

THIRRILI NEWSLETTER

March 2022



THIRRILI



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INDIGENOUS SUICIDE POSTVENTION SERVICE

CALL 1800 805 801

24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ANNETTE VICKERY



March is the month where Closing the Gap is highlighted and those of us who work towards achieving those targets reaffirm our commitment to continue to do all we can to achieve equity in health outcomes for our mobs. I would say the most challenging area of this for Thirrili is accessing data. We have some arrangements with some organisations to share data and work together in a place-based way to address the impacts of suicide, but not as many as we would like to have. Access to a consistent, verifiable, reliable data set is problematic.

There are a lot of reasons for this. The PHN network has a rich data set on behaviours which indicate a person is at risk of suicide, such as escalating self-harming. That is useful information in communities which are experiencing clusters of suicides, it would help us work with communities to focus capacity building activities on addressing those particular cohorts.

The Coroners Courts have access to suicide data of course, and often refer families to us for support at the first point of contact with the Coroners Court. We can then assist that family in a particularly difficult time, where families have requested provisional support to assist with their immediate family needs during sorry business. We can link people up with services and supports. We work with those families until they no longer need us, that could be long after the Coroner's Inquest has produced findings. That can be years. What this means for data integrity though is that the Coroners findings themselves can be subject to large yearly variations due to a lag in registration time in their system.

Some jurisdictions are particularly good at bringing multi-disciplinary networks together to work towards our common goals, which is a significant and sustained reduction in suicide. South Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland and recently the Kimberley Partnership are examples of where these multi-disciplinary organization-based network meetings have produced improved coordination of services and supports for our mobs.

The outcome we are all striving towards is that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing. We share common goals, and we need to talk about how we are progressing more often than once a year.

When we yarn within our organization, we recognize that for us to achieve our goals, other Closing the Gap outcomes need to be achieved as well as they have a flow on effect. More families and households that are safe, children thrive in their early years, students achieve their full potential, our people maintain our distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationships to land and waters. All the other 16 outcomes intersect with a significant and sustained reduction in suicide. So, it is a benefit when we can knowledge share and support each other's work.

Our goal is to ensure we get quality data that informs the communities we work with, so they can self-determine ways their community will restore capacity and prevent future suicides. There is an entire health sector that has a massive impact on achieving outcomes under Closing the Gap and we need all hearts and minds working towards these outcomes. Although data remains a challenge, the quality and accessibility are definitely improving. And that's a good start. But our people can't wait until next year's Closing the Gap day to see how things are going. We must have a continuous, ongoing commitment to improving data quality and providing data freely and transparently to inform decision making which will produce the outcomes.



OUR TEAM

As our Thirrili Family grows so does our reach, please join us in welcoming our new staff members to the Thirrili Family.



Margaret Liddy, Indigenous Suicide Postvention Advocate - NT

My name is Margaret I come from Woodycupaldiya NT, I lived in Melbourne for 25 years & after my 2 children became young adults I decided to return to Darwin I had been toying with the idea of returning for sometime and I began to miss my people and country. I read an article in the Age newspaper about a T.O in Jabiru, her story was compelling & her picture I saw her inner beauty shine through and that was it . I began the journey home in 1997.

[...] [Read more](#)

Our staff are committed to being there for our mob in times of need

If your organisation wants to know more about our service, we are more than happy to visit your organisation in-person anywhere around the country.

It's just a phone call away.

**Ring 1800 805 801 to organise
for an advocate to come
and have a yarn**

COME WORK WITH US

We have a range of opportunities available across our organisation and across all States in Australia.

We are looking for

- Suicide Postvention Advocates
- People & Culture Coordinator
- Policy & Governance Coordinator

Applications Close Soon

If you are interested in working with us please call 0474 313 662 or email jobs@thirrili.com.au



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NEWS STORIES

Thirili staff finally have a chance to meet each other face-to-face since COVID

Our national conference held in Kurna Country (Adelaide) this month saw all our staff attend the 3-day conference. During the conference, there was a chance to get to know one another, some activities and external presentations were undertaken to further develop and improve our service delivery capabilities to deliver support for our people.

- All staff had the opportunity to attend a [safeTALK workshop](#) and as a result, we now have 16 more suicide alert helpers in the community. We are so grateful to have an on-going relationship with Tegan Scheffe and [LivingWorks Australia](#).
- All staff had the opportunity to undertake culturally integrated training and mindfulness activities with international Indigenous mental health social enterprise, [Warida Wholistic Wellness](#).

All in all the 3-day conference was a huge success with many walking away with a sense of calm and happiness with new friends that they have made over their time in Kurna Country.



Thirili Staff undertake culturally integrated training & mindfulness activities in Kurna Country

On 15 and 16 March, Thirili staff had the opportunity to undertake culturally integrated training and mindfulness activities with international Indigenous mental health social enterprise, [Warida Wholistic Wellness](#). We started the afternoon of 15 March, in ceremony, connecting to Kurna Country on the beautiful Glenelg beach. Announcing ourselves to Country, walking through the sand and shallows, receiving messages of the importance of balance, spirit, Ancestors, reminders of home, and the need to make the time to honour Country and re-connect.

Each person had their own individual experiences, and shared group connection, listening to Country with our whole bodies. Everyone who participated in the cultural beach activity agreed that it was a good reminder to spend time in connection and to listen, feel, hear, and ultimately breathe with Country.



Bianca Stawiarski from Warida Wholistic Wellness and Tod Stokes from Legacy Counselling and Consultancy

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On the second day, Bianca Stawiarski from [Warida Wholistic Wellness](#), supported by Tod Stokes from [Legacy Counselling and Consultancy](#), facilitated a morning session on the very important topic of Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue, and Burnout. Mathieu (2012) states that “between 40% - 85% of people in the helping profession develop vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and have high rates of traumatic symptoms”. This makes it vitally important that staff access training on recognising symptoms and increase their available toolkit and resources. One activity involved a point in time self-assessment of our individual levels of risk for compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious trauma. This was a useful activity to take a base reading of how we are tracking now, and something to compare against for the future. We finished off the morning with a detained yarning circle and development of a mind map for themes of:

- Active listening
- Connection
- Culturally healing
- Self-awareness
- Trauma and healing
- Stronger connection
- Active generosity
- Informed
- Team evolution
- Self-reflection
- Cohesion
- Listening
- Cultural safety (2 ways)
- Decolonised spaces
- Empathy compassion.



NEWS STORIES

International Women's Day

Last month for International Women's day our CEO Annette spoke at the Tandem about the importance of lived experience, in workplaces, workplace culture, boards and in the sector advocacy to ensure self-determination is realised. Annette created a yarning circle and encouraged participants to consider their aspirations and hopes for the Government commitment to ensuring lived experience voices are heard and included in all aspects of our work.

Who and What is Tandem:

[Tandem](#) is proud to be the trusted voice of family and friends in mental health in Victoria. As the Victorian peak body with a sole focus on the needs and interests of mental health carers, Tandem’s role is to provide leadership, coordination and knowledge for the organisations and individuals who are working to improve outcomes for Victorian people living with mental health issues. Tandem is committed to ensuring that the importance of the contribution, expertise, experiences and needs of family, friends and other carers is recognised and addressed, and that they will be essential partners in treatment, service delivery, planning, research and evaluation.



Marie Piu , Tandem CEO & Annette, Thirrili CEO



Tandem Support and Referral Line:

Call Tandem on their FREE Support and Referral Line at 1800 314 325 on Mondays-Fridays between 9am-5pm. Tandem offers free interpreting through the Language Loop telephone translation service.

Tandem can support you with:

Navigating the mental health system Individual advocacy with the mental health system Accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Someone to talk to who cares and understands.

Natasha's Story

I am a proud descendant of the Jaru people of Halls Creek, born and raised in the East Kimberley and currently residing in Kununurra. I entered the workforce at 17 years of age after finishing Year 12, having attended boarding school in Perth. Like many others, I firstly worked in basic clerical roles and then joined the Army Reserves for weekend work, but my core passion is social change for Aboriginal people. Over the last 25 years I have worked in various community development roles across both the East and West Kimberley, which I enjoyed immensely. My 'work' never felt like work, because I deeply believed in the importance of empowering others, and advocating for others who were being treated unjustly or being exploited through their lack of knowledge.



Natasha Short, Managing Director at Kimberley Jiyigas

My earliest memories are of a carefree childhood that accompanied a stable home life. As an adult reflecting back on my growing up years, me and my siblings can attribute much of our personal fortitude, resilience and stability to the no-nonsense, common sense approach of our parents, who consistently displayed a strong work ethic, established rules and provided a home environment that sheltered us from much of the dysfunction that surrounded our communities. These simple qualities and their attributes are timeless, and parenting strategies such as making children do household chores, having a curfew and doing homework at night, never grow old – and help create responsible adults. My upbringing provided me a strong platform for my future, including the community development work that I passionately went on to pursue. From a young age, what stood out to me, very prominently, was the wide reaching social inequities and disadvantages I saw Aboriginal people faced. I came to understand this in a greater way as an adult; and I realised the extent that colonisation has had, and continues to have, on Aboriginal society. My heritage, and the disadvantage of Aboriginal people has been a driver in my life choices; to not only make good choices and to do what is right, but also to challenge the status quo and advocate for change.

One of the greatest dangers today to the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of Kimberley Aboriginal people is the abuse of alcohol and drugs in our Aboriginal communities and the ongoing exploitation of vulnerable people. This has led to all manner of misfortune, in addition to the high welfare dependency which is detrimental to any cultural group. Like many of my Aboriginal peers, my passion and work centres on advocacy and support to make a positive change – moving out of a continuing cycle of misfortune and welfare dependency, into a place of empowerment.

LIKE & FOLLOW US



In 2018, I established [Kimberley Jiyigas](#) (Jiyiga is a Jaru word for Bird) as a Kimberley Indigenous women's empowerment movement. The purpose of the movement is to share Aboriginal culture, help amplify Indigenous women's voices, and create more female Indigenous owned businesses throughout the Kimberley region. As Kimberley Jiyigas continues to grow, there are various projects and contracts that Aboriginal women are involved in, including the release of a Podcast called Kimberley SHero's showcasing the stories of Kimberley Indigenous Women. We are thrilled that people around Australia and the world are listening into their stories and recollections of the past, and learning new things about Aboriginal people and our culture.

In 2021, [Kimberley Jiyigas](#) started 'The Maganda Makers Business Club': a Kimberley Indigenous women's led grassroots initiative nurturing, championing and supporting Kimberley Indigenous women in business (aspiring, emerging, established and growing). This initiative is being developed through a collaboration of Kimberley Jiyigas, Good Return and the Menzies Foundation. Since starting this Women's Business Club, there has been over 60 Kimberley Indigenous women who have been identified at various stages of their business journey. This is incredibly exciting for us!

[Maganda Makers](#) (Maganda is Jaru for 'Tomorrow') vision is to see more Kimberley Indigenous women in business. It could be regarded that our Aboriginal business women are also leaders, showing a high level of initiative and self-motivation to increase their financial well-being through self-empowerment. Our motto for Maganda Makers is 'Empowering Kimberley Indigenous Women to build wealth through business.' Kimberley Jiyigas believe wealth in the hands of such women can bring about social and economic transformation across Kimberley communities

Throughout the Kimberley, of course, trade was occurring long before colonisation but entrepreneurial thinking, from a Western mindset, has not been introduced early to our local people, which is in contrast to many non-Indigenous people, for whom learning business principals was, and is, embedded from youth.

The importance of Aboriginal people seeing other Aboriginal people doing something that they aspire to achieve, cannot be overstated. Once more Aboriginal people are empowered and have a sense of order in their own lives, they can reach out and begin to empower others in a way that is culturally sound; an element that continues to be rare, in an ever revolving work force who are not always nuanced with the Kimberley way, the history or the cultural ways of local people

As Kimberley Jiyigas, we don't stand still, we are a MOVEMENT that will not be stopped, soaring to new heights, taking on new challenges and tackling social problems, now and into the future.

You can learn more about our work on our [Kimberley Birds](#) website
[Facebook page @kimberleybirds](#)

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Postvention Australia continue their working relationship with Thirrili

[Postvention Australia \(PVA\)](#) are excited to continue our working relationship with Thirrili – supporting their incredibly critical work in providing culturally-responsive, trauma-informed post-suicide support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities through Thirrili’s delivery of the National Indigenous Postvention Service.

We welcome the new Thirrili CEO and representative on the Board of PVA, **Annette Vickery**. We are looking forward to Annette and Thirrili’s vital input and contribution to the work of PVA. We recognise the complexity of interconnected issues unique to First Nations, such as intergenerational trauma and racism, which in turn engenders the disproportionate impact of suicide and suicide bereavement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Postvention Australia (PVA) is the national association representing and supporting suicide bereavement. PVA provides resources, information, education, and representation for the whole Australian community impacted by the trauma of suicide.

PVA is a member-driven organisation, representing both individuals and families bereaved by suicide and their service providers. PVA’s mission is to promote life by supporting and representing those bereaved by suicide and all those impacted in the community by suicide loss. Our three key focus areas are:

- **Leadership and Advocacy**

We aim to drive national and international advocacy work through the *National Reference Group*, the *Postvention Australia Guidelines*, and conducting the biennial *Australian Postvention Conference*, where we all gather to learn and share research, expertise, models, resources and guiding policy, highlighting the diverse voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bereaved by suicide and First Nations postvention service providers.



Prof. Pat Dudgeon giving her plenary presentation at the 2019 Australian Postvention Conference

- **Education and Training**

We promote best-practice education, training, resources, and research about postvention to build the capability and capacity of Australia’s suicide bereavement services. Our work includes: the 2020 *NSW Post-Suicide Support Webinar Series*, *Certificate III Pilot in Suicide Postvention* (in development), *Suicide Bereavement Care Pack* (launch upcoming) and the launch of the new *PVA website* (upcoming) as a comprehensive online resource for the bereaved and those supporting them. Keep a look out for the webinar recording for the fifth webinar, “*Postvention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities*” featuring MC Jacqueline-McGowan Jones and speakers including Thirrili’s Rachael Schmerl, Anthony Ah-Kit (DRISPN), Jye Cardona and Robyn Kapeen (lived experience speakers) on the new website.

Cover of PVA NSW Suicide Bereavement Guide





• Connection

We work to build an integrated national network of suicide postvention partners, service providers, educators and researchers that have access to best-practice, evidence-based information and resources.

Some of our key achievements include development of *NSW State Post-Suicide Support Directory* (launch upcoming), Support Group Facilitator Network (in development) and a national register of support groups.

For more information, email us at info@postventionaustralia.org. To keep up to date with our work, please sign up to our newsletter at our website and follow our social media accounts:

Webinar 4 Overview

- ▶ Jye Cardona - *My Story: A Lived Experience*
- ▶ Anthony Ah-Kit - *How an Indigenous community responds to a suicide: culturally-responsive postvention*
- ▶ Rachael Schmerl - *Indigenous post-suicide support on the ground: The National Indigenous Postvention Service (NIPS)*
- ▶ Robyn Kapeen - *Lived Experience Story*
- ▶ Q&A



Website: postventionaustralia.org Facebook: [@PostventionAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/PostventionAustralia)
LinkedIn: [Postvention-Australia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/postvention-australia) Twitter: [@postventionaus](https://twitter.com/postventionaus) Instagram: [@postventionaus](https://www.instagram.com/postventionaus)

FREE WORKSHOPS IN MPARNTWE – ALICE SPRINGS

Mental Health Association of Central Australia is offering free to local organisations and businesses in Mparntwe – Alice Springs.

**Observe
Respond
Support**

A free 1 hour workshop on responding to people in crisis or contemplating suicide.

For more information call MHACA 0455135903 or email healthpromotion@mhaca.org.au



Mental Health in the Workplace



A free 45 minute workshop to support a mentally healthy workplace

For more information email healthpromotion@mhaca.org.au

For more information call MHACA 0455135903 or email healthpromotion@mhaca.org.au



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OUR SERVICES

Your call will always be answered by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person

We support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities to deal with grief and trauma experienced as a result of:

- The suicide of an immediate family member; and/or
- The death of an immediate family member because of a fatal traumatic incident other than suicide

National Indigenous Suicide Postvention Service can be contacted
24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1800 805 801

Proudly supported by the National Indigenous Australians Agency

WHO TO CONTACT - OTHER SERVICES?

If you, or someone you know, may be at risk of harm you can also contact any of the services listed below for help:

- [StandBy Support After Suicide](#) 1300 727 247
- [13YARN](#) 13 92 76
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#) 1300 659 467 (cost of a local call)
- [Kids Helpline](#) 1800 55 1800
- [MensLine Australia](#) 1300 78 99 78
- [Beyond Blue](#) 1300 22 4636
- [Standby NT](#) 0418 575 680
- SA Virtual Mental Health Response 1800 841 313 (SA only)

CALLING CULTURAL & TRADITIONAL HEALERS

Join our register now!

Here at Thirrili, we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities to support their cultural, social and emotional wellbeing following a loss to suicide or other fatal traumatic incidents. As part of our work, many of our clients request support and access to cultural and traditional healing. As a national service, that means we need to know who is available in what locations to support our people.

If you, or your organisation or business, provides cultural and/or traditional healing (you might even be a Narrative Therapist) – either to be delivered individually, or to a community, and you would like to be on our Register Of Healers, please send the following information to communications@thirrili.com.au

1. Name (individual and organisation)
2. Region where you work or provide supports
3. Do you offer group healing or individual or both?
4. ABN number (if no ABN, please advise)
5. Your hourly rates (exclusive of GST)
6. Types of Services you provide

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STATISTICS – SUICIDE DATA UPDATE

Thirrili recognises that each number reported below represents an individual and wishes to acknowledge the devastating effects suicide and self-harm can have on people, their families, friends, and communities. This data is notification received to our service and consent given by families

The following tables shows a total of 29 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander completed suicides have been reported to Thirrili from 1 January to 31 March 2022, by jurisdiction, age and gender.

Jurisdiction	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Unknown	Total
Completed Suicide	3	3	10	1	8	0	4	0	0	29

Age	Under 18	18 - 24	25 - 34	35+	Not known at this stage	Total
Completed Suicide	4	5	6	5	9	29

Gender	Male	Female	Not known at this stage	Total
Completed Suicide	20	8	1	29

The following tables shows a total of 8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fatal incidents have been reported to Thirrili from 1 January to 31 March 2022, by jurisdiction, age and gender.

Jurisdiction	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Unknown	Total
Other Trauma involving a Death	1	1	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	8

Age	Under 18	18 - 24	25 - 34	35+	Not known at this stage	Total
Other Trauma involving a Death	2	3	0	1	2	8

Gender	Male	Female	Not known at this stage	Total
Other Trauma involving a Death	6	2	0	8