 13 11 14
- ⇒ Suicide call back service: 1300 659 467
- ⇒ Coronavirus mental health support line 1800 512 348
- ⇒ Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800
- ⇒ MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78
- ⇒ Beyond Blue: 1300 845 745
- ⇒ GriefLine: 1300 845 745 (midday to 3am AEST 7 days a week)

Thirrili Ltd ABN 617 635 828

Administration office:
2/2 Bromham Street
Richmond
Victoria 3121



T H I R R I L I

Website: thirrili.com.au: Telephone: (administration only) (03) 8578 1414