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**Welcome everyone** to the first Quarterly Newsletter of the year!

In this edition, we bring you updates on the **National Close the Gap Day**, we welcome the new **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Ms. Katie Kiss**, and we **meet out Darwin-based NT Indigenous Suicide Postvention Advocate, Margaret**.

**Thank you** for being an integral part our journey. Let's continue this conversation, and together, let's foster healing and connection within our communities.



## National Close the Gap Day

National Close the Gap Day serves as a harsh reminder of the ongoing disparities faced by First Nations peoples, highlighting the need for continued efforts to work towards equality. This year's report themes are Progressing Voice, Treaty, Truth, Leadership, Governance, and Building our Economies, underpin the enduring impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



# Suicide is the leading cause of death for First Nations people aged 15 to 44 years



\* <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/se/outcome-area14>

These disparities spanning economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions for Indigenous Peoples. Our goal is to improve social and emotional wellbeing for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to ensure that future generations are free from the traumatic impacts of suicide.

Our commitment lies in supporting communities to thrive and flourish despite historical injustices. Through active participation in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap's priority reforms, we strive to bring about meaningful and measurable improvements in outcomes for Indigenous communities.

### Reform 1 – Formal Partnerships & Shared Decision Making:

We're dedicated to fostering change agency and community empowerment to mitigate the traumatic impact of suicide. By working hand-in-hand with communities, we develop postvention plans to prevent future tragedies. Our approach is evidence-based, emphasising place-based service delivery tailored to community needs, and we actively participate in regional coalitions to enhance service alignment and responsiveness.

### Reform 2 – Building the Community Controlled Sector:

Thirrili prioritises strong, mutually supportive partnerships with organisations that share our values. We actively seek to expand our membership with entities that offer reciprocal value and maintain beneficial relationships aligned with our goals.

### Reform 3 – Transforming Government Organisations:

Through expert research and evidence-informed advice, we drive systemic change and influence policy development to enhance the social and emotional well-being of Indigenous families and communities. We advocate for Indigenous voices in public policy discussions and ensure the dissemination of relevant postvention research.

### Reform 4 – Shared Access to Data and Information:

Thirrili supports Indigenous communities in designing sustainable solutions tailored to their unique needs to reduce the impacts of suicide. We prioritise the development of postvention plans that empower communities to self-determine actions while respecting cultural and intellectual property rights.

As we observe National Close the Gap Day, let's send a resounding message to governments: health equality is not negotiable. Thirrili remains steadfast in our commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, guided by collaboration, empowerment, and respect for Indigenous rights and knowledge. Together, we can close the gap and build a healthier, more equitable future for all Australians.



In this edition we introduce Margaret, one of our wonderful NT Indigenous Suicide Postvention Advocates up in Larrakia country in Darwin.

### **Hi, who are you?**

My name is Margaret and my family come from Woodycupildiya in the Northern Territory. I'm Marrithiyel - It's my grandmother's country. It's between Daly River, Port Keats, Palumpa. My grandmother came in from her community over a hundred years ago and settled in Daly River where she met my European Grandfather who was from Melbourne. My Father's side if from Booraloola.



### **What initially attracted you to working at Thirrili?**

What attracted me was the holistic approach that Thirrili takes. I came from working at the hospital where I previously worked for 61/2 years, and it was a very narrow model of focus there. Aboriginal people need a broad focus to care, we miss out on better care when diseases and illnesses are treated in isolation. I also really liked that Thirrili is an Indigenous organisation, which is so important.

### **What does Closing the Gap Day mean to you, why is it important to have a day dedicated to this?**

We need to ask, what has really changed for Aboriginal people to close the gap? When I look at remote communities, housing and food insecurity is a really big issue - people's basic needs are still compromised. You can bring in other services, but until you address the basic needs, then what is going to change? A lot of money is spent, but the real problems need to be considered first. It's a basic human right to have a home and have food in your stomach. It's important to highlight the issues, but the core problems seen in communities needs to be addressed before any real change will be made.

### **In your opinion, why is the work Thirrili does so important?**

each other, they can be much freer to tell their story in a non-judgmental way. We understand where they're coming from. We can also help the whole community, from the ground up. Up here in the Territory we have big distances to cover, and during the wet many of these communities are closed off. So our work with community development is so important out there.



## Welcome Katie Kiss!



The Australian Human Rights Commission has recently announced Ms. Katie Kiss, a Kaanju and Birri/Widi woman, as the incoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.

Ms. Kiss's extensive experience in promoting and protecting the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples positions her as a formidable advocate for justice and equality. Thirrili welcomes Ms. Kiss's appointment as Commissioner, and we look forward to working closely with her.

Thirrili acknowledges the pivotal role played by June Oscar AO, the outgoing Commissioner, in shaping our organisation. It was during a heartfelt conversation with Ms. Oscar and Adelle Cox, our founding CEO, that the name Thirrili was suggested – a Bunuba work that means Power and Strength, which we feel not only encapsulated our mission, but also represents the powerful women who laid the foundations of our organisation.

Please join us in support of Ms. Kiss as she embarks on this journey to uphold the rights and dignity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

[Read more here:](#)



## Service Delivery Brochure

If you're looking to dive deeper into the work we do in Postvention, please checkout our Service Delivery Brochure through the link below. This document breaks down how our teams provide care to mob in crisis.



**Localised suicide postvention support for First Nations peoples**  
 Since 2017, we've provided First Nations communities with suicide postvention support and assistance. Our service is Australia-wide, our model is flexible and adapted to place-based community needs. We provide meaningful postvention support, case coordination and advocacy. Communities that have been impacted by suicide can include us to bring our trauma informed expertise to share with them as they develop their self-determined future.

**Thirrili's Model of Care, Connection and Practice**  
 All of our work is done with the goal that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities are thriving and flourishing and for future generations to be free from the traumatic impacts of suicide. We recognise the strength of our communities and create space and boundaries for individuals, families and communities to self-determine their own pathway of bereavement and self-healing. Our work in case management starts when families contact us for support. Our work in postvention capacity building begins when community leaders thank us for supporting them in developing a capacity building postvention plan. We sit beside our people in their time of greatest need, trauma and distress. We respect cultural and community protocols and hold space for communities to step back into their power. Our cultural values are embedded throughout our organisation. **Collective** - By invitation, support community-led decision-making. **Respectful** - Work with communities under their protocols, at their direction. **Relevant** - Provide support and services when communities grant their trust. **Relationship based** - Understand and respect that relationships with individuals, families and communities are based on care which applies to each beyond one incident or event, and is founded in our shared identity as First Nations peoples. **Diverse** - Remain inclusive and accessible to everyone and reflect the complex composition of First Nations communities in Australia.

**Our Model of Care, Connection and Practice**

**COMMUNITY LED PREVENTION**  
 - High level support  
 - Suicide prevention  
 - Risk management  
 - Mental health and substance use  
 - Cultural and community protocols  
 - Self-healing and recovery  
 - Capacity building

**POSTVENTION SUPPORT**  
 - Grief and bereavement  
 - Family support  
 - Community support  
 - Cultural and community protocols  
 - Self-healing and recovery  
 - Capacity building

**GRIEF**  
 - Grief and bereavement  
 - Family support  
 - Community support  
 - Cultural and community protocols  
 - Self-healing and recovery  
 - Capacity building

**SYSTEMS CHANGE**  
 - Policy and procedure  
 - Training and education  
 - Cultural and community protocols  
 - Self-healing and recovery  
 - Capacity building

**LOCAL AND SOVEREIGN BUSINESS**  
 - Country  
 - Community  
 - Culture  
 - Capacity building

**Based on strength and local knowledge**  
 We're guided by:  
 - Knowledge of shared, collective, consensus ancestral wisdoms  
 - Cultural ways of knowing, being, and doing  
 We protect the right of our people to do their cultural work of grieving, creating safe boundaries and support for the important cultural practice.

**Postvention responses**  
 A gentleman response happens after a suicide or other unexpected death. Support is provided to communities, families and individuals of the loved one who passed. Even though it happens after a postvention to a bereaved family or community, it is not a suicide prevention. After a suicide, communities, families and individuals may be at higher risk of suicide. When timely, supportive and culturally safe responses are provided, communities have the best and strongest response for one of the most difficult times in their lands.

Download our Service Delivery Brochure.

# Thirrili news & updates

## ACT Community Forum

Our ACT team recently hosted a community forum with the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Winnunga Nimmitjyah Aboriginal Health and Community Services. The aim of this event was to delve into pressing issues surrounding Indigenous mental illness and suicide. Additionally, attendees had the chance to get insights into Thirrili's culturally appropriate suicide prevention service.



Thank you also goes to the Honorable Emma Lorrain MP, Minister for Mental Health, as well as the Chief Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, ACT Health, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, and the Thirriili Board of Directors who were also present.



## The 2024 Indigenous Suicide Prevention Forum

Australian Indigenous Psychologists' Association (AIPA) for the recent 2024 Indigenous Suicide Prevention Forum held in Naam Melbourne, of which we were a gold sponsor. This event was an important event for Indigenous grassroots organisations to yarn about implementing culturally sensitive suicide prevention programs, drawing on community knowledge and expertise.

Thank you to AIPA for the opportunity to have our team express the importance of applying a Postvention lens with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention.



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## Welcome Anya Myra!

Join us in welcoming the newest addition to our family!

Congratulations to Hasan, our IT Support Officer, and his family on the arrival of beautiful Anya Myra!

Wishing you all endless love, joy, and sleepless nights!





## Community news



## Suicide Prevention Australia

[For more information](#)

### LGBTIQ Webinar

Improving support for LGBTIQ suicidal behaviour: insight from lived experience. Join SPA for this webinar delving into the practical implications of service delivery, along with a showcase of resources developed in response.

**Date: March 28, 2024 Time: 1:00 PM**



## Gayaa Dhuwi



## Declaration

The Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership across all parts of the Australian mental health system and guides the work of Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia.

Its goal is to achieve the highest attainable standard of social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, and suicide prevention outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A further aim is to promote an appropriate balance of clinical and culturally-informed mental health system responses, including by providing access to cultural healing.



[For more information](#)

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## COORDINARE - South Eastern NSW PHN

### Queanbeyan

7th May  
9:30am  
-3:00pm

[Queanbeyan Information](#)

### Goulburn

8th May  
9:30am  
-3:00pm

[Goulburn Information](#)

## Red Dust Healing

Red Dust Healing is holding a one-day workshop in Queanbeyan & Goulburn. Open to community members and service providers the workshop is a self-evaluating awareness program, designed to help people deal with hurt and anger in their lives.

Designed from an Aboriginal perspective, Red Dust Healing provides powerful healing tools for all and is based on a cultural belief that we are one people, one mob, who do not own but belong to this land.

## Conversation Convoy

Throughout March, the R U OK? Conversation Convoy will hold free public events across the Illawarra and South Coast NSW.

Community events in Dapto, Wollongong, Berkeley, Kiama, Nowra, Vincentia, Ulladulla, Bega, Pambula Beach and Wyndham will offer a free cuppa, a sausage sizzle and a chance to learn more about the important role we can all play in looking out for our friends, family and colleagues.

In 2024, the R U OK? Conversation Convoy will spend time in regional communities across New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.

Conversation Convoy public events, and resources to help support local communities can be found in the link below.

[Conversation Convoy Schedule](#)



If you would like to share any upcoming events for Thirrili to promote, please get in contact via the link below.

[Share community news with us!](#)



THIRILI

Working with families and  
communities after suicide.

**1800 805 801**  
**24/7 Australia wide**



Funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency



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