

THIRRILI NEWSLETTER

May, 2022



THIRRILI



IN THIS ISSUE

- Message from CEO
- Message from Practice Manager
- Media Release
- New staff member
- News stories
- Our Service
- Who to contact - Other Services?
- Register of Cultural Healers
- Statistics – Suicide Data Update

INDIGENOUS SUICIDE POSTVENTION SERVICE

CALL 1800 805 801

24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ANNETTE VICKERY

May is always a challenge in our communities. In ways it is a time for us to come together and support each other. It is the day of mourning, Sorry Day, the remembrance of all the loss and grief and suffering and the struggles to heal from the harm of colonisation. Sadly though, we are often drawn away from our community and asked to organise things for our mainstream friends to mark reconciliation week. Instead of our friends organising something we can come to which supports us. It seems there is a constant upskilling of our mainstream friends to remind them that reconciliation is a journey of non-Aboriginal Australia taking steps towards Aboriginal Australia, and that the heavy lifting of reconciliation rests with our friends and allies, of course under our direction, guidance, love and support.

This year's theme of *Be Brave, Make Change* is definitely a call for action to mainstream Australia, and I see the responses from individuals, community groups, organisations and Government Departments, that there a real, practical and achievable reconciliation actions being taken. Certainly our incoming Governments commitment to listen to the Uluru Statement from the Heart is one of those.

So today, when I reflect on reconciliation and what it has brought to our mobs at the grassroots, and how things are different. Very recently I had the opportunity to meet with some Aboriginal community members from the ACT, who are co-chairs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Working Group, and the Director of Aboriginal Programs in ACT Health and hear their expectations of reconciliation in action. What we heard very clearly was that our focus should always be on how grassroots community members benefit from what we do. That our relationships with mainstream organisations and services should be to ensure they provide and are held accountable for the work they do.



Annette Vickery CEO, speaking at Woden Community Service National Reconciliation Week event

And that we should always have community at the heart and centre of our thinking, as should our mainstream partners, allies and friends. We were inspired and energised by their commitment to their mobs, by the tireless volunteer work they have done to get the ACT to the point of investing in suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and after care and we will pay our respects to that by ensuring our work with mainstream organisations and services brings reconciliation to life in a very real way for the mobs in ACT.

For our allies, this is your time to be brave, renew that Reconciliation Action Plan. Make space for Aboriginal voices in your organisation. Do the heavy lifting on ensuring your organisation is culturally responsive and supportive and safe for Aboriginal community members. Its worth it.



MESSAGE FROM PRACTICE MANAGER, MARNIE WEULE

Our Service Delivery team is always on the road visiting individuals, families, and communities affected by suicide or other significant trauma. We also visit National, State/Territory, Regional and Local organisations to strengthen provision of culturally appropriate and responsive postvention support services, and create systems change.

Here is a snapshot of just some of the deadly work that has been happening across Australia in May



Marnie Weule
Practice Manager

Warmest Welcome to our newest staff members we are so glad to have you with us. I would like to thank ALL staff for their ongoing work in the on-call space and especially appreciate those of you have held this solid while we have been onboarding staff.

- Conferences and training have been attended by many of our Service Delivery team, which is always great to experience and spend some time talking with others working in and around our field.
- Community Capacity Restoration is starting to gain stronger momentum across many regions of Australia, we are currently engaged in active development of Community consultation and Capacity restoration and support in Cherbourg, Wilcannia, Shepperton and Mildura, several services in Southwest WA looking to engage with us for consultation and building community planning and a recent invite to Mornington Island.

Northern Territory and Queensland

- For Northern Territory and Queensland this month some highlights have included, being in an encouraging and supportive workplace. Having a strong rapport and connection with families and being thanked by them for the support given to them.
- Consultations and presentations in NT included, Palmerston Indigenous Network, Central Australia Life Promotion Work, and Palmerston MACCST.
- The Thirrili presence has been strengthening in Central Australia and Erin recently presented about our service in Alice Springs and the NT team are continuing to grow our working relationships more broadly across the Territory.



Chenoa and Karen QLD Advocates

New South Wales, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania

- Busy people here as well! Some highlights, successful community meeting in Shepparton and ongoing postvention response planning alongside the community and local service providers, this has been a collaborative effort between our very own Executive and Service Delivery staff to implement these meetings and community engagement.
- Justice Victoria have asked Thirrili to come and do a presentation on our work.
- Consultations occurring for this team included: Shepparton Vic, Mildura Vic, Gippsland Vic, Wilcannia NSW and Canberra ACT.
- Stephen and Zac attended the 2022 Men's Suicide Prevention Conference and gave a 25minute presentation introducing Thirrili there.
- Marnie and Stephen attended the Saltwater/Freshwater festival in Nambucca, promoting Thirrili.

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Western Australia and South Australia

- Michael and Greg completed an epic roadshow in the southwest of WA, which brought the number of services supports from Thirrili to other services up to a whopping 67 and the number of service providers contacted to 102.
- Planning is underway for joint community programs/workshops in Jerramungup with Yarramouup Aboriginal Corporation.
- Albany Aboriginal Medical Service has requested Thirrili to facilitate a consultation meeting with community members and local service providers.



Greg SA Advocate and Michael WA Advocate

I look forward to sharing more on our progress with you, until next time.

Marnie Weule Practice Manager
May 2022

COME WORK WITH US

Thirrili Ltd is recruiting for opportunities around Australia, as we are a growing organisation, and we would love to your help to help spread the word.



We are looking for....

Indigenous Postvention Service Advocate Role (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people only) locations available in Western Australia and Victoria

The Indigenous Postvention Service Advocate Role has a deep connection within communities ensuring they deliver culturally responsive services to clients. Advocates must have strong understanding of community engagement and capacity building, working within a community capacity building approach to enhance stakeholder relationships and develop and maintaining connections with other relevant service providers and referral partners. For more information about this role click [here](#)

People and Culture/HR Coordinator

Preferred location Melbourne

The People and Culture Coordinator position reports to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer and supports Thirrili Ltd with a range of human resources functions and activities which include (but not limited to):

- Managing employee engagement and development, employee performance development and planning, recruitment, orientation and induction processes, as well as Thirrili Ltd’s health, safety and wellbeing obligations and policies.
- Providing generalist human resources advice and support to Executives, People Managers and staff.

Major Functions / Accountabilities

- Recruitment and onboarding
- Learning and development
- Employee engagement
- Employee Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Reporting
- Teamwork
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Requirements

For more information about this role click [here](#)

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MEDIA RELEASE

29th May



ACT
Government

ACT Health

A new ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Postvention and Aftercare program is to be established.

Thirrili is humbled and honored to have been awarded a contract with the ACT Government to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT, or with a connection to the ACT, have access to culturally appropriate support for Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Postvention and Aftercare.

ACT Government will work with Thirrili towards a reduction in the causes, prevalence and impact of suicide on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, their families and communities, with an early intervention focus.

Thirrili has been delivering the Indigenous Suicide Postvention Service since 2017. Thirrili works with honesty and integrity in our relationships and in the spirit of self-determination to strengthen the resilience and wellbeing of communities.

Thirrili supports individuals and families after a loss of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to suicide or other traumatic incident. We have a network of staff across all jurisdictions including partnerships with local and regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations.

Our key focuses

- Case support for individuals and families impacted by suicide to ensure they get access to appropriate services in culturally safe ways,
- Building community resilience through restoration plans to prevent future suicides
- We work at National, State/Territory, Regional and Local levels to strengthen provision of culturally appropriate and responsive suicide postvention supports, and create systems change.

Annette Vickery, Thirrili Ltd Chief Executive Officer said *“we have established a partnership with Woden Community Service (WCS) for this contract. WCS already has a strong reputation in suicide prevention support with their [Way Back Support Service](#), providing aftercare support for people who have experienced a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis.”*

Jenny Kitchin, WCS Chief Executive Officer, said *“WCS is proud to work in partnership with Thirrili. We look forward to working together to achieve a culturally appropriate response for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here in the ACT.”* Annette Vickery said, *“we will engage with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the Traditional Owner groups, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Working Group.”*

Annette Vickery said, *“This funding from ACT Government will enhance the capability of the partners to collaborate and expand their relationships with the ACT service provides and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations, to support communities to co-design and deliver support at the local and regional levels.”*

Minister for Mental Health Emma Davidson said *“In the spirit of self-determination, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander integrated Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Postvention and Aftercare Service, is led by First Nations people for First Nations people. This is a deeply needed service to prevent suicide and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT who are impacted by suicide. Thirrili will work closely with the community to meet their needs and build strength and resilience.”*

- ENDS -

Media enquiries including interviews please contact: - Thirrili Ltd: Alice Currie, Marketing and Communications Coordinator: 0447 555 808 - Minister Emma Davidson: Julia Marais-van Vuuren 0468 568 967

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NEW STAFF MEMBER

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

Phillip Ingram, Indigenous Suicide Postvention Advocate - NSW

Hi, my name is Phillip Ingram.

I'm a proud Wiradjuri / Samoan man, my mob is from around the Riverina area of NSW and I live in Wagga Wagga NSW.

I am very passionate about working in community and with my people to support in times of need, help make positive impacts and uplift our people. I have worked in the community service field for 13 years previously as an employee with my local Aboriginal medical service, specifically as a Social Emotional and Wellbeing case manager, providing holistic care, support, and programs within my local and surrounding communities.

I look forward to working alongside my new colleagues and applying my skills and experience in my new role with Thirrili.



Marnie Lenehan, Indigenous Suicide Postvention Advocate - NSW

Marnie Lenehan is a Ngiyampaa woman who is currently completing her final year of a Bachelor of Social Work qualification at Charles Sturt University. Marnie has extensive experience within the mental health sector. Marnie's core motivation is to represent her people, and work alongside the community in a collaborative and informed manner. Working within the community to advocate for wellbeing, develop knowledge and awareness is paramount to Marnie's professional expertise. Marnie identifies with the she/her pronouns, and is an advocate for LGBTIQ+ rights and awareness.

As a lived experience professional, she understands the importance of mental health and wellbeing on a meso, micro and macro scale. Marnie is also eager to meet other likeminded individuals that are passionate about working within the community to convey the importance of mental health, accessing support and finding meaningful ways to keep well through prioritizing recovery, identity and selfcare.

Marnie was previously a coordinator at Wellways. Marnie's role involved coordinating a team of staff, and two psychosocial support programs that operated across the Murrumbidgee Region. Marnie also has experience in facilitating training, conducting research, Social Work policy, and community development. Marnie is experienced in working in consultation with community, by using elements of codesign and fundamental communication skills. Marnie has established a variety of programs and initiatives within communities, that target primary demographics and aim to meet the needs of consumers, by using sustainable and community led framework.

Marnie works as a postvention advocate this Thirrili and finds great reward in working alongside families after they have been impacted by a death or traumatic event. Marnie feels it's a great privilege to support people during the times they need a guiding hand and culturally responsive practitioner. Marnie enjoys working for Thirrili, as she feels as though the wellbeing and best interest of Aboriginal people is very much at the centre of all work we do.



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/email away.

Call 1800 805 801 or email communications@thirrili.com.au

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NEWS STORIES

NEW Program - Increased focus on supports for mob in the nation's capital

Thirrili is well known nationally for its suicide postvention work, a new opportunity for us to focus on four key areas of suicide (Prevention, Intervention, Postvention & Aftercare Support).

At the end of May Thirrili CEO, Deputy CEO and Regional Coordinator NSW, VIC, ACT and TAS met up with Paul Russell Manager Mental Health and Pam Boyer Director Disability, Mental Health and Aged Care from Woden Community Service and held formal talks around supporting Thirrili staff and the project that will be co-located in the Woden Community Services building.

Thirrili executive team had the opportunity to first meet the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Working Group. Thirrili met with Aunty Lidia George Co-chair, Uncle Jim Castro Co-chair and Uncle Neville Perkins OAM – Convenor. We were invited back because we won the contract and we asked to formally introduce the project plan to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Working Group.

Since the meeting the Regional Coordinator has been making regular visits to the ACT to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations to start building relationships, awareness and engagement about the service.

Stephen Smith Thirrili Ltd Regional Coordinator NSW, VIC, ACT and TAS said “I am looking forward to creating partnerships that form opportunities which will increase the focus on support for Mob in the Nation's Capital”



Let to right back row: Reinette McFarland Assistant Director - Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division, Stephen Smith - Regional Coordinator NSW, ACT, VIC & TAS Thirrili, Rachael Schmerl – Deputy CEO Thirrili, Uncle Jim Castro and Aunty Lydia George - Co-chair, ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Working Group, Paul Russell Manager Mental Health WCS, Pam Boyer Director – Disability, Mental Health and Aged Care WCS, Alice Currie Marketing and Communications Coordinator Thirrili, Annette Vickery Thirrili CEO Neville Perkins – Convenor, ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Working Group

On June 8, Thirrili CEO and Deputy CEO, presented to ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Working Group the intention of the service plan and what the ACT Government has committed. The working group offered advice on the project about how to approach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and what types of engagement we should look at focusing on.

Thirrili will now have a concentrated focus on engagement strategies for the ACT over the coming weeks. For this service, we are aiming to create three new positions based in Canberra that will create a strong concentrated effort on this project in the ACT and surrounding communities. For the First Nations-led and staff suicide (Prevention, Intervention, Postvention & Aftercare support) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

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NEWS STORIES

Building relationships

In partnership with Thirrili, [Woden Community Service](#) (WCS) is honoured and excited to be delivering the Culturally Appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Service, recently funded by ACT Government. The service will work with the local indigenous community providing suicide prevention, early intervention, suicide aftercare and postvention support.

Connecting and listening to the local community will be the basis for how the service is designed and is the most important part of making this new service a success. WCS will help Thirrili to connect more broadly into the Canberra community. WCS is thrilled to be part of the partnership and looks forward to what it can achieve.



**Photo supplied by Woden Community Service
Woden yarnning with Thirrili**

To find out more about the New ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and aftercare program. [Click here](#)

Girraway Ganyi Consultancy

My name is AJ Williams-Tchen. My background is Wiradjuri / Wotjobulak. I have qualifications in nursing, youth work, social work & community development. I was recently awarded the Australian Association of Social Workers' Aboriginal & / or Torres Strait Islander Social Worker of the Year. I am the Director of [Girraway Ganyi Consultancy](#).

We specialise in delivering Aboriginal Cultural Awareness (in a variety of settings), Mental Health First Aid (Aboriginal, Youth, Standard, Teen & Aboriginal Youth), Deadly Thinking (Youth & Adult) and mentoring programs in schools and workplaces.

Recently, we received COVID19 Recovery Funds through the Victorian Government. Through the 'Ngayiny wirimbirra' (Wiradjuri: take care of mind) project we were able to deliver 20 Aboriginal Mental Health Courses (including the AMHFA Blended Online course, the AMHFA: Let's talk about Gambling, AMHFA: Let's talk about Suicide and the AMHFA: Let's talk about NSSI) to 180 Aboriginal community members + their kin.

I have been a Mental Health First Aid Instructor since 2008. In 2012, I won the NSW Mental Health Matters Award for 'Indigenous social and emotional well-being' for delivery 30 AMHFA courses across NSW in partnership with AHMR&C, Orana Family Services & McKillop Family Services.

From 2010-2016, I was the National Program Manager of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid program at both Newcastle University and Mental Health First Aid Australia. This year, I recently delivered my 650th MHFA course. Last year, I became a Deadly Thinking Adult & Deadly Thinking Youth Trainer.

I love the work that I do. I love being able to provide mental health literacy and suicide prevention to the Aboriginal community. Over the years I have received so much feedback from Elders, and community members on how these courses have saved lives by being able to recognise signs and symptoms & have conversations.



Image description: AJ Williams-Tchen, Founder, Director & Lead Consultant of Girraway Ganyi Consultancy

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Thinking of having a MHFA course in your workplace or arranging a Deadly Thinking Youth (or Adult) program in community – contact us on girrawayganyi@gmail.com or 0409926689 www.girrawayganyi.com

Photo supplied by Girraway Ganyi Consultancy
Image description: Deadly Thinking Adult workshop : Morwell Victoria 2022.



Visiting the Coroners Court of Victoria

In May Stephen Smith (Regional Coordinator NSW, ACT, VIC and TAS) and myself Phillip Ingram (NSW Advocate) visited the Coroners Court of Victoria on 10th May. Whilst there we met with Stacey Douglas from the Koori Engagement Unit/Coroners Support Services, this was an opportunity for us to formally introduce ourselves and develop a relationship with Coroners Court.

We also had the opportunity to see an inquest proceeding first hand, the experience was very insightful. We heard and saw the evidence that people were giving and felt overwhelmed and quite confronting. During our time in Melbourne, we also visited a client and their family face-to-face and checked in with them to see how they felt that their inquest has been so far, how they were going and if there was anything we could support with. This was very well received by the client and family.



Phillip Ingram NSW Advocate



The site visit and inquest experience has given me a better understanding as to what clientele would likely go through during this situation which will help me when considering the process for clientele. Getting to know Stacey and the work that her and her team does will further strengthen our relationship. Future visit and engagements with the coroner’s courts will only benefit our aim to support and assist clients as best we can.

Stephen Smith Regional Coordinator NSW, VIC, ACT & TAS and Phillip Ingram NSW Advocate



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 45 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander completed suicides have been reported to Thirrili from 1 January to 31 May 2022, by jurisdiction, age and gender.

Jurisdiction	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Unknown	Total
Completed Suicide	6	5	14	1	11	0	8	0	0	45

Age	Under 18	18 - 24	25 - 34	35+	Not known at this stage	Total
Completed Suicide	4	9	10	9	13	45

Gender	Male	Female	Not known at this stage	Total
Completed Suicide	30	11	4	45

The following tables shows a total of 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fatal incidents have been reported to Thirrili from 1 January to 31 May 2022, by jurisdiction, age and gender.

Jurisdiction	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Unknown	Total
Other Trauma involving a Death	1	2	2	1	5	0	5	0	0	16

Age	Under 18	18 - 24	25 - 34	35+	Not known at this stage	Total
Other Trauma involving a Death	2	4	3	3	4	16

Gender	Male	Female	Not known at this stage	Total
Other Trauma involving a Death	10	6	0	16