Inaugural National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference Report

The main conference room

Alice Springs, Northern Territory

5th – 6th May, 2016
The Inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference was held over two full days from May 5-6, with preconference workshops and a Welcome Event on May 4, at the Alice Springs Convention Centre in the Northern Territory.

A total of 362 delegates were registered. 76 bursaries were offered, along with full sponsorship of 5 counsellors and 9 speakers.

99.5% participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall experience.
Background

The Conference Advisory Committee was appointed with its first meeting being held on January 12, 2016. The Committee includes:

Professor Pat Dudgeon (Chair)  University of Western Australia
Dion Tatow  National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
Brendan Gibson  Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Richard Weston  Healing Foundation
Sue Murray  Suicide Prevention Australia
Erin Lew Fatt  Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
Dameyon Bonson  Black Rainbow
Donna Murray  Indigenous Allied Health Australia
Donna Ah Chee  Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
Vicki O’Donnell  Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service Council
Gerry Georgatos  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Program (ATSISPEP)
Adele Cox  ATSISPEP
Dr Yvonne Luxford  ATSISPEP

Agreed Purpose of the Conference

The University of Western Australia has been contracted by the Commonwealth of Australia through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to evaluate the effectiveness of existing suicide prevention services and programs in combating suicide and suicide ideation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This project is known as ATSISPEP – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project.

The culmination of ATSISPEP is the Inaugural National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Summit.

Long overdue, this event will bring together experts and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and general community from across the country to Alice Springs, the heart of the Aboriginal nations. For two days those gathered will exchange learnings, share lived experience and build knowledge.

Intended outcomes are:
• Presentation of the products of ATSISPEP including a culturally appropriate suicide prevention service and program evaluation tool;
• Recommendations for national action to achieve systemic change;
•Forging a national alliance of key stakeholders for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention;
•Sharing of knowledge regarding suicide prevention, postvention, community capacity and resilience building; and
•Engagement and professional development of key stakeholders including Primary Health Networks (PHNs), Commonwealth and jurisdictional bureaucracies, politicians, health professionals, academics, educators and others.
Partners and Sponsors

With the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet as a key foundation sponsor of the event, to provide the level of financial support envisaged to bring numerous people from across the country who would not otherwise have an opportunity for attendance, further sponsorship was sought from a variety of organisations.

Our project partner, the Healing Foundation became a primary sponsor, providing significant financial support, advice and the services of their counselling staff. Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) also played an important role sponsoring the Art Workshop and providing Events Staff to assist at the venue. The West Australian Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) provided sponsorship for six attendees from across regional WA, and the WA Mental Health Commission also provided sponsorship through their small grants program. Telethon Kids Institute was also a key partner in the project.

Our sponsors included:
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- The Healing Foundation
- WA Mental Health Commission
- West Australian Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA)
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA)
- Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association
- Alice Springs Convention Centre
- University of Western Australia School of Indigenous Studies
- The Poche Centre for Indigenous Health
- The Telethon Kids Institute
- Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)
- Suicide Prevention Australia
- Helping Minds Mental Health Services Australia
- OneVision
- Vesna Trajanoska
- LifeLine
- Rotary International
- Healthy Matters
- Black Dog Institute
- BeyondBlue
- Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council (KAMSC)
- Black Rainbow
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)

Conference Program

The themes for the conference program were:

- community based solutions;
- social determinants;
- partnership;
- clinical factors; and
- sharing knowledge.

Whilst the majority of speakers were selected by the Conference Advisory Committee based on their knowledge of experts in the sector, a call for abstracts and expressions of interest for presentations was also made, with the deadline for receipt being 23 March 2016. Abstracts were assessed according to whether the applicant could demonstrate experience working in Indigenous suicide prevention; and/or lived experience delivering programs
or services in an Indigenous community. Preference was given to applicants who were Indigenous or teams of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Keynote speakers were high profile-media personalities and champions of Indigenous rights and interests Mr Stan Grant and Ms Rosalie Kunoth-Monks.

The program is included as Appendix A. Videos of numerous conference sessions are being made available at [www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/natsispc-2016](http://www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/natsispc-2016).

In addition to the main conference program, a full day workshop was held on the preceding day to develop a Fact Sheet on suicide prevention for Indigenous people who identify as being gender and sexuality diverse. A Youth Breakfast Summit was held on the morning of the first day to enable the youth attending to meet and discuss their own key issues.

**Social and Cultural Program**

On the afternoon preceding the conference, IAHA sponsored an art workshop where participants were guided through the development of a personal art piece. The importance of artistic creation was a theme which continued with all delegates encouraged to contribute to a group artwork on a large canvas, supervised by Tjalaminu Mia, former Curator of Indigenous Art for the WA Art Gallery. Building upon this, the group who came by bus from Leonora also created an artwork representing their personal journey.

The conference Welcome Event was held in the outdoor amphitheatre of the venue on the evening before the main conference, and provided an opportunity for delegates to meet one another in a relaxed atmosphere. Following a Welcome to Country by two local Elders from the Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation, Professors Tom Calma and Pat Dudgeon welcomed everyone to the conference. A local entertainer provided background music, and was accompanied by Ernie Dingo.

The main conference program commenced with a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country performed by local elders from Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation. The smoking ceremony was held in the venue courtyard and all delegates were encouraged to pass through the cleansing smoke before entering the conference main hall.

Ernie Dingo hosted the Conference Dinner on Thursday night, featuring a selection of excellent entertainment. Unfortunately one of the scheduled performers, Foxy Empire, was unable to travel to Alice Springs due to illness, but other performers played for longer.

Steven Oliver, famous for his work on radio and in the television series, *Black Comedy*, opened the entertainment with a comedy set interspersed with satirical poetry. Steven, who also works in suicide prevention, actively attended the entire conference.

Additional poetry was provided by Vanessa Lee, who penned three poems specifically for the conference.

The main musical entertainment for the evening was provided by Ted Wilkes who was joined on stage by a selection of performers, culminating with a long set with Ernie Dingo.
Finishing the conference on a note of hope for the future, the children’s drumming group, *Drum Atweme*, created a great sense of energy and joy. This was followed by the Ngankari performing an inma, and inviting conference delegates to join them in the relevant men’s and women’s dances.

**Registrations**

In total 362 delegates attended the conference. These were made up of 196 external registrations, with 76 community bursaries being awarded. In addition 5 counsellors and 9 speakers were fully supported to attend. The National Empowerment Program held a meeting adjacent to the conference which enabled a further 35 participants to attend.

Of the 191 attendees who completed Evaluation Forms, 130 identified as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, and 175 stated that they worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Chart 1: Delegates place of origin

For those participants we have full addresses for:
- 37% were from Western Australia
- 18.5% were from Northern Territory
- 14% were from NSW
- 12.5% were from Queensland
- 7.5% were from each of ACT and Victoria
- 3% were from South Australia

Chart 2: Bursary recipients place of origin

Of the 76 bursaries recipients:
- 33.5% were from Western Australia
- 22.5% were from NSW
- 18.5% were from each of the Northern Territory and Queensland
- 4% were from South Australia
- 1.5% were from each of the ACT and Victoria

Joe Williams and Prof Tom Calma

Professions

Of those who identified their profession or field of work on the Evaluation Forms the majority worked in Mental Health/Social and Emotional Wellbeing. In descending order the other most common fields of work were: Health/Medicine/Nursing, Social Work, Cultural/Community Development/Consultant, Suicide Prevention/Postvention, Academic/Research and Youth work.
The Key Themes from the conference have been identified by Professor Ian Ring of the University of Wollongong through analysis of the keynote, plenary and concurrent sessions, and the recommendations and comments recorded by participants in their notes and Evaluation Forms. (Reports from Facilitators of the concurrent sessions can be found at Appendix E.)

A summary of the themes in order of recurrence shows the need for culturally informed approaches to suicide prevention, and culture as a protective factor against self-destructive and suicidal behaviours, as the overall predominant interest and concern. The Key Themes are reflected in the Conference Recommendations at the conclusion of this report.

- Culture
- Services
- Community self-determination
- Suicide prevention programs
- Child abuse
- Diversity of sexuality (LGBTQI)
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Justice reinvestment
- Youth programs
- Racism
- Lateral violence
- Annual national conferences/ World Indigenous Suicide Prevention conference
- Funded Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Plan
- Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) declaration
- Stolen Generations
Creating a trauma informed space that can ensure the safety of both participants and presenters requires significant risk management to ensure that difficult topics can be discussed safely.

A safety plan was developed that is trauma informed and culturally safe and took into account both spirit and environmental safety for participants. Kelleigh Ryan and the Healing Foundation led this process and managed the team of fourteen Counsellors who comprised members of the AIPA, Healing Foundation, AIHA and KAMSC. A process in which both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview and non-Indigenous worldviews engage to provide a collective and collaborative safety planning was important.

To manage this process, the Conference utilised the Healing Foundation’s methodology to create a culturally informed Safety Plan, as detailed in the diagram below. The full Safety Plan is attached at Appendix B.
Being very conscious of the need to ensure cultural safety, the Conference made available fourteen Aboriginal Counsellors who were introduced to the delegates at the opening conference session, five Ngangkari who were available for traditional healings, flower essences treatments, and a Healing Space, being a quiet room distanced from the noise and energy of the conference sessions. Delegates could also contribute to a large joint painting.

The Counselling Team met by teleconference twice before the conference, and held an onsite workshop on the afternoon before the conference began. They had regular debriefings, which continued after the conference had ended.

At least 12 Counsellors were available at any one time, and all were constantly with clients. Similarly, the five Ngangkari provided treatments to over fifty people on the final day of the conference. The Ngangkari also performed an inma (dance and song) to close the conference.

Some of the key issues managed by the Counsellors were:

- Loss and grief, exhaustion from the weight of managing so much loss and sadness, and how having the space and time to talk to a black counsellor was safe and comforting. This issue was for participants, professionals and workers alike, Indigenous and non-Indigenous;
- A safe space to come and sit and feel safe with the therapist and counsellors was valued;
- Some asked for techniques to help them help others;
- Some just wanted to tell their story and be heard without being judged or feeling judged;
- Some were triggered by a number of presenters, feeling like lateral violence or judgement was being felt;
- Some just needed a safe space to collect themselves so they could carry on both at the conference and at home;
- A number of non-Indigenous participants felt safe to talk to us about the sadness of working in this space and how it affects them;
- Some just wanted to share that they felt great hope from the conference and even though the topic was hard seeing all those deadly black faces together was deadly;
- A few individual issues;
- A few family issues;
- But the feeling of being safe to say I am exhausted, my heart is heavy I know I have to be strong and carry on for everyone but the cost of this was being felt at a deep level; and
- Great joy and thanks for us being there and for the conference being held.

The benefit these strategies brought to the conference were immeasurable, and was reflected in the feedback from participants on what they valued most about the conference:

*Having counsellors and Ngangkari available was brilliant!*

*Really really appreciated the techniques from the counsellors at the start*

*The support of counsellors as the topic was very deep, emotional, personal*

*The fact that there were counsellors and healers available*
Media

Gerry Georgatos managed the traditional media engagement for the conference, which generated significant national coverage. There were at least 58 published articles covering online and hard copy, television news stories and radio broadcasts of the conference. The predominant focus of the news stories were on suicide prevention, what works in suicide prevention, what assists healing and wellbeing and improving lives and living conditions.

The conference was attended by the ABC National Reporting Team, resulting in substantive coverage. The ABC provided four lead-in stories developed around the journey of the Leonora contingent – 22 individuals, some of them at-risk youth – who travelled by bus (tagged the Trail to Hope) from Leonora to Alice Springs, a journey of 1,800km.

The Leonora contingent was inspired by a visit to their community by the ATSISPEP’s Critical Response Project following the tragedy of suicides.

![Image](image.png)

The conference sought to ensure a variety of voices and experiences were linked into the media coverage in order to reflect the lived experiences, community driven programs, what works in suicide prevention and postvention and also to amplify the needs of communities and in general to educate readers to the multifactorial issues that cause self-harming and suicides, but particularly what is needed to respond to these multifactorial issues.

Australian Associated Press (AAP) was also present at the conference and this ensured coverage was extended to the majority of mainstream media outlets. The AAP produced 6 substantive stories that were reproduced by the majority of commercial media outlets.
The Guardian Australia introduced to the nation coverage of the actual conference with a story on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBQTI peoples. This was a powerful signifier that the conference would represent every group, every demographic and that we would be diverse in our representations – LGBQTI, gender, age, youth, remote, regional and the urban masses.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders media was ensured, with NITV (National Indigenous Television) present each day of the conference. NITV produced daily news coverage and other substantive coverage. NITV’s The Point program, hosted by Stan Grant streamed live from the conference on the Thursday night. CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association) was also present daily at the conference. The Koori Mail produced stories and so too Koori Radio and Noongar Radio. The National Indigenous Radio Service also produced news broadcasts.

Independent media produced coverage of the conference and included The WIRE, 2SER Radio, RTRFM, among others.

Other coverage included local and community newspaper groups around the nation such as the Centralian Advocate (Alice Springs).

We introduced 23 interviewees to the media.

Stories that generated significant positive feedback included the restorative programs of Ngalla Maya Aboriginal Corporation led by former inmate Mervyn Eades who turned his life around after years in and out of juvenile detention and adult prison. Ngalla Maya inspires and commits former inmates, from as young as 15 years of age to training and education that leads to employment. The stories by the ABC and AAP of the Ngalla Maya successes generated positive feedback from around the nation, with one reader donating financially to Ngalla Maya. The stories of what works in suicide prevention also have come to the notice of government departments and other organisations and in turn representatives of various departments and organisations have made contact with enterprises such as Ngalla Maya.

The ABC’s initial coverage of the Leonora contingent – the Trail to Hope – generated significant positive feedback and as a result the ABC and other media followed the journey from Leonora to Alice Springs and then back to Leonora. LATELINE produced a story on the Trail to Hope. Significant funds were raised to make this journey possible and the media coverage certainly assisted with the fundraising. The coverage also had a positive effect in Leonora, a community arguably divided on racial levels, but who in some part came together to make this journey possible.

The media coverage fairly reflected the conference and its onus on the ways forward.

Below are sampled 21 media pieces and which are the majority of the more substantive and significant pieces.

• April 15 – Leonora community hopes road trip to conference will bring suicide prevention tips – ABC News


• April 30 – Community’s journey to find an answer to suicide – ABC News

- May 9 – Stan Grant inspired by WA town’s search for answers – ABC News


- May 8 – ABC Television News story on the Leonora contingent to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Suicide Prevention Conference

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJKwj5GOUYA

- May 11 – Bus brings hope to youth – Yahoo News

https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/regional/goldfields/a/31575915/bus-brings-hope-to-leonora-youth/

- May 6 – Stan Grant: I am prepared to let go of the memory of wounds – NITV/SBS


- May 6 – Professor Ted Wilkes on the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Suicide Prevention Conference – CAAMA Radio


- May 1 – Previewing the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference – Croakey


- May 5 – No data exists on LGBQTI suicides – The Guardian


- May 6 – Ngalla Maya: a training program saving lives – ABC News


- May 6 – Elevated risks to substance abuse and suicide for former inmates – ABC AM News

http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2016/s4457065.htm

- May 6 – Work offers life after jail for inmates – AAP News

https://au.news.yahoo.com/a/31537627/work-offers-life-after-jail-for-wa-inmates/#page1

- May 5 – Government urged to address Indigenous suicide rates – ABC News
The conference also utilised the Croakey News Conference Service. Croakey is a public health blog widely read by health and medical professionals, educators, researchers and policy makers, and social policy practitioners, researchers and policymakers. Croakey was founded to promote a greater focus in public debate upon under-served areas and issues. Croakey’s accompanying Twitter stream @Croakeyblog has nearly 15,000 followers, including many journalists, opinion leaders, policy makers and practitioners in the health, medical and social sectors. It has a strong following among Indigenous leaders, policy makers, service professionals and community members.
The Croakey Conference News Service was launched in 2013 to provide comprehensive reporting from health and social policy conferences, and to draw together sectors and issues. The News Service provided coverage of the conference before, during and after the event. Summer May Finlay, a Yorta Yorta woman, wrote a preview article to run before the conference, and attended the conference sessions from 5-6 May to report on presentations, discussions and any outcomes. She live-tweeted from the event, took photographs, and conducted Periscope video interviews, which were also uploaded to YouTube and incorporated into stories.

Melissa Sweet coordinated, edited and published the articles, and was active in retweeting conference tweets at her account, which has nearly 15,000 followers.

The conference’s capacity to use this service was enhanced by a donation from Frank Meany of OneVision.

The Periscope interviews can be viewed at https://croakey.org/watch-and-listen-interviews-from-the-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-suicide-prevention-conference/

The full Croakey report of the conference can be seen at Appendix C.

Participants also contributed their own blogs such as Joe Williams www.joewilliams.com.au/blog/2016/5/8/atsipep

There was also a strong Twitter presence at the conference. Many used the registered hashtag #ATSISPEP which assisted with analysing impact. The #ATSISPEP hashtag has continued to be used, especially in relation to funding proposals regarding suicide and mental health of Indigenous peoples during the 2016 Federal election campaign.

As at the time of writing, #ATSISPEP had 23,735,935 impressions with over 1,000 people tweeting more than 5,000 tweets.

**Media Management**

Recognising that the conference could become an unfortunate opportunity for media sensationalism as has been witnessed in individual instances of Indigenous suicide, effort was made to ensure that all potential interviewees were equipped with media management tools.

This pack (found at Appendix D) was distributed electronically and included:

- Key Messages for the Conference (as developed and agreed by the Conference Advisory Committee)
- Conference Media Tips
- Interview questions and answers
Participant Feedback

In addition to a formal conference Evaluation Form, feedback was sought throughout the conference. Participants provided feedback on conference actions through four major mechanisms:

- Recording issues on note paper/butchers’ papers around the main conference room
- Recording interviews with Conference Vox Pop Team
- Recording Periscope interviews with Croakey
- Responding to media interviews

Each of these mechanisms strongly reflect the key theme of culture, the need for culturally appropriate mental health services and education, and support for sexuality and gender diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

Examples of comments:

All delivery services should be culturally appropriate. They should be by our people to our own people. No communication barriers. For realistic outcomes this is the only way forward for our mobs.

Shortage of Aboriginal youth workers who could be working intensely with young people, role modelling and helping them through difficult times.

Network, Network, Network! There are so many similar projects running around the country by this deadly mob, we should be sharing and learning together – healing ourselves, our people as one united spirit.

Cultural competency programs – led/developed/maintained by people of the country.

Culture facilitators to deliver – accountability to the tribes – not Government.

Look in our own backyards first to clean them up. For example, Australian management of local organisations needs to be reviewed.

Consider the language used to work with – strengths-based start. Keep strategies family and community centric.

Consider the Elders when consultation processes happen.

Raise the profile of LGBTQI brothers and sisters and make sure they are involved in everything.

Workforce capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other services/communities. Need to underpin any development is a critical factor.

Would love to see an indigenous person the position of the Indigenous affairs Minister.

Stan Grant for Prime Minister!

Forget politics! Aim to help our people! Share – talk – collaborate. Together we can achieve a lot!
Conference Evaluation Results

Summary

The feedback from participants on all aspects of the conference was overwhelmingly positive. Attention to the specific areas enables strengths to be built upon in future events, and improvements to be made where appropriate.

99.5% were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall experience.

98.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference provided opportunities to build and strengthen relationships and experience national networking opportunities.

97% were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities & venue.

96.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference provided a culturally safe environment to learn and be actively involved.

96.5% were satisfied or very satisfied with the keynote presentations.

95.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference provided a positive experience that valued diversity of cultures and disciplines.

95% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference developed their professional and personal skills and knowledge.

95% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference explored innovation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention.

94.5% were satisfied or very satisfied with the support & organisation of the event.

94% were satisfied or very satisfied with the concurrent presentations.

94% were satisfied or very satisfied with the social program (Welcome Event, Dinner).

93.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference strengthened their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

93.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the conference was strengths-based and action orientated.

93.5% were satisfied or very satisfied with the panel discussions.

86.5% were satisfied or very satisfied with the support such as Counsellors. (NB 8.5% noted not applicable)

1. Total respondents 191

2. Are you an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person? ☐ Yes 130 respondents
3. Do you work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?  □ Yes  175 respondents

4. To what extent do you agree that the National Conference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthened your understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was strengths-based and action orientated</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided a positive experience that valued diversity of cultures and disciplines</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided a culturally safe environment to learn and be actively involved</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed your professional and personal skills and knowledge</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explored innovation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided opportunities to build and strengthen relationships and experience national networking opportunities</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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</table>
5. Please rate your overall satisfaction with aspects of the National Conference below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>Very unsatisfied</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Experience</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keynote presentations</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concurrent presentations</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel discussions</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support such as Counsellors</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social program (Welcome Event, Dinner)</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support &amp; organisation of the event</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities &amp; Venue</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0</td>
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A Selection of Free Text Responses

The strongest messages were that people felt empowered by the conference, want it to continue regularly, valued the networking, want better Youth representation as speakers, want people who comment from the floor to be time limited and keep to topic, and want healthier food options.

What did you like most about the conference?

- Having counsellors and Ngankari available was brilliant!
- Meeting different people from around the country
- Meeting new people and hearing of programs that work
- The safe learning space
- All speakers (etc) were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Solutions focussed discussions
- It's set up really encouraged people to meet and mix
The richness of presentations and inclusiveness

Being with amazing people from all over Australia

Hearing about the shared concerns/hopes/dreams

Opportunity to network – with so many talented people in one room it surprises me that we have not achieved more.

Panel sessions – opportunities for people to network and share stories of hope and the good work undertaken

Stan Grant’s keynote address

Great opportunity to learn and made to feel very welcome

Provided a safe and inclusive place for me to listen and learn from the experiences of others – as a non-Aboriginal woman this is so important.

Loved that debate and questioning was encouraged

Keynote speakers

Aboriginal voices being heard loudly in every session

So well organised

Friendly, warm, supportive and inspirational

High attendance demonstrating commitment to cause

Being held in Alice Springs

The information and knowledge shared throughout was amazing.

There was a clear sense of culture and Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people being the way forward and work being led from this.

Fantastic to be at an Indigenous run and focused conference – revived my passion and kindled hope

It was real, the room was full of amazing people doing amazing things – I only wish the wide Australian population could see just how awesome the reality is

A culturally safe environment where people could discuss and contribute their ideas and thoughts

Having all Black Fellas together, common cause and helping our people but also supporting ourselves as front line workers. There were tears and [it] was very emotional but we can stand united and support community through policy changes and programs that are community led and driven

The guest speakers … very powerful and I shall be going home with some really positive ideas to take to my community
What did you like least about the conference?

That the venue were racist and physically abusive to an attendee during the event
Toilets were too far away
Nothing
Nothing, everything was very good
Hard to go from one presentation to another, may not get to all questions because questions were at end after third speaker
Vegetarian food options were average
Not being able to attend all sessions
Not long enough!!
Issue of concurrent sessions and no repeats
That it often ran late in sessions –and was hijacked by those with well meaning agendas; that; by not following [topic] leaving people with a feeling that despite the achievements of the conference that nothing momentous happened
Not enough youth
The involvement of youth during the panel discussions and the concurrent presentations - would have been better if there was an opportunity for the youth to talk or be part of the panel
People late to sessions
Note enough time for workshops
Radical opinions from panel members (very disappointing)
Morning tea
Couldn’t attend some sessions due to conflicting times
There needs to be greater focus on promoting urban metropolitan, SEWB/MH issues/initiatives
Nothing
Timing – needs three days of conference
More promotional shirts, caps
Nothing
Too much talking and not enough action. Conference should not have been another talkfest and should instead have focussed on what we are going to do about suicide prevention
All good

Food could have been better (better options for vegetarians)

Not enough time to give the subject justice and to get real benefit

The time frame of the LGBTIQ session was inadequate and felt tokenistic

Needed to have some free time and visits to local organisations

The presentations were running out of time. Not enough time for the presentations.

Two presentations on at the same time, go to one and miss the other

Concurrent sessions felt rushed!

I found the first keynote speaker to be not appropriate considering this is being funded by the Federal government. Her arguments could have been delivered more diplomatically

Lack of time for yarning about some very important issues

I think the dinner entertainment should have been all upbeat. Parts were too serious

Dinner entertainment was negative and not light and supportive. You needed to look after us then.

Too many concurrent sessions and there was not time to discuss with presenters and not enough time for presenters to present

Not enough community attendance

Too much talk which took away time for planning action

Too many keynote presenters talked about themselves at a personal level and promoting their services

Very little, but if there was one thing, it would be to have more time allotted to presenters to avoid rushing through presentations

People grandstanding

Acknowledge Whitefellas who ‘get it’/walk with us

Appreciate comments don’t reflect everyone, but our table was very insulted by comments made by [a panel member] in last panel discussion as if there needs to be an either/or scenario re those of us who don’t have language and that ‘these jobs/resources should be directed to “real” Blackfellas’. I think that this feedback should be fed back to him that a group of strong black women from Eastern states, who have borne the brunt of ravages of colonisation earlier, who work SO hard for an ACCHO with not great pay – four women took his comments personally.

There was not a focus on suicide prevention in the keynote presentations.

Question time is question time! Topic appropriate
General Comments from Participants (including advice for the future)

Action oriented – say what we want to achieve at outset and move towards it

More time for concurrent sessions

More involvement from remote communities

More opportunities for ‘formal’ networking as sometimes it was difficult to meet new people

More young people involvement, especially from remote communities

Excellent. Congratulations on providing such a quality event – particularly as first. Look forward to the next.

Well thought out. Perhaps five minutes between presentations to allow for room changes would have helped

It would be great to have some keynote speakers who had content and are our healing leadership like Helen Milroy

Poster session on programs

Discussion around urban issues

Thank you so very much – fantastic conference – very inclusive, informative, welcoming

Open forums, longer seminars

Maybe all sessions all in together? But really I wouldn’t change a thing – amazing!!!

Thankyou for everything

It has been an honour to be part of this

Keep it going

Some confusion about session timing

The content was the most full-on and allowing healing and recovery space/counsellors was brilliant

Given the content two days was excellent

Keep activities like Ernie Dingo’s interviews, Ngangkari sessions

Maybe arrange some visits/sightseeing to local sites with local people

Some smoking cessation for attendees – huge health issue!

Young people strain, or part of each panel. Solutions and Future Directions – where were your young people?

Feel amazing being here an connecting with inspirational and strong people here
Rooms [signage] are not clear and I’m from Alice and have been here a lot

Really well run. Organisational staff were excellent and seamless, thank you for your good work

Gluten free options - a lot of food had wheat in it

I hope it is a seminal moment

I would like to think that this moment heralds time change – well done to the organizers

Less political statements as we are discussing suicide as a national tragedy

Needs more young people from communities and needs more youth specific sessions!

Youth keynote speaker

Thanks so much for opportunity to be here. It reignited my passion and commitment. Must become a regular event.

Representation from Government in the room for the whole conference

Not in or near a casino

Invite remote Indigenous brothers and sisters

More information needs to get out to people about exactly what this sort of conference is all about

Need to have a youth as a keynote speaker!

Great conference. I’m stoked. Going home with plans to work with family and school where my grannies attend

One of the best conferences I have attended and participated in

Food was great on the last day beautiful salads and vegetarian food

Must sessions on time - not Black Fella time

More relevant MPs should/must attend these conferences

Maybe get together and have more outreach through the communities

We need more conferences on suicide state wide

Need stronger representation of youth. Not just people working in youth but actual young people. Maybe a separate youth conference

Group yarning in conference and life experience in yarning

Well done on this Inaugural Conference, credit to all involved and being held in a central beautiful place. Beautiful energy – place and people!!!
Feedback from Committee Members

In addition to the feedback collected from participants, Conference Advisory Committee members also provided further reflections. Comments on the Conference, and suggestions for the future include:

Positive outcomes this conference

- The mention of LGBQTI people in attendance during the opening announcements by Tom was well received. Many people that I spoke to said that it really set the tone of a ‘community’ get together – no one was excluded.
- The LGBQTI fact sheet workshop was also well received by participants and those outside of this group that were aware it had happened. Having a dedicated conversation such as this has given aspiration to what can be achieved next.
- The overall inclusion of LGBQTI people, including the concurrent sessions and plenaries was positive. However, there is opportunity in future directions to have a wider spread across the themes.
- The workshop was invite only, for Indigenous LGBQTI only. This was to ensure that a safe space was created for participants to share openly and freely. At future gatherings it would be asked that this is respected.
- The media was coordinated very well. Commentary from those not in attendance, additionally to those in attendance, have been impressed with coverage – the unfortunate ‘heckling’ of Stand Grant notwithstanding.

Safety Plan
Social Media by Summer Finlay
Good food
Entertainment

Opportunities to improve next time:

- Need for a scientific committee to take care of content knowledge;
- Keynotes should have content knowledge
- More time on the ground before the conference to lay the groundwork and build partnerships & engagement with locals
- Final Session needs to focus on solutions
- Community People needed to leave with tools to apply back in their communities eg the Leonora Mob. It would have been good to give people more time to interact with the Evaluation material.
- Need to engage a Professional Conference Organiser
- The formation of any alliance/consortium/standing committee is of great interest to LGBTQI representatives
Conference Recommendations

- Culture
  - Aboriginal language, culture and history should be introduced and embedded into the Australian curriculum
  - Traditional knowledge should be acknowledged through cultural maintenance programs and ‘learning on country’

- Self-determination
  - Government services, especially health services, should be transferred to Aboriginal Community Control. It is noted that a proper process to ensure responsibility for inadequate services isn’t transferred to unprepared communities will be required.
  - Aboriginal communities should not constantly be used as trial sites

- Services
  - Primary Health Network guidelines should designate Aboriginal Community Controlled services as preferred providers.
  - Mainstream NGOs should only be used as service providers if there is no suitable Aboriginal Community Controlled Service, and only at request of community

- That any comprehensive approach to Indigenous suicide prevention should include community-specific and community-led ‘upstream’ programs focused on healing and strengthening social and emotional wellbeing, cultural renewal, and improving the social determinants of health that can otherwise contribute to suicidal behaviours, such as the National Empowerment Project.

- Suicide prevention programs
  - All delivery services should be culturally appropriate
  - There is a critical need to have community engagement as a driving force for what people want to have happening in their communities
  - There should be ongoing innovative approaches to suicide prevention programs embracing art/music, multi-media and cultural content
  - National programs need to be adapted to local needs
  - Programs should incorporate the role of Elders
  - Traditional Healers should be recognised and acknowledged as part of the health system under Social and Emotional Healing
  - Training is needed for non-Aboriginal providers to enhance cultural safety
  - There is a need for male and female interpreters
People with lived experience should be consulted

There should be access to Aboriginal counselors in all communities

Training should be provided for people who want to start healing groups

A national ‘Healing Day’ should be established for families living with the consequences of suicide, chronic illness, accidents

A greater focus on grief and loss is required with education and training delivered on a community by community basis and targeted to different age groups. Regional healing centres should be established

There is a need for 24/7 programs

There is a need more programs back on country

Crisis response teams are required in all areas. Women’s and Men’s group programs should be run separately.

There is a need to develop rehabilitation and psychiatric programs, i.e. mental health services.

Clear mechanisms must be established to ensure accountability of PHNs in their distribution of mental health/suicide prevention funding. They should support the expansion of ACCHO mental health/SEWB.

Opportunities are needed to develop the Indigenous mental health workforce

Memoranda of Understanding should be developed, especially with the police

Information about successful suicide prevention programs should be nationally disseminated, and resources such as the interactive maps which people can access on the ATSISPEP website

Resources should be provided to update and modernise Australian Indigenous Healthinfonet suicide prevention section

Long term funding is needed for suicide prevention programs

A National Peak Black suicide body should be established, with representation from around the nation and it should be funded to research and make policies and be engaged by government

- Child abuse – awareness should be raised of the impact and trauma (including historical trauma) of child sexual abuse as a potential contributor to suicide in our communities

- People identifying as LGBTQI:
  - are overrepresented in suicides
- should have representation on committees
- should be included in the census or similar survey
- need to be included in the Safer Schools Program
- need to have specific policy gaps identified such as lack of services
- should be included in all Suicide Prevention Plans

- Justice related programs should be praised, funded and rolled out nationally including:
  - #JustJustice
    - Justice reinvestment
    - Support programs inside prison
    - Post release mentoring
    - Restorative justice programs like Koori Court and Working on Sentencing in Adelaide
    - More support needed to address drug use

- Youth
  - State and National youth suicide prevention conferences should be supported
  - Pathways to higher education should be created through improved capacity of youth services
  - Secure safe houses for young children should be available in all locations
  - Local youth detention centres should be established to accommodate youth while waiting to attend court

- Annual national Indigenous suicide prevention conferences should be held as a means of maintaining focus on the issue and disseminating knowledge

- Ensure a strong contingent from Indigenous communities around Australia are at the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention conference

- There is a need to develop a funded Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Suicide Prevention Plan which clearly defines actions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people can, and will, undertake themselves, and role of government

- Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration should be prominent in recommendations.
Future Steps

There is no doubt that the Inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Suicide Prevention Conference was a success on many levels. The Indigenous governance protocols ensured that a culturally safe and welcoming space was created for people to discuss policy and share personal stories of trauma and loss in a supportive environment. The prioritising of Indigenous speakers and the mix of speaker selection and abstract submission promoted opportunities to highlight community led programs that are working. Such speakers are often restricted from presenting in conferences with strictly academic abstract guidelines and long lead times to submit. Further they often feel marginalised at mainstream conferences. Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) was represented on the Conference Advisory Committee, resulting in several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants being sponsored to attend the SPA National Conference in Canberra in July, 2016. A significant contribution to this support was made by the National Mental Health Commission who sought a mechanism to connect participants from the two conferences.

Participants generally felt well supported by the mix of options available through the Care and Safety Plan, in fact, a significant number of delegates specifically commented on the value of the Counsellors and Ngangkari.

Whilst every effort was made to ensure that the conference program provided opportunities for diverse voices and the representation of particularly vulnerable groups such as those who are gender and sexuality diverse, it is clear that a greater emphasis on youth is required in any future events. This may take the form of a Youth Summit which is programmed in parallel with the main conference, or overlaps in programing streams.

The conference was developed in a very short space of time compared to other national conferences of a similar size, and all processes including registration, bursary management, speaker management and venue management were administered inhouse by the ATSISPEP team. Voluntary assistance at the venue from IAHA and external volunteers was greatly appreciated and was essential to the smooth running of the conference.

The contracted timeframe meant that it was particularly difficult to manage the travel arrangements of bursary holders and speakers from such diverse parts of the country. In future events, timelines need to account for this and deadlines for bursary applications and abstract submissions should be much earlier in relation to the actual conference date.

Managing a large conference with a small team, some of whom had not worked on an event of such scale before, was sometimes difficult, although the final outcome was very positive. It would be preferable to manage future conferences through a Professional Conference Organiser, with an internal staff member taking responsibility for the internal event management requirements.

The success of this conference emphasised the need for future events to be held on a regular basis, preferably every two years. Governance must continue to be Indigenous led, with a consortium of organisations being formed who will contribute seed funding and collaborate through a
Memorandum of Understanding to host future events. Leadership will remain with the University of Western Australia.

Representatives from New Zealand and their organizing committee attended and presented at the Alice Springs conference. Participants were encouraged to attend the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference held in New Zealand in June. During this, hosting of the next conference was passed on to the Australian team, and accepted on its behalf by Professor Tom Calma.

Work to establish a consortium, and to start arrangements which will see both a national and international Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference held side by side in two years’ time has commenced. This process will utilise the successes and learnings from the Inaugural National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference to create even more opportunities and positive outcomes in the future.

Michael Naera, organiser of the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference, passes on a carved stone, blessed by a tribal Elder, to Professor Tom Calma signifying Australia as 2018 hosts.
APPENDICES

Appendix A  Conference Program
Appendix B  Care and Safety Plan
Appendix C  Croakey Social Media Report
Appendix D  Interviewee Media Brief
Appendix E  Facilitator Reports from Concurrent Sessions

Performers of Drum Atweme
Artwork by Jade Dolman. The circles and dots represent water holes and the lines represent the movement of the river.
## PROGRAM

### WEDNESDAY 4 MAY 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.00pm</td>
<td>Conference Registration open</td>
<td>Foyer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9.00am – 3.00pm | PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP  
Workshop: LGBTQI meeting                                              | Boardroom               |
| 9.00am – 3.00pm | PRE-CONFERENCE MEETING  
National Empowerment Project meeting                                  | Ellery C                |
| 1.00pm – 4.00pm | PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP  
Art Workshop: Sponsored by IAHA                                         | Ellery A                |
| 5.00pm – 7.00pm | Welcome to Country  
Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation                                      |                         |
|             | Welcome Reception – Alice Springs Convention Centre                    |                         |
|             | MC: Professor Tom Calma AO  
Co-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group |                         |
|             | Cultural Activities – local entertainment                             |                         |
|             | Facilitator: Adele Cox                                                |                         |

### THURSDAY 5 MAY 2016

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.00am – 8.30am</td>
<td>Youth Breakfast</td>
<td>Tali Restaurant, Lasseters Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.30pm – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Conversations with Commissioner Helen Milroy (invitation only)</td>
<td>Boardroom</td>
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</table>
## THURSDAY 5 MAY 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.30am – 8.30am</td>
<td><strong>REGISTRATION</strong></td>
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</table>
| 8.30am – 10.00am | **Conference Opening**  
Facilitator: Adele Cox  
**Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony**  
Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation  
**Opening Address**  
Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs  
**Welcome to Delegates**  
**Professor Tom Calma AO**  
Co-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group  
William Tilmouth  
Chairperson, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress  
**1 minute’s silence to acknowledge those who have gone** |
| 10.00am – 10.30am | **MORNING TEA**   | Foyer                                      |
| 10.30am – 11.30am | **Update from the ATSISPEP Project**  
**Professor Tom Calma AO**  
Co-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group  
Professor Pat Dudgeon  
Project Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP)  
Richard Weston  
CEO, Healing Foundation  
**Rosalie Kunoth-Monks**  
Keynote speaker |
| 11.30am – 12.00pm | **QUESTIONS**                                                                 |
| 12.00pm – 1.00pm | **LUNCH**  
“Soul Hunter” film by Yolgnu youth and Elders |
### THURSDAY 5 MAY 2016 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>ROOM</th>
<th>FACILITATORS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00pm</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSIONS</strong></td>
<td>Ellery A</td>
<td>Tania Dalton, Rob McPhee, Glenis Grogan, Vicki O’Donnell, Counsellors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY BASED SOLUTIONS</strong></td>
<td>Ellery B</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ellery C</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ellery D</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Outside</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00pm -</td>
<td><em>Nothing for us, without us. Themes, Challenges and Solutions</em></td>
<td>Ellery A</td>
<td>Dameyon Bonson and Jay Delaney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellery B</td>
<td>Development of a Culturally Appropriate Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Conversations with the Ngangkari Healer Group</em></td>
<td>Ellery C</td>
<td>Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellery D</td>
<td>Fiona Livingstone and Nathaniel Blacklock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25pm -</td>
<td><em>Caring for Country, Caring For a Each Other</em></td>
<td>Ellery A</td>
<td>Uti Kulintjaku</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.50pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellery B</td>
<td>Ngangkari Healer Group</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Larrakia Healing Group</em></td>
<td>Ellery C</td>
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<td>Ellery D</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Crackerjack Education</em></td>
<td>Outside</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.50pm -</td>
<td><em>Lighting the Dark – Preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait</em></td>
<td>Ellery A</td>
<td>Jody Kopp and Natasha Abbott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15pm</td>
<td><em>Domestic Violence, Suicide and Aboriginal and Torres Strait</em></td>
<td>Ellery B</td>
<td>Vanessa Lee</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Panel Discussion: Racism and Suicide</em></td>
<td>Ellery C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Conference Dinner</em></td>
<td>Ellery D</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Outside</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.15pm</td>
<td>Questions, Discussions and Recommendations</td>
<td>Ellery A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30pm</td>
<td>Feedback from concurrent sessions</td>
<td>Ellery B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00pm</td>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON TEA</strong></td>
<td>Ellery C</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.30pm</td>
<td><strong>Panel Discussion: Racism and Suicide</strong></td>
<td>Ellery D</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.30pm</td>
<td><strong>CLOSE</strong></td>
<td>Outside</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td><strong>Conference Dinner</strong></td>
<td>Ellery A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lasseters Hotel Amphitheatre</strong></td>
<td>Ellery B</td>
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<td><strong>Lasseters Hotel Amphitheatre</strong></td>
<td>Ellery C</td>
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<td><strong>Lasseters Hotel Amphitheatre</strong></td>
<td>Ellery D</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Lasseters Hotel Amphitheatre</strong></td>
<td>Outside</td>
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## FRIDAY 6 MAY 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Adele Cox</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 9.15am – 9.45am | Stan Grant  
*Keynote Speaker*                                              | Conference Room |
| 9.45am – 10.00am  | Questions                                                             |              |
| 10.00am – 10.30am | MORNING TEA                                                        | Foyer        |
| 10.30am – 11.30am | CONCURRENT SESSIONS                                                  |              |
| DATA AND STATISTICS |                                 |              |
| PRISON AND ITS IMPACT |                                 |              |
| STOLEN GENERATIONS |                                 |              |
| INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS NZ |                                 |              |
| YARNING CIRCLE |                                 |              |
| ROOM          | Ellery A  
*FACILITATORS*: Donna Murray                                        |              |
|               | Ellery B  
*FACILITATORS*: Tom Calma                                           |              |
|               | Ellery C  
*FACILITATORS*: Benny Hodges                                        |              |
|               | Ellery D  
*FACILITATORS*: Dion Tatow                                          |              |
|               | Outside  
*FACILITATORS*: Kelleigh Ryan                                       |              |
| 10.30am – 10.45am  | Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council (KAMSC)  
*FACILITATORS*: Vicki O’Donnell and Professor Murray Chapman           |              |
| 10.45am – 11.00am  | Indigenous Suicide and Incarceration  
*FACILITATORS*: Mervyn Eades                                          |              |
| 11.00am – 11.15am  | #JustJustice  
*FACILITATORS*: Summer May Finlay                                   |              |
| 11.15am – 11.30am  | Questions, Discussions and Recommendations                          |              |
| 11.30am – 12.00pm  | Feedback from concurrent sessions                                    | Conference Room |
| 12.00pm – 1.00pm  | LUNCH                                                                |              |
### PROGRAM continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session Type</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00pm – 1.25pm</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
<td>Ellery A</td>
<td>Tom Brideson</td>
<td>Kimberley Empowerment Healing &amp; Leadership Program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellery B</td>
<td>Erin Lew Fatt</td>
<td>Yiriman Keeps Country Good so Young People are Healthy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellery C</td>
<td>Dion Tatow</td>
<td>Empowering Aboriginal Men and Women to Break Their Cycles of Abuse and Expressions of Lateral Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ellery D</td>
<td>Dameyon Bonson</td>
<td>Warringarri</td>
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<td>Outside</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yarning Circle Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.00pm – 1.25pm</td>
<td>Kimberley Empowerment &amp; Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program</td>
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<td>1.00pm – 1.25pm</td>
<td>Blank Page Summit</td>
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<td>1.25pm – 1.50pm</td>
<td>LIGHT Ponds</td>
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<td>1.50pm – 2.15pm</td>
<td>First Peoples Disability Network</td>
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<td>1.50pm – 2.15pm</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.50pm – 2.15pm</td>
<td>Glenis Grogan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.50pm – 2.15pm</td>
<td>Ngoobbi Community Services Indigenous Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.15pm – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Questions, Discussions and Recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30pm – 3.00pm</td>
<td>Feedback from concurrent sessions</td>
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<td>Dameyon Bonson</td>
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<td>Ngangkari Healing Session – Men’s and Women’s healing sessions</td>
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Transgender (LGBQT) people experience far greater prejudice and discrimination than any other group. They have recorded higher rates of suicide deaths, attempts, and ideation than heterosexual Native American and LGBQT people of any other racial/ethnic backgrounds in the United States. This too is the same narrative coming out of Canada, Alaska and New Zealand.

In 2015, a National Advisory Committee was brought together to provide expert advice to ATISISPEP. Dameyon Bonson was invited to participate and imbued knowledges of issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders diverse in gender and sexuality (LGBTQ) for ATISISPEP. The themes of the roundtable report, current challenges and issues, plus solutions as well work toward preventing suicide will be presented by Dameyon during this session.
RESTORING THE CIRCLE – CULTUREGERATION
NOLA TURNER-JENSEN AND CRACKERJACK EDUCATION

Discover the Ancient core values of this continent and the wide ranging impacts they have when working and building relationships with the Indigenous people of Australia and the rest of the world. Parents from Indigenous backgrounds, historically were made to feel that to help their child adapt to the dominant/progressive culture of their countries colonists, they should drop their cultural practices and values. However, we now know the reverse is true. Having a strong cultural identity is a protective factor in the prevention of mental health issues in young people, homelessness and crime. This means that children who understand and are proud of why the family does things the way they do (e.g. the core values and traditions behind cultural practices) will be less susceptible to these problems. In our sessions comparisons between both traditional and new ways are explored to assist Indigenous participants to understand their values and beliefs and why we are who we are.

CULTURALLY SAFE PRACTICE – SUICIDE STORY
JODY KOPP AND NATASHA ABBOTT

Suicide remains the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15 to 44. In 2012, the suicide rate for Indigenous people aged 15-24 in the Northern Territory was 50.9 deaths per 100,000 people.

Today, Indigenous leaders and advocates across Australia are highlighting cultural connection as the missing link in current suicide prevention programs. This echoes wisdom from the 2013 Elders’ Report, “The only way forward is to adopt a ‘community centered’ approach to healing led by local Elders…”

Suicide Story is a 3 day workshop grounded in both ways learning. Developed in partnership with Aboriginal leaders from the NT, the program is delivered by a group of trained Aboriginal Facilitators, to build the capacity of remote Aboriginal communities to identify and respond to crises and prevent suicide in a culturally safe and accessible way. The program centered on combining the specificities of Aboriginal protocols with evidence-based practices. Suicide Story has been delivering culturally safe suicide prevention workshops throughout the NT for the past 4 years. Post workshop evaluations in 2015 identified that 100% of participants reported they felt both “strong enough to support someone thinking of suicide” and “the workshop strengthened their emotional spirit (fire)”. Clearly, future suicide prevention practice needs to centre on culturally relevant and safe programs to end this tragic cycle of Aboriginal suicide in Australia.


DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE ABORIGINAL SUICIDE PREVENTION SKILLS PROGRAM
FIONA LIVINGSTONE AND NATHANIEL BLACKLOCK

The Farm-Link Project is a rural suicide prevention program, funded by the Commonwealth government and operating since 2007 throughout the New England North West Region of NSW. The project is managed by the University of Newcastle – Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH). The project aims to prevent suicide, primarily through gatekeeper suicide prevention training at the community level. In 2012, Farm-Link developed and piloted a 4-hour Suicide Prevention Skills workshop (SPSW), specifically for the rural community. Since its inception, it has been delivered to 24 different communities, and to over 1400 participants. Farm-Link’s primary SPSW facilitator has a lived experience of suicide, which has forged her strong commitment to the work. During the delivery of SPSW, a need was identified for a culturally appropriate suicide prevention program for Aboriginal people. No such community training was found to be available in the area covered by Farm-Link, however a demand for such training was apparent. With considerable consultation with Aboriginal Elders, community leaders and health workers and using an iterative process, a culturally sensitive Aboriginal SPSW (ASPSW) was developed from our standard SPSW. Key changes were made to both content and mode of delivery. It was recognised that an Aboriginal co-facilitator was pivotal to achieve authenticity and effectiveness. ASPSW is an evidence-based suicide prevention program that is founded on health-related protective factors that are tailored to Aboriginal people. The aim of this program is to increase and inspire changes around health, to encourage help seeking, and to provide participants with the skills and confidence required to assist someone in need. This presentation will discuss the strategies used to create and deliver this workshop in its pilot form. Additionally, it will provide an overview of the workshop’s content. Lastly, it will discuss the basic evaluation that is attached to the program, and the direction and future of the ASPSW.
ABSTRACTS continued

PROGRAMS THAT WORK – STANDBY WEST KIMBERLEY
MICKLO MCKENZIE AND JACOB TYNDALL

Working with suicide loss within Aboriginal Communities in the West Kimberley, highlighting the positive work done with Mowanjum Community members, as a case study:

• As part of the crisis response service extended by StandBy, promote conversations that change the language around suicide.
• Challenging myths, beliefs and values pertaining to suicide in a supportive environment.
• Highlight the importance of ‘back to country’ as a healing initiative and cultural tool and in doing so canvass the concept of Liyarn.

• Encourage community participation in activities addressing issues identified within community through role play, bush camps and other culturally inclusive exercises.
• Within a strength based approach, utilise existing service providers and available agencies to promote and coordinate a holistic service.
• Actively engage established community groups such as Ranger Groups and Women’s Centers etc to identify strong and committed community members, to train and reinforce the positive message about after suicide support for local community members, in the handover to local communities following StandBy’s initial crisis response.

UTI KULINTJAKU
NGANGKARI HEALER GROUP

The Uti Kulintjaku (UK) Project is an innovative, Aboriginal-led mental health literacy project initiated by NPY Women’s Council (NPYWYC) in 2012. Senior Anangu (Aboriginal) women were concerned about the wellbeing of the young people in their communities and wanted to take action. Mental health issues affect many families, and all communities, in the NPYWC region in Central Australia.

‘Uti kulintjaku’ is a Pitjantjatjara phrase that means ‘to think and understand clearly’. The UK Project takes a strengths-based approach to building bi-cultural mental health literacy for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health professionals. The group does this by coming together in a series of workshops that open up mental health concepts from both Aboriginal and Western perspectives – building the capacity of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants. The knowledge that comes out of these workshops is then shared with western health professionals as well as Aboriginal families and communities in the area – largely through resources.

Innovative resources: A series of language-based, novel resources have been developed including graphic posters, emotional literacy animations and magnets, and the Uti Kulintjaku App. These resources are being used in a wide range of settings and are supporting frontline workers and families to more easily and effectively talk about mental health and wellbeing within communities.

The UK Project is highly regarded by a range of stakeholders, including Aboriginal families, for the integrity, authenticity and relevance of its work and its resources. In 2015 the UK Project won the NT Administrator Medal for Excellence in Primary Health Care and the CRANAplus Collaborative Team Award.

ANALYSIS OF RISING INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUICIDE IN THE KIMBERLEY
VICKI O’DONNELL/ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MURRAY CHAPMAN

This presentation draws on data compiled by KMHDS, the WA Kimberley Police and Standby Response over a 10 year period, representing the most comprehensive dataset for both reported suicide and also suicidality related behaviours throughout the region. The mechanism by which this collaboration was made possible, and an outline of the inter-service processes developed will be covered. Results of our preliminary analysis will be presented, including detailed descriptions of the distribution of these behaviours by age, sex, location and season. What will become evident is a profoundly worrying pattern, and a serious worsening of the situation. These results will also be contextualised nationally and internationally, and there will be a focus on some of the likely driving forces and the local responses.

#JUSTJUSTICE
SUMMER MAY FINLAY

#JustJustice is a crowd-funded campaign that has been producing a series of articles at the social journalism project Croakey.org. The campaign highlights the wide-ranging health impacts of over-incarceration upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities, including social and emotional wellbeing. The campaign seeks to add balance to the often negative mainstream media coverage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice issues.

The project developed out of conversations with Aboriginal health leaders, including Dr Tom Calma and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda. #JustJustice takes a solutions-focused approach, and identifies ways that politicians, policy makers and the wider community can tackle over-incarceration.

The #JustJustice project is informed by a decolonising methodology. Since its conception #JustJustice has published over 50 articles with contributions from a range of different non-government organisations, lawyers, researchers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, health professionals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice advocates.
from across the country. It has also published YouTube clips and internet memes, one of which had more than 1,000 shares via NACCHO’s Facebook page. The campaign is also contributing to the development of an online community with a shared interest in tackling this issue. Twitter analytics sourced via the Symplur site show that between the project launch on 1 April 2015 and 16 March, there were almost 74 million Twitter impressions for #JustJustice, and that 3,321 participants have been contributing to #JustJustice discussions and helping to disseminate some of the key themes. The campaign has also generated wider publicity and media coverage of #JustJustice themes.

JUSTICE ISSUES
HEATHER AGIUS
I have been dealing with justice issues for the last 20 years and recognising the injustices with the Aboriginal community. I have seen the unjust results of a failed system that are the incarceration of my people within that failed system. I have become involved as a grandmother and as a visiting inspector who visits the prisons and writes reports about complaints and issues around health and mental health, identifying people who may be at risk of suicide. I am also a visitor for the Aboriginal Legal Rights movement and visit Aboriginal people who have been arrested and need cultural support.

Having had two sons in jail for the past 20 years, I thought they were at risk of suicide, hence my involvement in justice issues. I just want to add that I have 50 Grandchildren and great grandchildren whom I don’t want to see in prison. I want to leave a legacy to my grandchildren and great grandchildren so they know that I made a bit of a difference. I do this for them and for my community so they don’t end up in a system that fails.

MAORI APPROACHES TO CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE POSTVENTION SUPPORT
MICHAEL NAERA AND TE PAE FITZEL (TE RUNANGA O NGĀTI PIKIAO TRUST)
The impact of suicide on Maori communities has a devastating effect on the health and wellbeing of tribal members and its community. Current postvention programmes are there to provide pathways to wellbeing but are they culturally appropriate? This presentation will enlarge the cultural factors required to address this question, as well as, provide indigenous solutions for supporting whānau (tribal family entities) through grief and loss.

WHANAU ORA PATHWAYS TO POSITIVELY SUPPORTING WHANAU THROUGH GRIEF AND LOSS
MOEWAKA TROTMAN AND PIP NEWTON
Whanau ora (tribal health) is a concept that has been around way before the arrival of pakeha (European settlers) to Aotearoa New Zealand. Yet in 2010 the New Zealand Government adopted the concept as a way of supporting Maori families via wellbeing frameworks rather than a deficit model of health. Therefore centralising efforts on strengths based approaches. Te Runanga o Ngati Pikiao Trust’s Whanau Ora Pae Arahia (Navigator) and iwi (tribal) education programme will present on the current programme they are delivering to support whanau who have experienced grief and loss from suicide; associated suicidal behaviours; and non-fatal suicidal attempts. This essentially is based on a collective response to supporting whanau to achieve their goals and aspirations.

KIMBERLEY EMPOWERMENT HEALING AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
VICKI MCKENNA AND BRENDAN COX
Consultations across the region to stimulate self-awareness of Aboriginal people resulted in the ‘Hear Our Voices’ report, published in 2012. This guided the SEWB unit to develop culturally appropriate and locally responsive strategies to assist participants in identifying opportunities and provide them with the tools to make more informed decisions to make their lives better and strengthen families and communities. The program is delivered 2 days per week over 4 weeks and comprises modules on Self, Family and Community with topics and sub-topics such as Who am I and Where Do I Come From?, positive parenting, the change process and how to address lateral violence in the community. A train-the-trainer workshop is offered to participants to enable them to deliver the program on their community.

Since 2012, the program has been delivered in towns and remote communities across the region with a high degree of success. I have witnessed a significant number of people whose lives have changed dramatically after engaging in the program.

YIRIMAN KEEPS COUNTRY GOOD SO YOUNG PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY
The Yiriman Project was set up in 2000 and initially based in Jarlmadangah Burru Aboriginal Community. The program is currently run out of Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia and ‘sits under’ the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC).
ABSTRACTS continued

DADIRRI AND DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY (DBT) IN REDfern: DEEP LISTENING, URBAN PEACE
KEN ZULUMOVSKI

Gamarada creates a safe, supportive environment through Indigenous protocols of acknowledgement, exploring strengths and sense of purpose, and community development.

The team at Gamarada Universal Indigenous Resources (GUIR) are developing programs and workshops that explore parallels between Indigenous methodologies for healing and the work of Marsha Linehan, founder of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), ‘dialectical’ meaning the practice of holding opposites together to integrate tension, emphasising both validation and change. DBT is internationally recognised as an empirically supported treatment for people at risk of harm to self and others, and treatment takes place within the community through skills training, focussing on self-management and training families and carers in skills to manage crisis and find a way forward. Non-reaction and wisdom practices are common to both DBT and the Gamarada programs. In 2010 Gamarada was awarded the NSW Premiers Excellence Award for Leadership, Building Indigenous Communities.

NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT PROJECT, NGOONBI CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
GLENIS GROGAN

Ngoonbi, in partnership with Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHHC) and the University of Western Australia (UWA), School of Indigenous Studies, delivers the National Empowerment Project (NEP) Cultural, Social and Emotional Wellbeing (CSWEB) program to members of the Kuranda and Cherbourg Queensland Communities. Ngoonbi has a key role in the development of the NEP as a universal strategy to promote cultural, social and emotional wellbeing and assists in reducing community stress and suicide in Aboriginal Communities.

EMPOWERING ABORIGINAL MEN AND WOMEN TO BREAK THEIR CYCLES OF ABUSE AND EXPRESSIONS OF LATERAL VIOLENCE
CHERI YAVU-KAMA-HARATHUNIAN

Lateral Violence is the silent, hidden, uncovered and unconscious Violence that has been passed down in the oral histories of many of our people. So many of our people do not know it exists and in many instances it lies dormant in a person’s psyche. More than likely, if Lateral Violence is not firstly understood, recognition of the cultural nuances of violence in people’s daily life will be ignored. Addressing the cultural nuances of Lateral Violence in Aboriginal families has to be recognised so that as a people we look into our cultural ways of healing to find an answer. Otherwise we will see violence such as suicide, domestic and family violence escalate into the next generation.

Because of the colonial past, and how our ancestors were taught to survive the traumas of first contact, Lateral Violence, began to entangle itself within other forms of violence. Because it is not recognised, understood, or acknowledged and it is only now being documented by courageous Aboriginal academics, professionals, and researchers we are beginning to understand it from an Aboriginal perspective. Uncovering Lateral Violence enables Elders, grassroots community people, victims and perpetrators to talk about it and a picture is emerging as to just how powerful the manifestations of Lateral Violence are.

LIGHT PONDS
KANAT WANO

Giving hope and prosperity to our First Nations peoples’ families and communities from a universal lifestyle of approaches and activities. Creating opportunities for light (loving individuals giving hope together). The greatest love being the love of self of who we are and where we come from to live life for ourselves and others. A universal approach to reduce suicide in our communities.

SUICIDE, HARMFUL SUBSTANCE USE AND THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS
EDWARD WILKES AND DENNIS GRAY
NATIONAL DRUG RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CURTIN UNIVERSITY

Suicide is a leading cause of death among First Australians. Both research and administrative data demonstrate that a significant proportion of those deaths are related to the harmful use of alcohol and other drugs (aod). However, both are socially determined.

We review the available evidence and conclude that what is lacking is not knowledge of how to address these problems but the political will to do so.
WARRINGARRI
CAROL HAPKE AND REGINA SEBASTIAN

Carol Hapke is the Coordinator of the Community Action Plan (CAP) of the Kununurra Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation. Through her connections as a local woman she uses her family networks to work as a link to connect her people with the appropriate services in Kununurra.

CAP is a program that works directly with Aboriginal people who are either at risk of suicide or with those families who have lost members through suicide.

One of her main focus is to BREAK THE SILENCE ON SUICIDE and to pass on preventative techniques and adapt and provide education sessions on suicide prevention.

STRENGTHENING CULTURAL TRANSMISSION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY.
CASSE/RFDS - JAMIE MILLIER TJUPURULLA, MARTIN JUGADAI

Suicide is about emotional pain, a cry for help, a not belonging, feeling alone, alienated, uncontained and a wish to die to obtain peace and solutions. There is a very high suicide rate among young Aboriginal men. Suicide is preventable.

Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment (CASSE) has facilitated the emergence of the Men’s Tjilirra Movement in collaboration with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). The Tjilirra Men’s Movement is an innovative program which facilitates emotional health. The heart of the Men's Tjilirra Movement lies in Australia’s remote central and western desert region, in the communities of Haasts Bluff (Ikuntji), Mt Liebig (Watiyawanu), Kintore (Walanguru), Papunya (Warumpi) and Kiwikurra. Tjilirra are 60,000 years old. Tjilirra are traditional tools of ancient ceremony, Aboriginal dreamtime and law. The men of the western desert, many who were the last to cease living a nomadic lifestyle in the 1970s say “they are strong and proud” when they make them. Re-establishing a cycle that was on the brink of destruction, the elder men are again passing on their knowledge of making Tjilirra to the younger generation in recognition of the importance of Tjilirra to cultural, community and emotional wellbeing. Tjilirra symbolise being, continuity in being, affirmation of cultural worlds, kinship relationships, differences, identity, transmissions and transformations. With over 300 men variously engaged, tools are being made, large men’s meetings are being held talking about “the problem life” and community pularpa bringing families together singing and dancing the protection songs of country (in the face of suicide) and strengthening the kurruna mwarre spirit inside themselves. Tjilirra are tools for living in two very different worlds. Tjilirra are tools for empowerment, belonging, community connection and self-determination.

CASSE is a psychological not-for-profit organisation with the vision to change minds in order to save lives. CASSE aims to promote safe, supportive environments through psychoanalytic awareness. We focus on empowering people and communities to understand and work through their trauma (manifest by suicide, depression, violence, substance usage) by preserving and strengthening cultural life and capacity between the generations in a self-determining way. We have developed a mentalisation framework for presentations on violence and suicide.

HOPELESSNESS, HELPLESSNESS, HOMELESSNESS
CYNTHIA DEEBLE

The expectation is that participants will gain a better understanding of skills to manage individual’s anxiety when experiencing helplessness and hopelessness when faced with their most basic needs not being met according to Maslow’s hierarchy with cultural understanding of Aboriginal Australians and begin to examine and reflect on their own practices to achieve better outcomes with their Aboriginal patients/clients.

The workshop will explore the importance of understanding anxiety disorders and behaviours, the role of family and community and explore the historical perspective, trauma and identity and their relevance of a holistic approach.
PRESENTATION BIOGRAPHIES

NATASHA ABBOTT

Natasha Abbott is a western Arrernte woman from Wallace Rock Hole. She has worked extensively in remote locations in Central And Western Australia, which gives her a deep understanding of the issues and complexities that face Aboriginal people living in remote locations. She has been a business woman of considerable repute and has helped Aboriginal people into employment through education, training and support. Recently she has been working in the mining sector engaging Aboriginal people to work in the mines. She has worked in Community Development with Central Land Council, working with community to develop projects funded by Royalty monies that would benefit the community. She is number 4 in a family of 6 siblings of the Abbott family and has 3 sisters and two brothers.

SCOTT AVERY

Scott Avery is the Policy and Research Director at the First Peoples Disability Network (Australia), a Non-Government Organisation constituted by and for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with disability. He has an extensive career in public policy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, health, disability, justice and education. He is a passionate and active advocate for social justice working within the non-government sector.

DAMEYON BONSON

Dameyon Bonson is a First Nation Australian of both Indigenous and Caucasian heritage. Dameyon is a Social Warrior (Social Work) with an interest in decolonising the academy. He is a contributing author at The Good Men Project, Aboriginal Service Officer (men’s health) at WA County Health Service, Male Health Reference Group Member at Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples with disability. He has an extensive career in public policy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, health, disability, justice and education. He is a passionate and active advocate for social justice working within the non-government sector.

PROFESSOR TOM CALMA AO

Professor Calma is an Aboriginal elder of the Kungarakan tribal group and Chancellor of the University of Canberra. He has been involved in Indigenous affairs at a local, community, state, territory, national and international level and worked in the public sector for 38 years. Respected for his inspirational and inclusive advocacy for human rights and social justice, Professor Calma has dedicated his life to improving the lives of all Australians and particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. For the past four decades he has championed the importance of empowerment – a passion that runs through his work in education, training, employment, health, justice reinvestment and development.

INDI CLARKE

Indi Clarke is a proud 23-year-old Muthi Muthi and Lardil man, currently employed with Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) in Mildura as a Youth and Community Engagement Facilitator. Within his role, he works on a range of MDAS projects including the MDAS Cultural Program, Mentor Program, the Volunteer Program and also on specialist events. Achievements and highlights of his life and career so far, include participating in the Indigenous performance of the 2006 Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony, participant of the 2009 Kokoda Youth Mentoring Program, Koorie Youth Council Member and awarded the 2016 Mildura Young Citizen of the Year as part of the Mildura Australia Day awards.

ADELE COX

Adele Cox is a Bunuba and Gija Woman from the Kimberley region of Western Australia. She has spent the majority of her early working life in The Kimberley region in media and in suicide prevention and since 2001 has been in Perth. She has worked at the Telethon Kids Institute as a senior Research Officer on numerous projects including Indigenous Suicide Prevention and Maternal and Child Health Research. She is a current member of the WA Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention, and the newly established National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health group.

TANIA DALTON (JONES)

Tania Dalton (Jones) is a Gunditjmara/Wathaurong woman from Warrnambool and now Geelong in the southwest region of Victoria. Tania is a registered psychologist with a Masters of Behavioural and Health Science from Sydney University. Tania has contributed to Indigenous issues at local, state and national levels through membership of a variety of Boards and reference groups. Tania is the current Chair of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Assoc (AIPA) since 2013, National Coordinator of the AIPA Cultural Competence Project since 2010 and a member and advisor of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Alliance (NATSIWA).

CYNTHIA DEEBLE

Cynthia Deeble has been an Aboriginal mental health practitioner and therapy facilitator with Peel and Rockingham, Kwinana (PaRK) for more than 5 years. Her work for PaRK included the redevelopment of a new program for Dialectical Personality Therapy (DBT). In addition, Cynthia Deeble has more than 16 years’ experience in the education sector and currently is involved in presenting mental health sessions to Aboriginal students pursuing careers in mental health. Her academic background is in health science, and education, currently she is pursuing her PhD.
**PROFESSOR PAT DUDGEON**

Professor Dudgeon is from the Bardi people of the Kimberley. She is a research fellow and psychologist known for her leadership in Indigenous higher education and mental health. Currently she is a Research Fellow at the School of Indigenous Studies, University of Western Australia. Her roles include Commissioner, National Mental Health Commission; co-chair with Dr Tom Calma, of the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group; and chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group from State and National Mental Health Commissions Australia.

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**MERVYN EADES**

Mervyn was born in Cranbrook, in the South West of Western Australia. Mervyn was in and out of Western Australian juvenile detention facilities and prisons from the age of 13 and until he was 31. At 44 years of age, he now runs Ngalla Maya in an effort to help ex-offenders successfully reintegrate into society.

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**JOSIE FARRER**

Elected to State Parliament in March 2013, Josie is the first local female Kimberley Aboriginal MP to represent the region. Her maiden speech was exceptionally powerful as she spoke about the high rates of suicide, economic development, housing and job creation in the Kimberley. Josie resides in Halls Creek with her husband Mario Jazyk where they raised their 13 children. They now have 52 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. Josie has been an active member of numerous regional boards including, director of the Kimberley Land Council, Kimberley Language Resource Centre and Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre, Deputy Chair of the Kimberley Development Commission, Chairperson of the Regional Road Group, Halls Creek Shire Councillor and Halls Creek Shire President.

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**TE PÆE AKURANGI FITZELL**

Te Pae is a Suicide Prevention Project Leader in Rotorua New Zealand. Te Pae has a passion for working with our youth, to empower them to lead the way in Suicide Prevention. This year, she is co-ordinating the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference alongside colleague, Michael Naera.

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**CAROL HAPKE**

Carol Hapke is a Minwoong woman from the East Kimberley where she was born and raised. She has worked all her life to improve conditions for her people. Carol was primarily educated in Kununurra and secondary educated in Perth.

In 1985 she was recruited as a trainee with the Department of Employment Education and Training and continued to work with the department for a further eight years. From 1993 to 1998 she worked with the Department of Child Protection as a Child Protection Officer. She then spent the next five years working with her people in preparing for the Minwoong and Gadjerong Native Title trials. Carol worked with her Elders in establishing the Gawoolng’ Yawoodeng Women’s Refuge, which is now Aboriginal owned, managed and staffed by Aboriginal women. Carol now works with the Kununurra Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation as the Coordinator of the Community Action Plan (CAP).

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**SUMMER MAY FINLAY**

Summer is a Yorta Yorta Woman who grew up in Lake Macquarie near Newcastle. She has worked in Aboriginal affairs at the national level and has strong professional connections across the country in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service sector. She specializes in health policy, qualitative research and communications. Summer is a writer with Croakey and is the Co-Convener of the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Special Interest Group an Associate Consultant with Cox Inall and Ridgeway and is an Honorary Associate at Sydney University.

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**STAN GRANT**

Stan Grant is a multi-award winning current affairs host, author and adventurer. Stan Grant’s Aboriginal heritage shaped his dynamic, resilient personality. Born in Griffith in south-west New South Wales, in 1963, Stan Grant’s mother is from the Kamilaroi people and his father is of the Wiradjuri. Stan spent most of his childhood on the road living in small towns and Aboriginal communities across outback NSW. His father was an itinerant saw-miller who worked when and where he could. Stan moved so often he attended 12 different schools before he was in his teens. Stan is passionate about justice and humanity. His years of international reporting has given him a deep understanding of how the world works. He is deeply immersed in the politics and history of Asia and the Middle East. He can link the importance of leadership and the impact of history and above all believes in the power and resilience of people. Stan is married to ABC Sports Broadcaster, Tracey Holmes and has four children. He lives in Sydney.
**PROFESSOR DENNIS GRAY**

Professor Dennis Gray is a Deputy Director at the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University, and a leader of the Institute’s Aboriginal Research Program. He is an eminent researcher in this area and has a long history of conducting collaborative research with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. Professor Gray has published extensively on Aboriginal alcohol and other drug issues and has been invited to give presentations on his research in various national and international forums.

**GLENIS GROGAN**

Glenis Grogan is a Kuku Yalanji woman from the Kuranda Aboriginal community in far north Queensland. She also has strong connections to the Djabugay Dirri and Takalaka people. Glenis is the coordinator of the National Empowerment Project, Cultural, Social and Emotional Wellbeing program in Kuranda and Cherbourg.

A descendant of the Mona Mona Mission (approximately 45 kms from Kuranda) and current Deputy Chairperson of the Mona Mona Bulmba Aboriginal Corporation, she was part of the group’s successful reclamation of the mission and its surrounding land and they now hold 1610 hectares on behalf of all descendants. Working as a private consultant, Glenis’ experience is mostly in the areas of Aboriginal health and education and she is currently working with several Aboriginal Corporations and Native Title prescribed body corporates.

**TRACEY JERRI**

Tracey is a transgender woman from the community of Charters Towers. I recognise myself as a Gudjala woman. I have fostered children from many backgrounds and cultures. I have received recognition by the former Queensland premier Peter Beattie and the Minister for Child Safety for my ongoing work as a foster parent. I have spent many years working in the homeless sector, with work focused on domestic violence. I am actively involved as a community member.

**MARTIN JUGADAI**

Martin Jugadai is a Ngangkari (traditional healer) and a Cultural Consultant with the Royal Flying Doctor Rural and Remote Mental Health Service and also attends the Batchelor Institute. Based in Haasts Bluff, he also works with the communities of Papunya, Mt Liebig and Kintore. Martin was recognised as a Ngangkari at the age of 14 and has been under the guidance of his teachers ever since, constantly increasing his knowledge and skills to treat Aboriginal people with physical and mental health issues. The Tjiirra Project was an idea that Martin had for some time as a way to engage young men. “It is important for our young men to learn about traditional culture and skills, to keep our culture alive and strong into the future”.

**JODY KOPP**

Jody Kopp is a Traditional Owner of the Arrente people of the Alice Springs Region. She is happily married and is the proud mother of three absolutely gorgeous children. Jody is very passionate about suicide prevention and has been involved in Suicide Story since 2013. She is the current Chair of the Suicide Story Aboriginal Advisory Group that oversees and supports the implementation of the Program on behalf of the Mental Health Association of Central Australia. Jody has immense knowledge skills and expertise in working with Aboriginal communities in Family Wellbeing, drug and alcohol, education and suicide prevention.

**ROSALIE KUNOTH-MONKS**

Rosalie Kunoth-Monks is an Amatjere and Arrernte woman born in 1937 in the heart of the continent, at Arapunya. Rosalie came to international attention at age 18, in the lead role for the 1955 film Jedda. Rosalie has dedicated her life to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights struggle. She spent ten years in Melbourne working with the fledgling Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Subsequently Rosalie returned to Alice Springs to work with the Aboriginal Hostels and then the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service and thereafter with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. In 2014, Rosalie was awarded the Dr Mandawuy Yunupingu Human Rights Award at the first ever National Indigenous Human Rights Awards. In 2015, Rosalie was a finalist for Australian of the Year after being awarded Northern Territorian of the Year. Rosalie is the incumbent NAIDOC female Person of the Year.

**DUWAN LEE**

Duwan Lee is a traditional healer, who has spent his life learning a wide range of healing modalities. He works with Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients, supporting them to heal from trauma. As a community worker, he has worked in remote communities, and as a founding member of the Larrakia Healing Group, he is training organisations to become more traditionally and trauma informed. He is also a successful artist involved in many public art projects.

**MARTIN JUGADAI**

Martin Jugadai is a Ngangkari (traditional healer) and a Cultural Consultant with the Royal Flying Doctor Rural and Remote Mental Health Service and also attends the Batchelor Institute. Based in Haasts Bluff, he also works with the communities of Papunya, Mt Liebig and Kintore. Martin was recognised as a Ngangkari at the age of 14 and has been under the guidance of his teachers ever since, constantly increasing his knowledge and skills to treat Aboriginal people with physical and mental health issues. The Tjiirra Project was an idea that Martin had for some time as a way to engage young men. “It is important for our young men to learn about traditional culture and skills, to keep our culture alive and strong into the future”.

**JAMIE MILLER TJUPURULLA**

Jamie Millier Tjuparrulla is the Program Manager for the Men’s Tjiirra Movement. Jamie has lived and worked in the communities of the western desert in the Luritja-Pintupi region for over 16 years, speaks the local language and has worked with men on making cultural tools, establishing strong connections while spending much of his free time learning from the Elders woodcraft techniques and cultural expectations around how traditional tools are used.
JUNE MILLS
Gunluckinimul June Mills is a Larrakia Elder, artist, musician and social worker with a long history of advocacy and involvement in advancing social justice and wellbeing for Larrakia and other Indigenous peoples. She has an extensive knowledge and experience as an Elder working in the field of healing and trauma recovery work in her community. June is a lore woman who is called in on matters of cultural importance, eg. funerals and family issues. She has been accepted into the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Trauma Recovery at Wollongong University, where she also will be co-presenting the Caring for country, caring for each other resource to over 70 students from across Australia.

VICKI O’DONNELL
Vicki is an Aboriginal woman born and raised in Derby. Vicki was the CEO of the Derby Aboriginal Health Service for 12 years and is now the CEO of the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service, the regional health body for the Kimberley region providing support to its member services. Through this position, Vicki has excelled in advancing and advocating for Aboriginal people throughout the Kimberley. Her passion for Aboriginal Health has been noted at the regional, state and national level.

WINTHROP PROFESSOR JILL MILROY AM
Professor Milroy is from the Palyku people in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Professor Milroy is Dean of the School of Indigenous Studies and Executive Director of the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at the University of Western Australia. She has more than 30 years experience in Indigenous higher education developing university pathways, programs and support services for Indigenous students as well as a range of Indigenous curriculum and research initiatives. She has served on a number of national policy advisory bodies including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council. Her key research interest is in Aboriginal knowledge, story systems and the rights of Aboriginal children to be born into stories. In 2011 Professor Milroy was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of her services to Indigenous education.

GLEN PEARSON
Glenn Pearson, a Noonygar man from Western Australia and father of five, is the Manager of Aboriginal Health at the Telethon Kids Institute. He is also a member of the Health Consumer Council of WA, Curtin University’s Human Research Ethics Committee and the Institute’s Community and Consumer Participation Advisory Council. His area of research interest includes Aboriginal Health and Emotional Wellbeing, Aboriginal Research Methodologies and Policy and Advocacy.

PROFESSOR HELEN MILROY
Professor Helen Milroy is a descendant of the Palyku people of the Pilbara region of Western Australia born and educated in Perth. She studied Medicine at UWA, worked as a General Practitioner and Consultant in Childhood Sexual Abuse at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children for several years before completing specialist training in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Helen is a Royal Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse which is being conducted for the next three years. Until February 2013, Helen held the positions of Winthrop Professor and Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health at UWA.

MAPHI RAHARUHI
Mapihi is the programme lead and Te Rau Matatini who has been funded to deliver the Waka Hourua National Maori & Pasifika Suicide Prevention programme for vulnerable communities. Over an eight year period Mapihi has worked with families, communities, elders, decision makers, both government and non-government on developing community strategies, initiatives and activities that promote family and community focused solutions and safe responses to suicide and the impacts of suicide.

MICHAEL NAERA
Michael has made significant contributions for improving mental health services and suicide prevention strategies and activities for Māori across Aotearoa. Michael is also coordinating the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference, 2016 in Rotorua, New Zealand.

TAUTO SANSBURY
Tauto is a proud Narungga man from South Australia’s Yorke Peninsula. He has more than 35 years’ experience as an advocate for Aboriginal people across all areas. He worked closely with Elliott Johnston, QC, on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and led both the National and South Australian Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees for more than 10 years, monitoring the implementation of the RCIADIC recommendations across Australia.
SENATOR THE HON. NIGEL SCULLION

Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, is an Australian politician. He has been a Country Liberal Party member of the Australian Senate for the Northern Territory since November 2001. He sits with the National Party in the Senate, and has been the Leader of the Nationals in the Senate since 2013; having previously served in that role between 2007 and 2008; and as Deputy Leader of the National Party between 2007 and 2013. Minister Scullion has been the Minister for Indigenous Affairs since 18 September 2013, first in the Abbott Government and then the Turnbull Government.

GRACELYN SMALLWOOD

Associate Professor Gracelyn Smallwood has been a tireless advocate for improved outcomes in Indigenous Health for over forty years. One of the few employment options open to Aboriginal women in Townsville in the early 1970s – Gracelyn has championed the improvement of health, in particular Indigenous Health and HIV-AIDS prevention. Associate Professor Smallwood currently works at the largely Indigenous Cleveland Youth Detention Centre as nurse and mentor, and at Townsville Hospital as a nurse and midwife. She is an Associate Professor and Indigenous Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor at James Cook University.

DION TATOW

Dion Tatow is Aboriginal (Iman and Wadja) and South Sea Islander (Ambrym Island, Vanuatu). Dion is currently the Senior Policy Officer – Mental Health with the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council. Dion has a Bachelor of Business degree and a Graduate Certificate in Health Service Management. Dion has worked in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health for 20 years for both the Commonwealth (OATSIH) and State Governments (Queensland Health) and for the past 9 years at QAHC. His roles have focused on policy and program development, implementation and evaluation, with a particular focus on social and emotional wellbeing/mental health and sexual health/blood borne viruses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

WILLIAM TILMOUTH

William Tilmouth was born in Alice Springs and is of Anemite descent. A member of the stolen generations, William was taken to Croker Island where he lived and attended school with many other children sent there as a result of Government policy of that era. In 1967 he was moved off the mission to Darwin, and in 1969 returned to Alice Springs. He attended the Aboriginal Community College in Adelaide in 1974 and worked in many jobs in South Australia. He returned to Alice Springs in 1980. William has worked in various Government and Aboriginal organisations and was elected to the Central Australian ATSIC Regional Chair in the 1980s. William is now the Chairperson of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, an Aboriginal community controlled primary health care service located in the heart of Alice Springs and also provides primary health care services in partnership with local leaders in six surrounding remote Aboriginal communities.

NOLA TURNER-JENSEN

As a proud Wiradjuri (Weir rad jury) Australian women, Nola is committed to positive change for all Australians. After a career as a community based Youth and Social Worker she witnessed firsthand how a loss of culture is a loss too much to bear for many young Aboriginal men and women and their families. Nola and a committed team have undertaken research for the past 5 years to try and develop practical models or frameworks to capture, maintain and pass on traditional knowledge and values to all Australian future generations.

ROZ WALKER

Associate Professor Roz Walker is a Senior Researcher at the Telethon Kids Institute. She has a PhD in critical social science, “Transformative Strategies in Indigenous Education: Decolonisation and Positive Social Change”, and was a Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Curtin Indigenous Research Centre at Curtin University for seven years. Associate Professor Walker’s principal areas of investigation involve research in Indigenous health and social mental health and wellbeing, and early intervention and prevention initiatives to strengthen Aboriginal capability and capacity building across the life course.

KANAT WANO

Kanat is a direct descendant of the San Sep Clan of the MERIAM Nation (aka Murray Islands Torres Strait Islands) and her waters. He proudly wears the tribal Dhari (headress) of the Komet tribe. A traditional custodian &owner of Kerwaïd lands & villages. He is accepted by the local Townsville and wider Queensland Indigenous community. Strongly advocating & representing de-colonised attitudes and values as himself, a colonised man.

RICHARD WESTON

Richard is a descendant of the Meriam people of the Torres Strait and has worked in Indigenous affairs for more than 20 years, 14 of these in Indigenous controlled health services in Far West NSW and Queensland. As CEO of the Healing Foundation since September 2010 Richard has overseen the strategic development of the organisation which has supported more than 135 culturally strong, community led Indigenous healing projects around Australia.
TED WILKES
Ted Wilkes is a Nyungar man from Western Australia. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Science and his professional background includes working for the Western Australia Museum, the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University of Technology, and sixteen years as the Director of the Derbal Yerrigan Aboriginal Health Service in Perth. He is currently employed at the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University where he is a leader of the Aboriginal Research Program and plays an active role in Aboriginal capacity building, and research and its application.

JOE WILLIAMS
Joe is a proud Wiradjuri Aboriginal man born in Cowra, raised in Wagga NSW, Australia. Joe played in the National Rugby League for South Sydney Rabbitohs, Penrith Panthers and Canterbury Bulldogs before switching to professional boxing in 2009. Joe is a 2x WBF World Jnr Welterweight champion and recently won the WBC Asia Continental Title. Joe now spends his time working to inspire youth and individuals through motivational speaking and running his charity, The Enemy Within. He has had his own battles, struggles and setbacks, which culminated in his own suicide attempt in 2012.

DR MARCUS WOOLUMBI WATERS
Dr Marcus Woolombi Waters is a Kamilaroi First Nation Aboriginal Australian who over the last three years has become one of the most read Indigenous social commentators in Australia. In 2014, Dr Marcus Woolombi Waters won the Australian Multicultural and Indigenous Media Award for Best Editorial Reporting, while writing for the National Indigenous Times.

His writing focuses on traditional ceremony, cultural maintenance and he often writes in his own Kamilaroi First Nation Aboriginal language. This has created a body of work that documents surviving Kamilaroi epistemologies essential to cultural maintenance and trans-generational pedagogy over tens of thousands of years old as a resistance strategy to neocolonialism.

His writing remains critical of neoliberal policy and austerity politics that continue to have devastating effect on Aboriginal peoples and their communities across the world. A published playwright, screenwriter, journalist and academic, Dr Waters is the Convener of Open Learning and teaches Sociology at Griffith University in Brisbane Australia. He is a past winner of the Griffith University Excellence in Teaching Award.

CHERI YAVU-KAMA-HARATHUNIAN
Cheri is a traditional Australian Aboriginal Elder of the Terabalang Bunda, Gooreng Gooreng and a Senior Elder of the Kabbi Kabbi clan/family to which she belongs. She has achieved professional success in business, education, academia, and cultural portfolios. In her professional career, her achievements include developing an Indigenous Research Model with a colleague, developing and implementing a Transformational Management Model, writing and publishing articles and papers on Aboriginal Australian issues, and being a sought-after conference, seminar and colloquium speaker. She is a gifted inspirational speaker who brings clarity to issues under discussion. The 50,000 Years Project is the result of this research and the team are ready to start to effect positive change based on sound practical solutions focused on the education and training systems of this country. Nola is a multiple published Aboriginal writer of children’s stories and books.
BRENDAN COX

Brendan is a Yawuru man from Broome who has been employed at Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Limited for the last 17 years in Broome. He was first employed as a Health Promotion Officer delivering health messages and activities to all the Aboriginal Medical Services throughout the Kimberley region. Brendan currently work in the SEWB Unit as a trainer delivering the Youth Mental Health First Aid, Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid, Kimberley Empowerment Healing and Leadership Program and various men’s programs such as Hey Dad. Brendan is also a Counsellor providing Brief Intervention and has recently completed the Train the Trainer in Trauma and will be delivering the program in the Kimberley region.

PATRICIA COUNCILLOR

Patty is a Yamaji Naaguja nyarlu from Midwest of WA. Patty completed her Bachelor Health Science Mental Health in 2013 after working at the Fremantle Hospital social work department and the state mental hospital Graylands. Patty then returned back to her home of Meekatharra to work with her countrymen and after several years returned to Perth to be with her daughter who requires care and work full time in mental health.

VANESSA EDWIGE

Vanessa is a Kamilaroi woman from Inverell, NSW. Vanessa is a registered Psychologist and a member of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) and the Indigenous Allied Health Association (IAHA). Vanessa has been involved in the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the last 16 years through the provision of psychological support, advocacy, and facilitating and developing both Government and non-Government projects that address intergenerational trauma and grief and loss in communities.

GRAHAM GEE

Graham Gee is an Aboriginal man, also with Celtic heritage, born and raised in Darwin. He has been a registered psychologist since 2008 and has worked at the Family Counseling Services unit of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Services in Melbourne for over 8 years. Graham recently successfully completed his PhD thesis, “Resilience and Recovery from Trauma among Aboriginal Help Seeking Clients in an Urban Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation” and holds a combined Masters/PhD degree in Clinical Psychology at Melbourne University. Graham has been a past steering committee member of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association, and was a founding board member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation.

TANJA HIRVONEN

Tanja is one of Australia’s Aboriginal psychologists and the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team Leader at Danila Dilba Health Service in Darwin. Tanja has a Master’s in Clinical Psychology and is currently completing her Clinical Psychology endorsement. Tanja has a passion for rural and remote practice. Tanja’s passion for working in health and wellbeing is attributed to the tireless work of her own family who have always worked in health or in agencies geared to improving outcomes for our people.

VICKI MCKENNA

Vicki is a Yawuru woman “Nagula Jarndu” of Garimba skin, tribal group of Broome, WA. In Vicki’s current position as the Regional Manager within The Workforce Support & Development / SEWB Unit at KAMS Ltd, she has a responsibility to coordinate and provide training, mentoring & SEWB Support to all Aboriginal Medical Services staff, peers, community members and service providers within the Kimberley region.

BRONWYN MURRAY

Bronwyn Murray lives in Cherbourg and currently works delivering the National Empowerment Project, Cultural, Social and Emotional Wellbeing program to community. Bronwyn’s passion in life has always been to help her people from all walks of life in any challenges they encounter on their journey. Bronwyn is a multi-skilled individual who wants to set great examples for her kids, family, friends and community with a motto to never say never and to get her people to come together and unite in one spirit, one mind and one body – whether it be at social, community or family events.

KELLEIGH RYAN

Kelleigh Ryan is a descendant of the Kabi Kabi people of South-East Queensland and the Australian South Sea Islanders with connections to the people of the Loyalty Islands. Kelleigh is a registered Psychologist and a member of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) and sits on the AIPA Steering Committee. Kelleigh is serving her second term as the Co-chair of the Australian Psychological Society’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Psychology Interest Group.
STACEY VERVOORT
Stacey is a descendant of the Gamilaroi people of the Goondiwindi/ Moree region of Queensland and NSW. Stacey’s educational qualifications include a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and Masters in Organisational Psychology.

Stacey specialises in providing Indigenist focused employee assistance services and programs within both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non–Indigenous organisations, cultural capacity training and development, and culturally appropriate social and emotional wellbeing and holistic support for adults, children and communities.

CONFERENCE STAFF

Dr Abigail Bray
Dr Abigail Bray was born in North Wales and travelled all over the world when young, living on beaches, tents, barns, and communes. Her mother is from Perth, Western Australia. She is Professor Pat Dudgeon’s research assistant. Abi is an interdisciplinary social scientist, has worked in the area of mental health for over a decade and published numerous books and articles. She is an inaugural inductee in the U.N-sponsored Western Australian Women’s Hall of Fame. She has one child — Dylan.

Chrsie is the coordinator of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference and works at the University of Western Australia. She has a Bachelor of Arts from Edith Cowan University and is a qualified financial planner. Her experience in public relations and events management spans a 25 year period working in both government and non-government fields. She previously worked as the coordinator of the Centre of Research Excellence in Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing grant at the Telethon Kids Institute.

CHRISSIE EASTON

Gerry Georgatos is a life-long human rights and social justice campaigner and multi-award winning investigative journalist. In 2011, he left a management background and the tertiary sector and found himself called upon to contribute as a journalist and researcher predominantly for the National Indigenous Times and the National Indigenous Radio Service. He is working on a documentary and completing a book on the crises and prevention care. In 2008, he was recognised by the WA Government Department of Communities – Outstanding Individual Contribution – for his work in the tertiary sector, his work with the homeless and for his work alongside First Peoples communities. He is a regular traveller to remote communities Australia-wide.

GERRY GEORGATOS

Carolyn has been working with the National Empowerment Project with Professor Pat Dudgeon at the University of Western Australia for three years. Carolyn has a background in health promotion, education and community liaison and has worked in the health industry for many years, raising awareness of cultural appropriateness and supporting community access to primary health care. She has also supported international aid sponsored students in a university setting and worked with young students participating in vocational education training in schools.

CAROLYN MASCALL

Dr Yvonne Luxford
A professional with 20 years’ experience in the health sector, Yvonne interacts and collaborates with all levels of government, health professionals, service providers and advocacy bodies to achieve high quality, accessible and culturally appropriate health care.

As the Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP), Yvonne values the opportunity to assist Indigenous leaders in the development of strength based solutions to the excessive suicide rates.

She has a wealth of experience in public health, with particular interests in Indigenous health, chronic disease prevention, and equity of access to healthcare. She has been Vice President of the Public Health Association of Australia and is currently a Board member and the Co-Convenor of PHAA’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Special Interest Group, and deeply values her long involvement in the Close the Gap Steering Committee.

She has qualifications in philosophy and higher education, and her doctoral thesis explored a mixture of policy and medical issues with a focus on child oral health.

TOBY HUNTER

Toby is a Kutjala/Birrigubba man from Charters Towers in Queensland. He has lived in Perth for 6 years now and is studying Law at Deakin University in Melbourne. Toby has recently come on board at UWA to support in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference.

Dr Yvonne Luxford

Counsellor Biographies continued
CONFERENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Professor Pat Dudgeon  
(Chair) UWA

Dion Tatow  
NACCHO

Brendan Gibson  
PM&C

Richard Weston  
Healing Foundation

Sue Murray  
Suicide Prevention Australia

Erin Lew Fatt  
AMSANT

Dameyon Bonson  
Black Rainbow

Donna Murray  
IAHA

Donna Ah Chee  
CAAC

Vicki O’Donnell  
KAMSC

Gerry Georgatos  
ATSISPEP

Adele Cox  
ATSISPEP

Dr Yvonne Luxford  
ATSISPEP

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

THIS CONFERENCE IS PROUDLY FUNDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
Framework of Care and Safety for the ATSISPEP Conference

6 May 2016

Creating a trauma informed space that can ensure the safety of both participants and presenters requires significant risk management to ensure that difficult topics can be discussed safely.

We believe that it is important to raise and discuss complex issues. However, given the levels of trauma in our communities, including the lived experience of many of our community members with direct loss and grief through multiple tragedies, we offer these points as key ways we believe this can be done safely.

A safety plan that is trauma informed and culturally safe must take into account both spirit and environmental safety for participants. A process in which both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview and non-Indigenous worldviews engage to provide a collective and collaborative safety planning is important. Collective and individual healing practices are necessary in the planning and will support a transparent management process. Special considerations for managing and mitigating lateral violence along with enduring respectful communication is beneficial at the preliminary conference planning stage. A healing and safety plan must incorporate pre-conference and post conference support measures to ensure as far as possible that healing is sustainable.

Safety for participants

1. Given the sensitive nature of the topic time is allocated at the beginning and at regular intervals throughout the conference, to remind participants to practice self-care and seek out calming spaces provided. Counsellors and supports staff during the conference should be identified. At the end of the conference, information about ongoing support services available for participants both nationally and locally can also be provided.

- Conference presenter/facilitator (Adele) needs to restate early and throughout the conference that floating counsellors, time out rooms and workshops are available.
- A brochure with help lines needs to be part of the conference bag.
- Contact the local mental health service and advise them of the conference and proposed numbers and health concerns in holding this conference and flag a possible need of assistance.
- Counselling staff need to introduce themselves both culturally and professionally to allow easy identification of the team throughout the conference and proceedings.
2. The venue should allow for participants to ‘break out’ into safe spaces for self-care. Appropriate supports may include access to counsellors and traditional healers, body-based activities such as yoga and gentle exercise, and expressive therapies (e.g. arts, crafts, music, writing etc.).
   - Plan break out areas with art workshop,
   - Yarning space
   - Wild flower essence therapy room
   - Riverbank and natural bushlands for sitting and grounding exercises
   - Seating in hallways near Aboriginal artwork.

3. If yarning circles are offered as part of this space, these should be facilitated and supported by appropriately trained people.
   - Counsellors wish yarning circle experience will work within the circle during the conference.
   - Floating counsellors will support the yarning space.

4. Options for debriefing and self-care should also be made available to facilitators that are developing supporting the yarning circles.
   - All staff, counsellors, administrative, presenters, facilitators will be in initial conference and safety plan briefings
   - All Staff, will attend debriefing either in a group or individual settings.
   - Lead supervisor and buddy support member are responsible to ensure that this does happen each day.

5. Specific attention should be given to high-risk groups of conference participants (e.g. Stolen Generations members or survivors) in attendance. This may require identified support people to attend with groups to ensure safe, trusting relationships are available to them.
   - All counselling and mental health support team members will be briefed on high-risk groups and key advisors for each group.
   - All counsellors will be briefed on issues and special consideration for responding.
   - Counsellors with relevant experience will be assigned to high risk groups for additional support.

6. The use of culture and ceremony to support conference participants to remain grounded, regulate their emotions and feel safe throughout the event should be considered. Featuring dance, song, at regular intervals including at the beginning of each keynote and closing of each day seeks to provide people with hope and reconnect them to significant cultural care.
   - Ceremony events are planned for beginning and end of conference.
   - Ngankaris doing healing workshops, every day.
• Basket weaving sessions and art sessions are run across conference,
• Time out rooms, yarning circles and open garden settings are planned
• Ted Wilkes will play the didge and do a couple of songs at the dinner (he is a fine musician).
• Local performers and healing workers are invited to participate.
• Smoking area is allocated and accepted in space or healing.

7. Adequate amounts of food, availability of tea and coffee all day and appropriate seating to accommodate the majority of participants and staff at lunch and breaks assists people to feel cared for and has a significant impact on assisting people to manage their distress.

• Feeding participants is the responsibility of support staff directly and all of us in planning.
• Lead counsellor to ensure counselling staff are provided with time and space to eat in privacy.
• Special attention to keeping continuous consumption of water and fresh fruit and air for support workers.

8. Venues should be safe for participants be able to be warm, or cool and be able to accommodate the elderly and those with disabilities appropriately.

• Mobility access and safety of venue is planned for.
• Conference staff know the names of venue staff for any required assistance.

Safety for presenters

9. Keynote speakers and workshop presenters should participate in pre-conference processes that enable them to structure their presentation and deliver material in a safe, trauma-informed manner to conference participants.

This could include provision of written guidelines, video-chats with conference organisers after the abstract has been accepted, or pre-conference workshops specifically for presenters. Presenters should be specifically warned against sharing of highly distressing or identifiable information.

• Key note speakers and workshop presenters to be provided with safety framework to guide their workshop content and presentation delivery.
• Organising staff to confirm that guidelines have been taken into account with presentations before loading presentations and that workshop facilitators have a safety plan.
• Chair persons to brief presenters/facilitators before their presentations.

10. Keynote speakers and workshop presenters should also be cognisant to the particular needs of participants who could be highly vulnerable and be able to identify their particular needs and potential triggers within their presentations.

• Key note speakers are briefed and aware of counselling support available.
• Key note speakers and facilitators are briefed on signs of distress and helpful response techniques.

11. Each workshop room should be allocated a facilitator who can introduce the presenters, monitor the safety of participants, and keep track of time. These leaders need to be appropriately briefed about their responsibilities and provided with adequate resources to fulfil them including being able to deal with any complexities that may arise. This may require professional facilitators to be employed that are able to manage the complexity of these discussions depending on the topic.
   • Development of a Facilitators Guide for the conference will support safe practice in each session.
   • Resources and briefing include how to use; engaging I.T. staff, conference staff, stop watch/timer, take notes for points of reference and guiding questions to support participants and facilitators.
   • Seeking support of counselling staff or medical staff.
   • Defusing conflict and engaging empowering conversations dot points will assist in briefing notes.

12. In the event that a person becomes acutely unwell due to re-traumatisation, a pre-developed plan should be activated. This plan should be known to and understood by all workshop leaders and support persons.
   • Development of a plan encompassing the four elements of environmental response for participants, situated key rooms. Copies are available in hard and soft copy format.
   • Conference venue staff have incorporated their safety response plan into the physical environment plan section.
   • Counselling staff and emergency response staff (ambulance, police) are briefed prior to conference.
   • Conference organisation staff and committee members are briefed and provided with safety plans.
   • Engagement with local service providers and hospital emergency staff are briefed on the conference and safety plan, any adjustments or work a rounds are streamlined at this time.
   • Accommodation and transport staff are briefed on safety plan for their support and participant well-being.
   • Conference venue map and hotel accommodation maps are included in briefing notes.
Summer May Finlay reported on the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference in Alice Springs, from May 5-6, for the Croakey Conference News Service.

Croakey is a social journalism project for public health based in Australia. http://croakey.org
Previewing the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference in Alice Springs

The inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference had a focus on strengths-based, community-driven solutions.

It also considered the importance of collective healing and secure funding arrangements, according to Summer May Finlay, a Yorta Yorta woman, Croakey contributor and PhD candidate.

**Summer May Finlay writes:**

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong and proud. Yet there probably isn’t an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family who hasn’t in some way been touched by suicide or self-harm.

An individual’s social and emotional well-being is closely strongly influenced by and connected to their family and communities’ well-being as well as a strong connection to culture and country.

As well, social determinants that negatively effect people include poverty, unemployment, lack of housing, lack of access to appropriate services and ongoing racism. These make significant contribution to a sense of helplessness, hopelessness and despair for some people and can result in destructive behaviours.

This is why the Inaugural National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference brought together people, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to discuss not only the appallingly high rates of suicide seen in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics, but also how to work towards a healthy future for individuals, families and communities.

There has been much in the media recently about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and suicide. There was considerable information about the statistics, how terrible they are and the need to address the issue some how. There were many individual’s commentaries about what could be possible solutions.

The conference sought to bring together people who work in the space at a local level, experts and community to yarn about community-based solutions and the community supports which are required to develop and implement them.
No quick fixes

There cannot be one-size fits all approaches. There are no quick fixes. There are no solutions that can achieve the unachievable in a political cycle. Over 200 years of colonisation, dispossession, racism, discrimination and marginalisation have taken a toll on our communities.

No one knows these impacts better than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves; therefore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-driven solutions are required.

Keynote speakers were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including Stan Grant and Rosalie Kunoth-Monks. Other significant speakers include Professor Tom Calma, Co-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group, Professor Pat Dudgeon, Project Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP) and Richard Weston, CEO of the Healing Foundation.

The conference organisers also recognised that we could learn from the experiences of Indigenous people from other countries and included international representation in the program.

Professor Tom Calma AO, former Social Justice Commissioner, believes that the conference is significant because it prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ perspectives.

“The real significance is that this the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference is that has been organised by us, with most of the speakers and workshops delivered by our people, and the majority of the participants are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” he said.

Focus on protective factors

Vicki O’Donnell, CEO of the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Services Ltd, is a member of the Conference Advisory Committee, and believes the significance of the conference is the strengths-based approach.

“We want to focus on interventions which promote cultural continuity, identity and language. We see these as protective factors. Part of that is building resilient, long-lasting programs,” Ms O’Donnell says.

Professor Calma agrees that a strengths-based approach is one of the key aspects of the conference, which is why there will be a focus on learning from the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“We have a number of objectives, and first and foremost is the opportunity for people to learn more about suicide prevention and to share their ideas,” he said. “This learning is not only for government or professionals but also enables communities to share their experiences and thoughts about what needs to be in place.”

Ms O’Donnell agrees that the priority is hearing from people who are working in the space or have lived experience.

She also describes the importance of collective healing, believing that we need to come together as a collective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the country to learn from and support each other.

“As Aboriginal people coming together, we can showcase the good work that’s been done,” she said. “We have common issues and gaps. The conference can also lead to collaborations across the country.”
Ms O’Donnell also expects the conference can assist non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations working in the space. She said:

“For non-Aboriginal people, I would like for them to become more aware of the underlying issues [of suicide and self harm].

The other significant things I hope they take away is that for effective solutions, they need to be co-designed with Aboriginal families and communities. Also, I want to see the non-Aboriginal organisations who receive Aboriginal funding to facilitate a space for this to occur.”

Conference themes

Themes of the conference reflect a strengths-based approach, and include:

- Community Based Solutions
- Cultural Solutions
- Social Determinants
- Cultural Practices
- Data and Statistics
- Prison and its impacts
- Stolen Generations.

To ensure attendance from all around Australia and from people who might not have had support to attend, the conference offered scholarships or bursaries. Professor Calma said:

“We want to recognise the people who are doing great work, and there are some fantastic groups at the local level who are building peoples awareness and resilience. The participants are from all over the country and... through our bursary program, we were able to make sure that a variety of people from across the country are represented.

We also wanted to make sure that the minority groups of people within our communities are equally represented such as LGBTI, those with disabilities, people very remote communities with limited English and people with lived experience. We also wanted to make sure we had people represented from the stolen generations.”

One could be forgiven for thinking that the conference will be all serious; however, if there is one thing we are good at as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is being able to laugh together, even when things aren’t so great.

Professor Calma says that laughter will also be part of the conference: “One of the thing about Aboriginal people is we can laugh in tough times. The conference is a serious matter but there will be some lighter moments.”

Conference organisers recognise that the conversations may be difficult for some people, and have ensured there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health professionals and psychologists to speak to conference attendees. Three counsellors at the conference will be from the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Services Ltd.
Social media tips
For those of you on social media – we encourage people to tweet, the hashtag is #ATSISPEP. Please keep in mind when engaging with social media that suicide and self-harm are sensitive issues.

Below are some tips on how to engage with social media and the sensitive issue of self-harm and suicide.

• Please do not record, stream or post video of people’s presentations without their express permission.
• Please don’t post tweets with people’s personal stories or photos without their permission.
• We encourage social media posts, which are strengths-based and solutions-focused in keeping with the conference tone.
• We encourage healthy conversations; however, we know trolls do exist and recommend you ignore, report or block them if they engage in negative debate.

Of course, there will be some take-home messages for governments too.

Ms O’Donnell said:

“I want the government to sit up and pay attention to the good work that’s happening in communities. There are some great programs but the funding isn’t sustainable. Every year we have to fight for funds. We shouldn’t have to do that. We don’t want to be in the same situation three years later.”

On Twitter follow: @OnTopicAus & #ATSISPEP

• For more information on the conference please visit the website: http://www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/natsispc-2016
• Also read this ABC story about a group travelling to the conference from Leonora.
“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Summer May Finlay writes:

I am writing this from Alice Springs where an historic event is underway – the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention conference (follow #ATSISPEP on Twitter).

Despite the challenging and traumatic topic, the mood is hopeful, perhaps because this conference is setting all sorts of “firsts”.

This is the first conference I have attended where our voices have been preferred in this way.

The program has been designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The keynotes are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The presenters are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is hard to miss at this conference. People are talking solutions, not just statistics.

According to Richard Weston, the CEO of the Healing Foundation: “It’s important that the conference actually shows what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are capable of.”

A common theme of the conference has been “nothing about us without us” – as underscored by Dameyon Bonson during his presentation this morning (see more in the tweets below).
Culture is the key to keeping us healthy, and as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we are the Cultural knowledge holders. The solutions need to be driven by us.

Today we heard some of the recommendations from the concurrent sessions. At the end of the conference, all the recommendations will be collected and presented to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project National Advisory Committee.

Weston doesn’t want to pre-empt the recommendations, but hopes that the government will listen to them.

“We very much have a top-down approach at the moment to Aboriginal Affairs,” he said.

He expects the recommendations will challenge governments with “the idea that Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people have solutions that are embedded in our Cultures, embedded in our ancient knowledge.”

“Solutions will have to privilege that knowledge,” he said.

One of the key themes to emerge from the conference today is the impact of racism and discrimination on our peoples’ social and emotional wellbeing.

Professor Helen Milroy, a Commissioner of The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and a descendant of the Palyku people of the Pilbara region, understands these impacts all too well. She has lived them and seen them through her work as a Commissioner.

She told the conference: “Racism isolates. It creates an ‘other’. Racism is incredibly challenging. It is hard to shake. It’s a difficult thing to tackle if we don’t see it. We need to make it visible. It’s everyone’s responsibility to say no to racism. It shouldn’t rest on the shoulders of our children.”

The inspirational, passionate and dedicated Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, an Amatjere and Arrernte woman and the current NAIDOC female Person of the Year, was a keynote speaker who had a powerful impact (see tweets below).

She urged the conference:

“I want to know before we are done tomorrow where we are heading. Let’s find a line of action to turn a new page.

Our voices carry power. Our voices carry knowledge. Our voices carry experience. We are the answer to the issues we face.”

Meanwhile, the World Indigenous Suicide Conference will be held in New Zealand from 1 – 3 June.
From the Twittersphere

Below is a collaborative Twitter essay that shows how the conference has unfolded since the opening on Wednesday night.

“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

#ATSISPEP
"Talking solutions": an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities #ATSISPEP
You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference [here](#).

**“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**

#ATSISPEP

The conference began with presentations from:

- **Professor Tom Calma AO**, Co-Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group

- **Professor Pat Dudgeon**, Project Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP)

- **Richard Weston**, CEO, Healing Foundation
"Talking solutions": an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

#ATSISPEP

Professor Pat Dudgeon’s update on ATSISPEP at National Suicide Prevention Conference @AustPsych

The development of an evidence base for what works in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention;

The development of a culturally appropriate evaluation framework, including a national interactive map of places experiencing high rates of suicide and the available services;

Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community suicide prevention needs;

Identify system-level change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention; and

Host a National Suicide Prevention Conference.

Gov'ts must invest in community led strategies to prevent crises in communities-scale up healing

#ATSISPEP
Keynote speech by Rosalie Kunoth-Monks

Rosalie Kunoth Monks keynoting at #ATSISPEP

I am on my country, speaking my language - our culture
Aunty Rosalie Kunoth-Monks
A powerful woman!!! #ATSISPEP
"Talking solutions": an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

#ATSISPEP
“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

You can track Croakey’s coverage of the conference here.

Entire massive #ATSISPEP conference held spellbound by wonderful Rosalie Kunoth-Monks

Other presentations

Beautiful message stick ‘Message of Hope’ brought from Beagle Bay Nyul Nyul peoples to #ATSISPEP conference
"Talking solutions": an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

#ATSISPEP

You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.

Aboriginal Health Retweeted
Janette Milera @OriginalAussie · 54m
Message Stick from Beagle Bay.. absolutely beautiful #ATSISPEP

Weave Youth @Weave_Youth · 28m
"It’s about embracing our culture & sharing it". Indi Clarke, proud 23 year old Muthl Muthl & Lardil man #ATSISPEP

Ngaree Ah Kit @ngareehkit · 2h
Aunty Dorrie Wesley outlining the work of Central Australian Aboriginal Congress to help prevent suicide #ATSISPEP
“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities #ATSISPEP
Healing Foundation @HealingOurWay - 2h
Ngangkari Healing Group: wonderful work - understanding trauma as something weighing heavy inside you #ATSISPEP

Yvonne Lushford @Y_L_L - 2h
Wonder Woman!!! Great informative session from the #Ngangkari with #APYWomensCouncil #ATSISPEP

Dameyon Bonson @DameyonBonson - 2h
"Culturally Safe Practice - Suicide Story" by Jody Kopp and Natasha Abbott #ATSISPEP

"Talking solutions": an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities #ATSISPEP
You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.

“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

#ATSISPEP

Professional support was on hand

#ATSISPEP conference participants are well supported by this fabulous bunch of counsellors
“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

#ATSISPEP

You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.

Selfies and snaps
“Talking solutions”: an historic conference on preventing suicides in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

#ATSISPEP
You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.
Watch and listen: Interviews from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention conference

At the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention conference in Alice Springs, Summer May Finlay conducted a number of Periscope interviews with conference participants and speakers. Please watch them below.

The post also includes her video-reflections on day one and at the conclusion of the conference.

Jay Delaney

JD, a 40-year-old Indigenous trans man, says the conference has been hugely important, showing the amazing work being done in communities. It has been vital for exchanging ideas and creating action, he says. Understanding your identity and having a sense of belonging and connection are vital for helping to keep people alive, he says. He also urges people to be gentle and kind to each other, to be supportive and open-minded and “to recognise that small things can effect big changes”. He adds: “If people reach out to you, please don’t turn your back.” Follow him on Twitter at @JayDelaneyau. Read more here.
You can track Croakey’s coverage of the conference here.

Joe Williams

Joe, a Wiradjuri man from Wagga Wagga in NSW, describes his history of bipolar disorder, his recovery plan (including healthy eating, exercise and lifestyle), and how he uses his sporting profile to share his story widely with the community as part of healing work with his charity, The Enemy Within. He also describes the impact of colonial oppression, discrimination and racism upon mental health and wellbeing. Read more about his work here, and follow on Twitter: @joewilliams_tew

Tauto Sansbury

Tauto Sansbury, a Narungga Elder from South Australia’s Yorke Peninsula, is attending the conference to find some solutions to take back to SA, “to start a different conversation”. He highlights the harmful impacts of incarceration, loss of country, and loss of self-determination, and also describes the expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. “I think government should hear what the people are saying,” he says.

Ken Riddiford

Ken Riddiford, CEO of the Kimberley Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation, describes the impacts of transgenerational trauma in Stolen Generations people. This conference is important because of its focus on preventative strategies for youth suicides, he says. He describes the important role his own grandmother played in his own development as a youth, in keeping him away from harms such as drugs and alcohol.

Richard Weston, CEO of the Healing Foundation

Richard Weston, a descendant of the Meriam people of the Torres Strait, says the conference is “super important”, and stresses the importance of urgently addressing the suicide crisis facing some communities. He says: “We know from our work that much of the distress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today is generated by the trauma of Stolen Generations policies and colo-
nisation. Our work is about working with communities to address trauma through cultural healing.” Locally designed and led healing and prevention strategies are important for breaking the cycle of crisis and to prevent suicides, he says. He also describes the intellectual power, wisdom and cultural strength of those contributing to the conference organisation and presentations. He distinguishes between “Government” and “bureaucracy”, and says Government may be challenged by the notion that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have solutions embedded in their knowledge and culture. “They need to change the system, to tackle the processes of policy making and the processes of engagement…If we don’t have that, then we won’t see successful outcomes,” he says. “If Government doesn’t get the message, then we will get more of the same – half baked ideas…”

**John Paterson**

John Paterson, chief executive of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT), says the conference is about hearing from other service providers and organisations facing similar challenges in their own communities to see what may be working, and to enable collaboration among those trying to address and prevent suicides. He hopes that conference participants can develop an agreed approach forward, to steer away from duplication of services, to identify any gaps, and to continue supporting useful programs and services while learning from them. He urges anyone contemplating self-harm to pick up the phone, ring a friend or family member or someone they trust to seek support. “Don’t think that you are alone,” he says. Aboriginal communities are about sharing and caring and looking after everyone in the community, he says.

**Summer May Finlay**

Reflecting on the first day of the conference, Summer May Finlay says solutions must be driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Governments need to understand that if they want to make a difference, she says. Coming to this conference shows how strong we are as peoples. “I really wish people could see us as I see us,” she says. “We’re strong, passionate, driven people that really are a hell of a lot more than the crap that we have to put up with. These conferences and hopefully the interviews that I’ve done demonstrate to people that we are knowledgeable, we are able to actually work on our own solutions, and we just need to be given the time, the money and the space to do that.”
Vanessa Lee

Vanessa Lee says the conference has been empowering, in bringing together people from the same historical background with shared experiences of colonisation, including of oppression, inequality, and discrimination. She presented at the conference on “Domestic Violence, Suicide and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQI”, and talks about the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention to be inclusive of sexually and gender diverse people. “Let’s stop the suicides, let’s stop the domestic violence,” she says.

Indi Clarke

Indi Clarke, 23, is a Muthi Muthi and Lardil man, currently employed with Mallee District Aboriginal Services in Mildura in north-west Victoria, as a Youth and Community Engagement Facilitator. He loves his role, working with his community and giving back. His work includes mentoring, work experience, cultural awareness and emerging leaders programs. He describes the negative stereotypes around Aboriginality, which should instead be seen as an “amazing thing”. He promotes the positives to youth and the community. He is part of the National Empowerment Project. “Mental health is something that touches us all,” he says. He looks to family and friends when feeling overwhelmed himself. “Some people don’t have that, and we’ve got to provide those opportunities for those guys,” he said. He was part of the panel on racism, and would like to see a recommendation for governments to address racism, including in their own backyard, for example through doing Acknowledgement of Country in Parliaments.

Scott Avery

Scott Avery, the Policy and Research Director at the First Peoples Disability Network (Australia), talks about the importance of capturing the narratives and lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability. Disability is largely invisible in many social policy areas, including in suicide prevention. The conference has shown the complexity of issues involved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, and that governments aren’t well organised to respond to this issue. On Twitter, follow @ScottTheHolWrld.
For help or more information

For people who may be experiencing sadness or trauma, please visit these links to services and support:

- If you are depressed or contemplating suicide, help is available at Lifeline on 131 114 or online. Alternatively you can call the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

- For young people 5-25 years, call kids help line 1800 55 1800

- For resources on social and emotional wellbeing and mental health services in Aboriginal Australia, see here.

Summer May Finlay

At the end of the conference, Summer May Finlay reflects on a “long couple of days” and her feelings of vulnerability during some of the heart-breaking discussions. The take-home message from the conference is the power of the collective to make a difference, she says. “I just wish that Government would see us for our strength, and sit up and pay attention.” Suicide and self-harm are a symptom of larger issues, she says, and we need to not be working in silos but need to work across sectors such as health, justice and education. She says: “I’ve spent the last couple of days with some amazing people who have so much strength, despite having gone through so much. If we could just harness that strength and work with Government, we could do so much more than we are now.”
The power and the passion: hearing from a landmark conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention

The inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention conference provided delegates with a safe space to come together and to share experiences, emotions and insights.

While the formal conference recommendations are yet to come, some of the key themes to emerge were the centrality of connection to Culture and country, the need for holistic approaches to address the wider social determinants of health, and the importance of healing and strengths-based approaches in working with communities.

Another recurring theme was the need for governments to be more accountable in how they work with communities.

Summer May Finlay writes:

As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we often have to be strong for our families and communities.

Like me, most of our people put on their protective armour when they step out into the world. That armour only comes off in a few very safe places.

This conference was one of those safe places. It allowed us a space to be vulnerable. It allowed us to share a full range of emotions – hope, sorrow, anger, and determination.
At times I felt very vulnerable. I felt the pain that most of us keep buried, and I decided that it was OK to feel the pain. It is that feeling that I know drives most of us.

When dealing with the topic of suicide, the emotions we feel are a strength. We needed to talk about our experiences to be able to understand what is required to heal and reduce the devastating suicide rates.

In a powerful keynote oration, Stan Grant, a Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi man, journalist and author, spoke of the enduring impact of “the memories and wounds” felt by many:

“The memories of loss and sadness, the memories of grief… this is our inheritance.

These memories are not just carried within us; these memories seep deep into our land.

This is a sad country in so many ways for us… We love and find laughter in each other but we check ourselves because we know too well that grief waits for us.”

We knew through these words he too has experienced the pain. Pain he generously shared with us.

Everyone who was at the conference has in some way been touched by suicide. Despite the pain they feel, they were able to find the strength to come together to work together.

Focus on solutions

Working together does not mean that there weren’t differences of opinions. There were. But the conference was about us coming together to find solutions, despite our differences.

The presentations were varied. There were sessions on the link between justice and suicide, local solutions, a holistic preventative approach, what we don't know, and the importance of culture.
A number of key themes were repeated by different speakers across the two days. These included the need for better crisis management, a holistic approach to suicide prevention and that connection to Culture holds the key to reducing the toll of suicides.

Professor Pat Dudgeon, a Bardi woman, a research fellow and psychologist known for her leadership in Indigenous higher education and mental health, was the Chair of the Conference Advisory Committee. She has seen and felt the impacts of suicide, and decided to work in the space of suicide prevention and self-harm because of her experiences.

After a suicide of a close family member, she realised the lack of support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. “There were no services to support my family,” she said. “There were no services, no counsellors, no literature. It’s like they didn’t exist or something.”

For Professor Dudgeon, it was the family who was the support: “We were lucky that my family was quite strong…we were lucky in that regard”.

Professor Dudgeon is working for Culturally appropriate resources and services for our peoples. She believes “firstly, Indigenous suicide is different. If you are going to do any kind of service or intervention, it needs to be culturally appropriate and needs to have community engagement.”

Kanat Wano of the Meriam Nation says there is a difference between “surviving and thriving”, and he wants to see Culturally appropriate programs like his all over the country.

Evidence gaps

In some areas, such as the needs of gender diverse people and for people with disabilities, we need more information, and more needs to be done (as outlined by Dameyon Bonson in relation to LGBTQI people at The Guardian).

Vanessa Lee, a Wik and Meriam woman, says we need listen to the anecdotal evidence but we also need data: “We need that statistical information; we need that identification.”

She hopes that this will lead to better policy. She suggests we need a “strategy to bring this all together into one space…which is inclusive of the sexuality and gender diverse people”. (See a video interview with Vanessa Lee).

Scott Avery, a Worimi man who works at the First Peoples Disability Network, also acknowledges the limitations in our evidence base, which has an impact on people with disability.

“Aboriginal people with disability are often the most marginalised people in our country,” he said. “They often experience disadvantage and discrimination in layers.”

He wants the wisdom and lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability to be captured, as at present it is an invisible space. (See a video interview with Scott Avery).
Holistic approaches needed

To explain the meaning of suicides in communities, Professor Dudgeon draws on an analogy used by Professor Michael Chandler, who has worked with First Nation Peoples in Canada to understand youth suicide and self-harm – that “suicide is like the miner’s canary”.

She said:

- “Reform is needed, it’s not just about suicide where it’s needed. Suicide is that last desperate act that people do, it’s a sign.
- When the birds die, it means the air around is not good. So high rates of suicide are indicating that things are not good in a group.
- We need to do other kinds of changes. It can’t be looked at in isolation to the other social determinants and mental health.”

The social determinants approach to suicide prevention was also raised by Professor Tom Calma AO, a former Social Justice Commissioner, who said we need to “break down the silos” within government.

His comment reinforces the need for us to see the whole person, community and family in their totality to truly be able to prevent suicides.

Mervyn Eades, who spoke of his experiences in and out of the justice system, understands the need for holistic approaches.

He realised how hard it was for many people like him to get a job, which is why he started a training and employment agency, Ngalla Maya, for other people who have been in jail.

He wants to see more opportunities on release because “the reality comes in when you walk out in the community and the options aren’t there. The recidivism and reoffending comes from the lack of options.” (Read more in this ABC story.)

Vicki O’Donnell, the CEO of the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Services Ltd, said we need to develop a better understanding of local responses in regards to suicide.

“We don’t want to be concentrating on the numbers of suicides, but the social determinants and all the reasons people suicide, and how we can actually run programs to stop that happening,” she said.

Keynote speaker Rosalie Kunoth-Monks stands proud on her land, that of the Arrernte people. She has seen too many deaths from suicide, and believes “it is Culture, language and ceremony which keeps us healthy, but more importantly it’s our land which is the most important”.

The “joy of life is to be found in the black Culture of this country,” she said.
Stan Grant also talked of Culture and the role it played in the health of our Peoples, but said that we can also walk in both worlds:

“We can have a foot in our traditions and a foot in the market. That we can speak our languages and we can know our kin and we attend the best universities and I can be a Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi man in New York or Jerusalem or Bagdad or Beijing as surely as I can be in Alice Springs or my home town of Griffiths.”

There was talk of the issues and of solutions. There was also a call for government to listen to communities and fund programs designed by them to address their individual needs.

There was also a recognition that the issues we face cannot be solved solely by governments. Rather, communities need to step up as Peoples, and make changes for future generations.

Professor Dudgeon wants to see the $17.8 million that was set aside by the Federal Government for suicide prevention allocated once the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project report is completed.

It’s not just the amount of money which is important but also the implementation. She said: “I think that a lot of funding is put in for Indigenous issues but they aren’t successful because they don’t engage with community.”

It is the people in each community who know what’s happening. Their input into any program or support is the only way to make a real difference to preventing suicides.

Richard Weston, a Meriam man and CEO of the Healing Foundation, said: “We need broader strategies around preventing crises, and to be supporting communities to access healing and other services before they get to crisis.”

This “is going to take a different way of thinking,” he said.

The conference was not just about sharing and networking. It was also about making recommendations, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments.

The Conference Advisory Committee will list all the conference recommendations in a report, which will be available on the website.
From the Twittersphere

Stan Grant’s keynote presentation generated lively interest from Twitter and the wider media.

Professor Ted Wilkes and Professor Dennis Gray presented on the reduction of harmful use of alcohol and other drugs.
You can track Croakey’s coverage of the conference here.

The power and the passion: hearing from a landmark conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention

#ATSISPEP

Other presentations and sessions covered diverse topics.

#ATSISPEP
You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.

The power and the passion: hearing from a landmark conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention

#ATSISPEP
You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.

Cynically Depressed @TheKooriWoman · 8h
#ATSISPEP ‘Empowering Aboriginal Men and Women to break their cycles of abuse and expressions of lateral violence’

The power and the passion: hearing from a landmark conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention #ATSISPEP

Yvonne Luxford @Y_S_L · 3h
Dameyan Bonson: We need more strategies for suicide prevention than just those using sport #ATSISPEP @DameyanBonson

jackie crowe @jackiecrowe24 · 2h
Aunty Gracelyn: we can not reconcile in this country w/out speaking the truth of our history. #ATSISPEP
The power and the passion: hearing from a landmark conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention #ATSISPEP

The impact of over-incarceration was highlighted.

"For one little black woman" Aunty Heather Agius to go into jails legislation needed to passed in SA. #ATSISPEP
Summer May Finlay presented on the #JustJustice project (watch it here).

There was music and dance.
The power and the passion: hearing from a landmark conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention

You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.

#ATSISPEP
You can track Croakey’s coverage of the conference [here](#).
Wrapping up

Sabine Hammond @sabine_hammond · 1h
#ATSISPEP healingourway Professors Tom Calma and Pat Dudgeon summarising conference themes and outcomes

Summer May Finlay @indigenousX · 8h
Key theme from indigenous suicide prevention conference is solutions by us for us. That’s goes for all issues we face. #ATSISPEP

Alison Fairleigh @AlisonFairleigh · 11h
In amongst all the politicking, I hope our nation’s politicians are paying attention to #ATSISPEP. #auspol

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference
5 – 6 May 2016 – Alice Springs Convention Centre

Georgie Harman @georgie_harman · 8h
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people have solutions to #suicideprevention. Our role is to listen, respect and walk alongside #ATSISPEP

Georgie Harman @georgie_harman · 8h
Two days of listening and learning. #ATSISPEP: One of the best conferences I’ve ever attended
You can track Croakey's coverage of the conference here.

The power and the passion: hearing from a landmark conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention

#ATSISPEP

Indig Online Project @indigonline - 7h
The #ATSISPEP was an inspiring, informative & deeply moving event. Its heartening to see so many passionate people working to tackle suicide

Adam Sharah @colonialtales - 6h
Thankyou Dameyon for putting LGBTQ mental health on the map and for creating a safe space for us #ATSISPEP @BlikfnBow

Alexandra Culloden @alexculloden - 7h
Thanks to all tweeting #ATSISPEP conference yesterday and today, spirit of the conference being felt all the way in #Canberra

jackie crowe @jackiecrowe24 - 8h
Listening learning & healing together. Thankyou #ATSISPEP. @sussanley @CatherineKingMP @SenKatyG @BrodgenLucy

Georgie Harman @georgie_harman
Two days of listening and learning. #ATSISPEP: One of the best conferences I’ve ever attended

Richard Weston @RichJWeston - 18h
Very proud of my @HealingOurWay colleagues Kelly & Steve for their part in safety team. Kelly Ryan’s leadership was exemplary #ATSISPEP

Richard Weston @RichJWeston - 18h
Home, couch, footy, glass of red, track dacks, phone friends & family - ahhhhhh #ATSISPEP

Yvonne Luxford @_Y_S_L_ - 4h
Looking towards Ntaripe. Thanks for hosting us #AliceSprings it’s been fantastic #ATSISPEP

Croakey
"Conference News Service"
Analytics

Twitter analytics show there were 997 participants at #ATSISPEP on Twitter and almost 22 million Twitter impressions (30 March - 12 May).

The #ATSISPEP Influencers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 10 by Mentions</th>
<th>Top 10 by Tweets</th>
<th>Top 10 by Impressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@indigenousx 966</td>
<td>@croakeyblog 381</td>
<td>@croakeyblog 668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@dameyonbonson</td>
<td>@ontopicus 232</td>
<td>@indigenousx 599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@ontopicus 599</td>
<td>@dameyonbonson</td>
<td>@dameyonbonson 311</td>
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<tr>
<td>@croakeyblog 311</td>
<td>@ontopicus</td>
<td>@nachoaustral 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@joewilliams_tew 306</td>
<td>@_y_s_i 119</td>
<td>@nachoaustral 141</td>
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<tr>
<td>@_y_s_i 297</td>
<td>@jaelaskehan 56</td>
<td>@jaelaskehan 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@thekooriwoman 197</td>
<td>@htcooss 84</td>
<td>@htcooss 183</td>
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<tr>
<td>@healingourway 183</td>
<td>@htcooss</td>
<td>@htcooss 84</td>
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<tr>
<td>@jaelaskehan 180</td>
<td>@joewilliams_tew</td>
<td>@joewilliams_tew 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@bluenbow 170</td>
<td>@indigenusphas 75</td>
<td>@jaelaskehan 180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Numbers

- 21,893,773 Impressions
- 4,743 Tweets
- 997 Participants
- 16 Avg Tweets/ Hour
- 5 Avg Tweets/ Participant

#ATSISPEP Participants

Read the Twitter transcript here.
For help or more information
For people who may be experiencing sadness or trauma, please visit these links to services and support:

- If you are depressed or contemplating suicide, help is available at Lifeline on 131 114 or online. Alternatively you can call the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.
- For young people 5-25 years, call kids help line 1800 55 1800
- For resources on social and emotional wellbeing and mental health services in Aboriginal Australia, see here.

Declarations and acknowledgements
Summer May Finlay reported on the event for the Croakey Conference News Service. Her expenses for attending the conference were covered with a bursary and she also presented on Croakey’s #JustJustice project. We also acknowledge and thank Frank Meany of OneVision for his donation to cover Croakey’s editorial production and design costs associated with conference coverage.

Croakey Conference News Service
- Reporting by Summer May Finlay
- Editing by Melissa Sweet
- Layout and design by Mitchell Ward
ATSISPEP Conference Key Messages

3 main messages

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide is different.
2. Genuine partnership with communities are needed for successful suicide prevention programs, which should include mechanisms to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the mental health workforce at all levels.
3. Culture must be embedded in all suicide prevention activities. Disconnection from culture has contributed to high suicide rates.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide occurs at double the rate of other Australians.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of 15 to 34 years of age, accounting for 1 in 3 deaths.
- Suicide has many causes, including cultural, historical and political considerations.
- Within our vulnerable group are other vulnerable groups such as youth and LGBTIQ.
- Every suicide is the loss of somebody’s loved one and should be treated with respect and dignity by everyone, especially the media which has the power to help rather than harm.
- This conference will remember those who have been lost, but will also focus on the future. It will shine a light on solutions that work.
- Across the world, disconnection from culture has contributed to high suicide rates amongst First Nations peoples. Successful suicide prevention programs need a foundation of culture and engagement of Elders.
- The solutions can be found where the problems are found – communities must be engaged in developing solutions that work for them.
- Strategies are needed to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the mental health workforce at all levels.
- Cultural safety must be an essential element of initial and ongoing training for all non-Indigenous health and mental health professionals.
ATSISPEP Conference: Responding to the Media

Following is a background and tips for you when you are speaking to the media.

Main Conference Messages

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicides are different to non-Aboriginal suicides.
- The solutions can be found where the problems are found – solutions must be community-driven.
- Within our group are other further vulnerable groups such as youth, LGBTIQ, those living in regional areas.
- Strategies are needed to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in all levels of the mental health workforces.
- The conference will highlight what works in the development of wellbeing and suicide prevention.

Statistics and Facts:

- The suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is double that of non-Aboriginal Australians – for both men and women.
- Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 14 years and less are 8.8 times more likely to suicide than non-Aboriginal children of the same age.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 to 35 years of age.
- The rate of suicide has increased in each of the last of five years.
- Suicide accounts for 5 per cent of all deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Overall, suicide is the 5th leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on average suicide much younger than the rest of the population.

For more detailed background information go to the ATSISPEP website where there are several useful Fact Sheets, see: [http://www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/media-and-publications](http://www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/media-and-publications)

Tips: Using the Media to Tell Your Messages

If you consent to an interview it is good to keep these issues in mind:

- Take your time in answering media questions.
- Speak to what you know and keep to the facts.
- You do not have to answer every question.
- Be prepared for the questions, “What are the causes?” and “Why are there so many Aboriginal suicides?” and “Why are Aboriginal children taking their lives?”
- Be ready to respond to the question, “What are the solutions?”
- You will more than likely be asked, “What do you hope the conference will achieve?”
Q: Tell us about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide.

- The suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is double that of non-Aboriginal Australians – for both men and women.
- Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 14 years and less are 8.8 times more likely to suicide than non-Aboriginal children of the same age.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 to 35.
- The rate of suicide has increased in each of the last five years.
- Suicide accounts for 5 per cent of all deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
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Q: What does this Conference say that is new?

A: This inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference gathers together members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, experts and the wider community from across the country to Alice Springs, the heart of the Aboriginal nations. Over two days we will exchange learnings, share lived experiences, build knowledge and inspire one another as to how we can best strengthen communities to tackle this entrenched tragedy.

Importantly, it asks the Aboriginal community what needs to be done.

Q: What causes these terrible suicide rates?

Answer: Everyone asks that question but the answer is not simple.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have suffered through the effects of colonisation and dispossession. While these impacts have varied according to patterns of settlement, all Aboriginal people are living out the consequences of these impacts today. The transgenerational effects of the policies of forced removal of Aboriginal children on Aboriginal emotional and social wellbeing are profound and enduring. Many of the current issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today are the result of past practices and loss. These, alongside ongoing racism and discrimination at individual and institutional levels, contribute to ongoing disadvantage. Suicide can be one of the end results. The statistics are appalling but they should not mask the individual, family and
Aboriginal culture prior to colonisation had characteristics and a range of mechanisms that addressed conflicts in relatively healthy ways. According to an Elder, in Aboriginal culture before colonisation, if a person felt negative about another person, they would approach them and express their feelings rather than suppressing it, and this would clear their ‘centre’. In the old days our ways were to resolve conflicts quickly; to get rid of it quick. Nowadays, Aboriginal people are not expressing themselves in a healthy way.

As well, most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have grown up in racist environments.

Part of our journey to self-determination must include reclaiming our cultural ways and becoming empowered groups in Australian society.

There are a range of reasons why people take their own lives, often several reasons happening at the same time. It could be due to a sense of hopelessness in their lives, feelings that they are not loved nor valued, past abuse, relationship breakdowns, and so on. Alcohol and substance abuse makes things worst.

In summary, however, there might be different reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from different regions and diversity take their lives. It is easy to try to analyse the data after the events but we should be cautious of trying to get one overall answer. The victims of suicide are actual people, not statistics. Even though it is a worthy pursuit to attempt to understand suicide and to try and address it, we need to also remember that each case is unique and is a person.

An important issue is that suicide is an indication of greater community distress. For every suicide there may be many more people suffering from depression, anxiety, and other feelings of entrapment, powerlessness, and despair.

Q: Why do Aboriginal people need their own programs to tackle suicide?

A: Any group of people needs to be involved in interventions that impact on them. If they are not involved, it is likely that the intervention will have limited success. Another important issue for Indigenous people is cultural difference – this needs to be recognised. There is cultural difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups and also between Indigenous people themselves.

The differences and diversity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures that make up the Aboriginal population needs to be acknowledged and respected when delivering any service to the community. Aboriginal suicide attempts and completion rates are different to that of the general population.

Characteristics of suicidal and self-harm behaviours are also different. There can also be suicide clusters at certain times and locations, occurring more frequently than in the mainstream population. These differences require different frameworks and interventions driven and informed by Aboriginal people and adapted to local groups in recognition of diversity.

Q: Is it mainly young Indigenous males that are suicide victims?

Answer: No. Until recent times, suicide completions almost exclusively involved young Indigenous males. There is now a broader age spread and far more greater numbers of
female completions. It is a terrible gender balance. However, the higher overall rates remain higher for males. See statistics.

The greatest difference in rates of suicide between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people was in the 15-19 years age group for both males and females. Suicide rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15–19 years were 5.9 times higher than those for non-Indigenous females in this age group, while for males the corresponding rate ratio was 4.4.

Q: Is it true that suicide is only a recent phenomenon?

Answer: Yes. According to researchers, the high rates of Indigenous suicide have only come about in the last 30 years or so. See Hunter and Milroy 2009, who explain that this may have come about due to the delayed effects of colonisation, the huge pressures on Indigenous people, the rapidly changing social context, and the appearance of freedom and rights while paradoxically we live in a racist country where the struggle for equality is still a hard reality.

Q: Why hasn't all the funding given to Aboriginal communities and previous programs changed the situation?

Answer: Because things are not going to change overnight and often funding and programs are implemented without genuine engagement and consultation with local people. Also the programs are often one offs and/or funded for a short time so limited gains are made.

Question: What will stop suicides?

Answer: There needs to be a range of different programs and services at different levels. But all need to involve true partnership with local communities and have a strong cultural foundation to work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Concurrent Session:</th>
<th>Community Based Solutions Session 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session Date &amp; Time:</td>
<td>5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators Name:</td>
<td>Tania Dalton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Messages:</td>
<td>Dr Marcus Waters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Auto ethnography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cultural memory and retention is</td>
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<td></td>
<td>essential to Social and Emotional</td>
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<td>Wellbeing and our very existence</td>
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<td>• Greatest way to honor our ancestors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– to do for ourselves – gift to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>our children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Repatriation is not just about</td>
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<td>burial of ancestors but also about</td>
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<td></td>
<td>language, ceremony, cultural</td>
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<td>practice and remembering the very</td>
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<td>origins of who we are as</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Comments:</td>
<td>Language programs are paramount for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>cultural renewal.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cultural memory is essential to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>rebuilding resilience of all</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal people.</td>
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### Name of Concurrent Session:
Community Based Solutions Session 1

### Session Date & Time:
5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm

### Facilitators Name:
Tania Dalton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Messages:</th>
<th>Dion Tatow</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local responses by local community - paramount for suicide prevention and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>responses.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any responses must talk to local communities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Key Recommendations and or Actions: | Funding for local resources for suicide prevention, including workforce support and resource development |

### Additional Comments:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Concurrent Session:</th>
<th>Cultural Solutions Session 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session Date &amp; Time:</td>
<td>5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators Name:</td>
<td>Rob McPhee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Messages:</td>
<td>Dameyon Bonson and Jay Delaney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LGBQTI is diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Need to speak on our own behalf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Need for data as there is a lack of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interconnectedness with culture, other LGBQTI</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Family understanding/support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities very accepting of LGBQTI</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Need a seat at the table for all decisions that affect us, as contributors not just as participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experience racism/homophobia/violence/AOD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 50% of young homeless LGBQTI</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• North America 67% attempted suicide LGBQTI</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ACCHOs need to be safe/accepting places and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Still oppressed – conferences as an example</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alienated within our own communities; lack of understanding, experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accepting communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Additional Comments</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Name of Concurrent Session:**
Cultural Solutions Session 2

**Session Date & Time:**
5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm

**Facilitators Name:**
Rob McPhee

**Key Messages:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nola Turner-Jensen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Culture into the schools system</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reclaiming culture/knowledge of culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Demand cultural recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reviving culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Blueprints of the past</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Group focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sustainable</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ceremonial</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organic</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Behaviours are different for Aboriginal people even in contemporary times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identity is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong underlying values drive behaviour... clear difference between values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Recommendations and/or Actions:**

**Additional Comments**
**Name of Concurrent Session:**

Cultural Solutions Session 2

**Session Date & Time:**

5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm

**Facilitators Name:**

Rob McPhee

**Key Messages:**

Jody Kopp and Natasha Abbott

- Community driven response
- Talk to people
- Culture is embedded through advisors
- Advisors provide cultural authority and safety
- Provide advice on how to respond; is it safe to go in? Is it safe to talk about issues?
- Community have the solutions – need to use the knowledge from community
- Aims to prevent suicides
- Story telling, short films, educational, workshop 2-3 days within communities
- Easy to understand – pictures by local artists
- Listened to local people about the topic – people need to be able to relate to the content
- Several resources developed as part of the program
- Male and female interpreters are important
- Use of local cultural speakers
- Guided by the community on when and how to engage
- Talk and engage before delivering the program
- Direction is taken from the Elders only
- Lack of coordination of services
- Breakdown on communication
- Substandard services and support – not good enough
- NT government funded
- Post workshop follow is critical also
- Formal recognition of participants who have done the program
- Suicide Story is implemented and delivered across borders
- Healing focus
- Sad/hard story that needs to be told in order to change the story

**Key Recommendations and or Actions:**

- Suicide prevention and intervention programs for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander people must be delivered by them for their use and ownership of the problem and accompanying solutions

- Our communities have answers to their problems, it is time there were empowered to implement these solutions.
- Aboriginal communities and their organisations need to work together in equal partnership with each other and governments to make the difference needed in suicide prevention
- Evidence based programs such as Suicide Story should be supported, rather than investments being made in re-inventing the wheel again and again...
- Expanding the program across other States and regions
- Expanding across borders

Additional Comments
### Name of Concurrent Session:
Social Determinants – Session 3

### Session Date & Time:
5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm

### Facilitators Name:
Mel Thomas

### Key Messages:
Vanessa Lee
- Domestic violence and LGBTQI and abuse
- LGBTQI people have been around in Aboriginal society prior to colonisation... Only homophobia was not
- 1/3 experience violence – up to 80%
- High drug and alcohol intake and suicide rates
- Accessing services – people deny their sexuality, especially Aboriginal people
- 80% of bullying occurs in schools
- Problematic – community acceptance

### Key Recommendations and/or Actions:
- There is not enough statistical data, reason: silencing, 30% of identified people who hang themselves were sexually and gender diverse and suffered anxiety
- Fear that no one will believe you about domestic violence is a common theme
- Homophobia/labeled/stigmatisation/HIV positive – gay person is blamed in the community
- Most HIV positive think/act out with suicide
- Watch your language – important message

### Additional Comments:
Academic and practical presentation. Identify policy gaps i.e. lack of services. Young LGBTQI people are committing suicide at alarming rates, compounded by stigma over homophobia/gender/sexual diversity within their own communities.
- Abuse is not believed
- Gays are blamed for STIs by communities
- LGBTQI 38% suffer chronic anxiety GAD
Name of Concurrent Session:
Social Determinants – Session 2

Session Date & Time:
5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm

Facilitators Name:
Mel Thomas

Key Messages:
Micklo McKenzie and Jacob Tyndall
- Standby/Anglicare, a partnership in the West Kimberley region running for 7 years
- Work also with the central Arrente people
- They are actually 24/7, including at 2am in the morning
- On the ground, great deal of experience
- Admitted to making mistakes
- Broome to Derby 200 kms
- Responding 2-3 attempts per week
- All reactive – prevention, bush camps, intervention, assessments done
- Respecting family, culture, community protocols could be learned before interventions take place
- Bush camps more proactive
- Building relationships with community was paramount and the agencies trust was established

Key Recommendations and or Actions:
- Creating a safe environment
- Having MoUs, especially with the police
- Networking with community groups
- Supporting community
- They supported a family for about 2 years as one example
- Changing language around suicide
- Camps are a success, football was also used as a ‘carrot’ to break the ice with men and any young men with suicidal ideation especially

Additional Comments:
An established and successful example of suicide prevention, with good examples of preventable and proactive measures taken over the last 7 years. Anglicare is a religious affiliation, though the speakers were empathetic about not representing this agency.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitators Name:</td>
<td>Mel Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Messages:</td>
<td>Fiona Livingston and Nathan Blacklock</td>
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<td>Fiona spoke about:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Risk factors lens</td>
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<td>• Cultural safety imperative</td>
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<td>• Consultation with community leaders</td>
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<td>• Consultations occurred with the Moree community</td>
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<td>• There became a need for an Aboriginal co-facilitator (Nathan)</td>
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<td>• 2 pilots delivered – Inverell and Tamworth</td>
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<td>Nathan spoke about:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Elders interacting with facilitators, what can they do to make the program better</td>
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<td>• There is a lot of distrust within the health service</td>
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<td>• There is a need for someone in the community to be there quick, rather than Lifeline, to improve access to mental health services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge of totems, cultural ways of the client are paramount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Suicide prevention skills workshop/program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Innovative suicide prevention program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 24/7 day job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Constant accessibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Needs and barriers require ongoing research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</td>
<td>Ongoing work: Action plan developed to carry out suspect, connect, refer, respect and guide research...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Comments:</td>
<td>An innovative and new program that has started up facilitated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Non-religious affiliation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name of Concurrent Session:
Conversations with the Ngangkari Healer Group

Session Date & Time:
5 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm

Facilitators Name:
Vicki O’Donnell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Messages:</th>
<th>3 States SA/WA/NT work across all of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Working with young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Met regularly, inclusive of all stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teach stories about culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Support the nursing sisters</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Work with women’s council directors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Doctors from western medicine and Healers working together in the mental health space. Also with medical staff in the communities. This included working alongside specialist doctors as well</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community people see the Healers first and then go to the clinic if needed – working together</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Power in hands like a magnet to help with things like: poison, feeling no good, realign, use traditional medicines for healing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Observing, Thinking, Feeling and Looking after each other in order to make things right... Positive and negatives (there was a great diagram of how this works)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources – box with information on mental health literacy in language, fridge magnets, etc.

Word List – language describing the feelings and matched to English language to understand clearer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Recommendations and/or Actions:</th>
<th>• Traditional Healers being recognised under Western society and acknowledged as part of the health system under Social and Emotional Healing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengths in paintings and the stories which is what is happening today</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 x posters telling stories of what our people feel. Searching the story of the poster to young ones. Cycle of the child to being a mother/father and then having their own children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Videos in animation and language (3 languages) with stories of how people feel, what they do/outcomes = with good outcomes with traditional healing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Morning meditation to clean the mind for the days work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Dictionary on iTunes app in language and in English – keeping our</td>
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<tr>
<td>culture</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Story book on a young girl growing up sad in the world, because her mother is drinking all the time – the story brings the issue that our young ones have today with parents on drugs, alcohol and even child abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Second story book about a young girl (Bird Kid) going to school and in a good place</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health promotion is a big part of prevention</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments:**

- The Ngangkari Healing Group have received awards for their work they are doing with young ones with trauma and mental health
- Ngangkari Healers are used frequently at Adelaide hospital. Working together. (Great example)
**Name of Concurrent Session:**

Data and Statistics – Session 1

**Session Date & Time:**

6 May – 10.30 – 11.30am

**Facilitators Name:**

Donna Murray

**Key Messages:**

Vicki O’Donnell and Murray Chapman

- The number of suicides that didn’t present to mental health services was 70% (major finding)
- We now have data and need to act
- Can’t share copies of the presentation at the moment because it is about to be published, these were preliminary findings from the work being done by KAMS, Kimberley Mental Health and Kimberley Police
- Talk about the effects of media when reporting on suicide which can lead to incorrect information
- Research looks at what was really happening in the Kimberley
- Looked at partnerships and data
- 70% of suicides didn’t access mental health services, e.g. they were unknown to KMHS ( Kimberley Mental Health Services)
- Kimberley suicide rate is 74 per 1000
- Trends are increasing with highest in female 15-24 year olds
- 50% under 20 years of age and trending up over time
- Seasonal variations coming into wet season increases
- Driving forces – intergenerational trauma, ongoing racism, cultural disruption, social, economical, political, historical influences, timing, social media, alcohol

**Key Recommendations and/or Actions:**

- State and Federal funding around empowering local providers for successful programs not external providers
- Local solutions need to be supported as they are more effective and communities know how to do it
- Kimberley Leadership and Empowerment Program needs to be resourced and embedded in the CDEP process to empower people and their aspirations which is a more sustainable approach
- KEHELP is extremely effective which is community driven and solutions focused. Investment and implementation more broadly like the CDEP and more sustainable in training local facilitators
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to have a better say on programs rolled out more from grass roots right from the start
- Local communities not being listened to... governments need to truly engage and actively listen
- We have good data and evidence to back community now we need action and investment at local level in local programs

**Additional Comments:**
**Name of Concurrent Session:**
Data and Statistics – Session 2

**Session Date & Time:**
6 May – 10.30 – 11.30am

**Facilitators Name:**
Donna Murray

**Key Messages:**

Roz Walker ad Glenn Pearson

- Local solutions need to be supported and resourced
- Continued investment in collating and collecting data across States/Territories and release of data
- Great resource with interactive maps which people can access then on the ATSISPEP website
- Full engagement and empowerment of Aboriginal people at the local community level
- Kimberley Leadership and Empowerment Program a local solution that needs to be recognised and supported and implemented more broadly as identified by community

**Key Recommendations and or Actions:**

**Additional Comments:**

- Overview of the maps and stats of the projects
- Working in partnership to get the evidence together
- Showed the Interactive Indigenous Suicide Maps specifically the project consultations and rates of suicides across the country
- Major social disadvantage themes: centrality of culture, engagement with community, strengths based solutions and approaches, respecting connections, promoting recovery, etc. Highlighted other themes as well including leadership, local solutions, address racism
- There is a story of disadvantage but some messages coming out Aboriginal people must be involved from the start at the local community through to national level to address the disadvantage
- Local solutions and programs are critical
# National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference
## Concurrent Session Report Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Concurrent Session:</th>
<th>Prison and Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session Date &amp; Time:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Facilitators Name:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 May – 10.30 – 11.30am</td>
<td>Tom Calma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Messages:</th>
<th>No Specific Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three speakers who all stuck to time. General discussion and questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes – Post release, Inside and Prevention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. #JustJustice a supported campaign  
2. Justice reinvestment supported and should be rolled out nationally  
3. Mentoring post release programme strongly supported, should go national and be adequately funded. Currently being delivered and support on a voluntary basis  
4. Inside prison program support role is applauded and should be rolled out and funded. Need more support to address drug use  
5. Restorative justice programs like Koori Court and Working on Sentencing in Adelaide supported  
6. Acknowledged that all three speakers were informative and their work is applauded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>

<p>| Additional Comments:                |                              |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Concurrent Session:</th>
<th>Stolen Generations Session 3 (All presentations included on this form)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session Date &amp; Time:</strong></td>
<td>6 May – 10.30 – 11.30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitators Name:</strong></td>
<td>Benny Hodges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Messages:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngaree Ah Kit – Darwin Indigenous Suicide Prevention Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We focus on community solutions and saving our mob our way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Link to local service providers to make sure our mob are recognised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide input into policy about our solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In order to keep people safe, need a sense of self-identity, sense of purpose and a sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is important that we create this for our mob, be proud of what we are and celebrate our success and share our positive stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Important to treat and act with respect to all of us – creating inclusion and educating our community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Our Stolen Generation families are struggling with the impact of trauma and overrepresented in the justice system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We should be looking at any land that we have available as part of healing potential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wrap around joined up responses are needed for healing our Stolen Generations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tjalaminu Mia – Sister Kate’s Home Kids’ Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many of our descendants are still under the shadow of a lot of the issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transgenerational trauma is present within out Sister Kate’s families – it has been hard for some of our young ones as our parents could not always be available and we have had to create a sense of belonging and identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some of our Stolen Generation mob are lost and can’t reconnect to family and are slowly drinking themselves to death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We have to begin our healing from some of the places we started</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• We want to reclaim our missions as places of healing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Given the Stolen Generations, I am now one of the 2nd generation who does not know their own language and culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We are struggling to find our ceremony and songs, those of us disconnected is there a way for us to know to get this back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do we support our Stolen Generation and their descendants to get strong back in culture? Our old and young people should be</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
adopted in culture.
- Need to be able to share up our knowledge and our healing
- Healing Foundation growing bottom up approaches and we need cultural solutions. The Healing Foundation is on track

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Bringing Them Home report is 20 years old next year and very few of these recommendations have been actioned – this needs to be addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We need a broad range of healing services for Stolen Generations that are designed by them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Services are too fractured for Stolen Generation people and need integrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This Conference should work with the Healing Foundation to put more effort into establishing Cultural Healing Centres to provide SEWB services to individuals, families and communities at risk of self harm and suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Important to create a Healing Centre for our people to support our future generations to build their identity and strengthen their spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We need support for our men and help people to access counseling and support and get away from the stigma that is attached to this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Power of reclamation of place – for some people being back on country in missions and homes is important but this is not universal. Stolen Generation experiences are diverse and different around the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We have to be inclusive and heal together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stolen Generations are being discriminated against. We need additional funds to drive change and this can’t be left to our organisations alone to meet this need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Additional Comments |
## Name of Concurrent Session:
International Speakers NZ

## Session Date & Time:
6 May – 10.30 – 11.30am

## Facilitators Name:
Dion Tatow

## Key Messages:
- Listening and learning from our Elders to create initiatives to help our people
- Supporting our young people to have a voice and initiate change
- Ensure a strong contingent from Indigenous communities around Australia are at the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention conference
- Traditional and cultural concepts to underpin work with families and communities
- Multi-layers/facets across, below/above have to be considered

## Key Recommendations and or Actions:

## Additional Comments:
**Name of Concurrent Session:**
Community Based Solutions – National Empowerment Project

**Session Date & Time:**
6 May – 1-3pm

**Facilitators Name:**
Patrick Johnson

### Key Messages:
- Community driven organisation
- Program is currently being delivered in Kuranda and Cherbourg
- Focus on healthy lifestyle and culture
- Local ownership
- Empowerment, Leadership and Healing
- Development of Community Wellbeing plans
- Mental Health First Aid courses have been provided for community members

### Key Recommendations and or Actions:

### Additional Comments:
**Name of Concurrent Session:**
Community Based Solutions – Dadirri and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy

**Session Date & Time:**
6 May – 1-3pm

**Facilitators Name:**
Patrick Johnson

**Key Messages:**
- Gamarada Program in Redfern using Indigenous healing
- “Show me love I will show you change”
- Healing through culture
- Quiet stillness
- Listening is more than the ears, its also heart, mind and spirit
- Dadirri – using mindfulness
- Deep listening – Deep connections


**Key Recommendations and or Actions:**

**Additional Comments:**
The audience were asked to participate in a song and dance to “Blackfella/Whitefella” song – this was captured on video as well by Ken the presenter
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Concurrent Session:</th>
<th>Community Based Solutions – Yiriman Keeps Country Good so Young People are Healthy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session Date &amp; Time:</td>
<td>6 May – 1-3pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators Name:</td>
<td>Patrick Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Messages:</td>
<td>• Cultural youth program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Driven and supported by the local elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Back on country</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women’s and Men’s group programs are run separately</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Need more programs back on country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</td>
<td>Need more Back on Country programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Comments:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Name of Concurrent Session:**
Sharing Knowledge

**Session Date & Time:**
6 May – 1-3pm

**Facilitators Name:**
Dion Tatow

**Key Messages:**
- Suicide – worst form of lateral violence
- All life is sacred
- Teaching our kids to be proud – flow on to parents – empowers our families/communities
- We know what works – give us the proper funding to implement successful programs
- Some bloody good white fullas around who are welcome to come on the journey with us – not as drivers, but passengers on our journey

**Key Recommendations and or Actions:**

**Additional Comments:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Concurrent Session:</th>
<th>Social Determinants – Session 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session Date &amp; Time:</strong></td>
<td>6 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitators Name:</strong></td>
<td>Dameyon Bonson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Messages:</strong></td>
<td>• One family at a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rent (low income)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Depression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cultural?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Link to services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Barriers to school aren’t isn’t simply that they don’t want to go</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Compounded trauma</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Outings increase connection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</strong></td>
<td>• Resourced – spiritual realm of healing needs to be recognised and resourced and supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Comments:</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Concurrent Session Report Form

**Name of Concurrent Session:**
Social Determinants – Session 2

**Session Date & Time:**
6 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm

**Facilitators Name:**
Dameyon Bonson

**Key Messages:**
- Cultural continuity
- Men’s engagement
- The problem in the 100’s, the men’s Jilirra Movement is to ensure that culture isn’t lost as new culture is happening
- Compounded grief
- Tijilirra Movement aims to use traditional tools to heal and converse to heal and strengthen each other

**Key Recommendations and or Actions:**
- Resourced – spiritual realm of healing needs to be recognised cultural movements

**Additional Comments:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name of Concurrent Session:</strong></th>
<th>Social Determinants – Session 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session Date &amp; Time:</strong></td>
<td>6 May – 1.00 – 2.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitators Name:</strong></td>
<td>Dameyon Bonson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Messages:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anxiety – Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exploring the role that family and community have through a greater understanding of the causality of anxiety</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Case study on a quota of Aboriginal people in emergency accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No where to go</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Self harming gets a bed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Recommendations and or Actions:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health workers skilled in anxiety</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Standards of practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Spiritual realm of healing needs to be recognised</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Comments:</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>