



THIRRILI

Thirrili Ltd

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A hello from CEO Jacqueline McGowan Jones

I am honoured to have been chosen by the Board to lead Thirrili through the next phases of their growth.

My own family has been touched by suicide and I firmly believe that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders need a postvention service that understands the cultural context in which we work.

I am also very pleased that the Board has shown initiative and commitment by allowing the CEO (me!) to remain in Darwin.

My first week has been thoroughly hectic – I cannot thank Kerry Arabena enough for her work as the interim CEO and the achievements she and

the team have realised in that time.

I have met all our people and believe we have a solid foundation for building upon our successes and to continue to develop and enhance the work we do with individuals, families and communities.



One of our key priorities is to fill vacant National Indigenous Postvention Advocate (NIPA)

positions in all jurisdictions and we hope to advertise those roles this week.

Our Advocates provide much needed guidance, advice and support to navigate the multiple service systems.

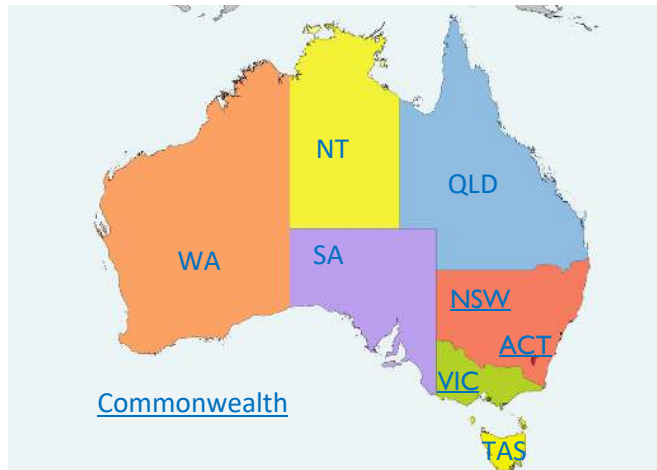
However, and perhaps more importantly, they provide personalised support to those affected by the grief, loss and trauma.

Much as the Board has shown flexibility in allowing me to remain in Darwin, we will show flexibility about where our Advocates are located – noting we have areas where there is a critical need.

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COVID-19 information updated

Continued high numbers of new infections in Victoria in the last few days has highlighted that the danger from Coronavirus is not yet over. Please continue to follow the advice of officials in your state or territory (links below) and from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) [here](#).



Black (All?) Lives Matter

Thanks to the ubiquitous smart phone and their inbuilt high quality digital cameras, events such as the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the associated protests are reaching — and dare I say touching the hearts of — people from all parts of the globe.

It is therefore not surprising that along with the UK, France and other countries, we have seen protest action too.

To the credit of protestors here in Australia, we thankfully haven't witnessed the violence that has occurred in other places.

The tragic events in the US have enabled a 'bright light' to be shone on structural issues of racism in Australia, particularly in regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and how this impacts through the justice system.

Unfortunately, some of the discussion—particularly on social media¹ — misses the real issues that are at stake here, while focusing on questions of semantics and allegations of reverse racism, e.g. "Why do only black lives matter?"

Of course *all lives* matter. The use of the term *Black Lives Matter* (BLM) is not meant to deny or undervalue all other lives.

Rather, the use of this term is analogous with the idea of affirmative action, where there is recognition that a particular group has been discriminated against previously and something needs to change for them.

Perhaps President Barack Obama said it better when speaking to the debate between Black Lives Matter and All Lives Matter in 2015.

Obama said, "I think that the

reason that the organizers used the phrase Black Lives Matter was not because they were suggesting that no one else's lives matter ... rather what they were suggesting was there is a specific problem that is happening in the African American community that's not happening in other communities".²

As far back as February 2016, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg "scolded" employees for what he calls "several recent instances" of people crossing out "black lives matter" on signature walls at the company's headquarters and writing "all lives matter" instead.

In a note posted to employees on a company announcement page, Zuckerberg says he and several other leaders at the company have previously warned employees against doing this. "I was already very disappointed by this disrespectful behavior before, but after my communication, I now consider this malicious as well," Zuckerberg writes.

"'Black lives matter' doesn't mean other lives don't. It's simply asking that the black community also achieves the justice they deserve."³

More recently, Zuckerberg has found controversy having to explain to enraged employees and the public about Facebook's decision not to take action against posts by President Donald Trump in relation to BLM.⁴

"The conversation around justice for Indigenous people has been going for more than two centuries, but it took the death of George Floyd in the United States for Australians to open their hearts and minds" according to Tahnee Jash.⁵

Let us hope that the hearts and minds of non-Indigenous Australians continue to be opened and that real solutions to past and

current injustice isn't slowed by a lack of understanding or worse, subversion from elements who contribute nothing to finding solutions to longstanding problems.

Notes:

1. It appears that fake campaigns on twitter and other social media have been seeking to undermine the BLM movement. For example, see:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-06-22/black-lives-matter-4chan-shaved-head-woman-photographs/12363952>

2. *President Obama defends Blacks Lives Matter movement*, CBS news October 23, 2015. Available here:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/president-barack-obama-defends-black-lives-matter-movement/>

3. *Zuckerberg Tells Facebook Staff To Stop Crossing Out 'Black Lives Matter'*. Available here:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/02/26/467985384/zuckerberg-tells-facebook-staff-to-stop-crossing-out-black-lives-matter>

4. *Zuckerberg posts 'Black lives matter' and pledges to review Facebook's policies*

Available at: https://www.kmov.com/zuckerberg-posts-black-lives-matter-and-pledges-to-review-facebooks-policies/article_55f1c85c-85cf-5092-ba72-a072552a8698.html

5. *How to learn from Indigenous people about the Black Lives Matter movement in Australia*: ABC article, 22/06/20. Available here:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-22/how-to-engage-with-indigenous-content-black-lives-matter/12373408>

"Black lives matter' doesn't mean other lives don't. It's simply asking that the black community also achieves the justice they deserve".



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We are focused on finding the right people for the roles and this may require some flexibility in location.

It is vital that the Advocate positions are filled by Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islanders.

The Board is also reviewing the structure to ensure we have a solid foundation and leadership approach to our work.

We hope to be able to advertise additional leadership roles in the very near future.

A major priority is to also build upon, and extend, the partnerships already being developed with Standby and other service organisations to provide a truly wrap-around service on a national basis.

In this regard, I have met with the partners in the Kimberley Postvention Services partnership and am confident we will continue to provide much needed support in that region, in collaboration with Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service, Standby and Anglicare.

We will continue to listen to our families and communities about the supports they need – and if this includes services that are not part of our remit, we will support them to access other services as may be required.

We will also strengthen our work in building and restoring capacity in communities to recover from loss and to provide support to each other during times of grief.

A major achievement from Kerry was the establishment of the Scholarships – announcements will be made next week on the successful applicants and we will provide you with more information about each of the recipients.

Also, a great initiative was the small grants program and the successful first projects will also be announced in the coming weeks.

We have a lot to do – and our Board,

our People and our Communities are focused on working together to ensure Thirrili and the National Indigenous Postvention Service can provide the critical supports required to move forward.

I look forward to meeting our many stakeholders as I settle into the role.

Until next time,
Jacqueline



NIPA roles to be advertised shortly

Watch this space for upcoming advertisements for vacant National Indigenous Postvention Advocate positions.

In this intake, we will be seeking people to fill roles in the following jurisdictions:

- ⇒ Victoria/TAS (1x)
- ⇒ New South Wales/ACT (1x)
- ⇒ South Australia (1x)
- ⇒ Northern Territory (1x)
- ⇒ Western Australia (2x)
- ⇒ Queensland (2x).

Please note that the location of the Advocates within those states and territory are yet to be determined. Please note further that in addition to this newsletter, these positions will be advertised widely.

Have a think about whether working in the postvention space is for you...we want the best people to join us in our important work.



Significant community events

Coming of the Light

Wednesday 1 July 2020

Go to:

<https://www.qm.qld.gov.au/Find+out+about/Aboriginal+and+Torres+Strait+Islander+Cultures/Gatherings/Coming+of+the+Light+Torres+Strait+Islands>

NAIDOC Week

POSTPONED UNTIL DATES TBC

Go to: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/>

National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s Day

Tuesday 4 August 2020

Go to:

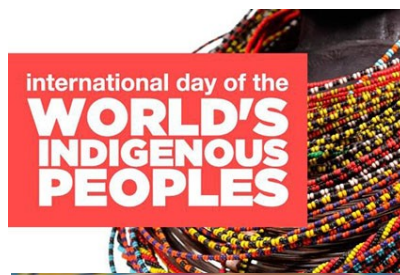
<https://aboriginalchildrensday.com.au/>

International Day of the World’s Indigenous People

Sunday 9 August 2020

Go to:

<https://www.regions4.org/events/international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-peoples-2020/>



Powerful speech by Senator Malarndirri McCarthy

Senator McCarthy gave a powerful speech in relation to Aboriginal deaths in custody in the Australian Senate on 17 June 2020.

To read the speech, go to Hansard here:

<https://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/senate-remembers-aboriginal-custody-deaths/news-story/55d5a431db8d489a1f48a5ec6cab4e9c>

National Indigenous Postvention Service (NIPS) notifications 2020: updated every issue

Updated 22 June 2020. In the past week — in addition to sadly, two reports of suicide — we have received 10 reports of incidents involving trauma, all of which fortunately did not involve a death. In terms of the reports of suicide, the respective Coroner in the relevant jurisdiction will determine the cause of death in each instance.

	Gender			State or Territory*						Total
	Male	Not known at this time	Female	QLD	WA	NT	VIC	NSW	SA	
Completed suicides	44	2	16	21	13	9	8	5	6	62

Age range	17 and younger	18-30 inclusive	Older than 30	Not known at this time	Total
Completed suicides	10	31	15	6	62

	Total
All other incidents include attempted suicides and/or traumatic incidents with or without fatalities	43

Crisis contact numbers

- ⇒ Lifeline: 13 11 14
- ⇒ Suicide call back service: 1300 659 467
- ⇒ Coronavirus mental health support line 1800 512 348
- ⇒ Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800
- ⇒ MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78
- ⇒ Beyond Blue: 1300 845 745
- ⇒ GriefLine: 1300 845 745 (midday to 3am AEST 7 days a week)
- ⇒ Thirrili After Suicide support 1800 805 807

Thirrili Ltd ABN 617 635 828

Administration:
 PO Box 2115
 Richmond 3121



T H I R R I L I

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

National Indigenous Postvention Service (NIPS) explained

As we complete the transition from the former National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NICRS) to the National Indigenous Postvention Service (NIPS), it is probably a good time to reiterate what it is our people do on the ground.

First of all, what do we mean by postvention?

Simply put, Postvention, by its definition is the support that is provided after the loss of a loved one from suicide.

Why aren't we focussed on prevention rather than supporting loved ones after a suicide?

Postvention is widely accepted as a vital component of suicide prevention.

We know that people who have lost loved ones through suicide are at increased risk of suicide.

By directly supporting these people through their grief, we are not only assisting them in practical ways to deal with that grief, we are also helping to prevent further suicides within that family or kinship group.

What sort of help will we provide?

Our role, when invited to by affected individuals and families is to provide practical social support, link people with a range of local social, health and community services and where appropriate continue to work with local services to ensure care and support continues beyond the immediate aftermath of the traumatic incident (we call this throughcare).

We are Advocates, speaking up and standing beside people who need assistance, whether that be in maintaining housing, dealing with all manner of government and non government agencies on their behalf; or for example, liaising with funeral directors on behalf of families at the worst time of their lives.

Our aim is not to replace the good work being done by local services. Rather, we aim to compliment the work being done by them to ensure the

best outcome for families and their communities.

To understand more about what underpins our work, have a look at:

[Thirrili \(2018\) Defining and addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trauma, grief and postvention: Literature review; Melbourne.](#)



Worth a read

In addition to the literature review referred to in the previous article, Thirrili has authored several other papers, most of which can be found on our website.

One such paper is our submission to the 2019 Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system.

Within that paper, we made a number of recommendations including:

Recommendation 1

Mental health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be provided within a framework that recognises that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have suffered trauma through their lives.

Recommendation 2

Delivery of Mental Health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be delivered consistent with the nine guiding principles that emphasise the holistic and whole-of-life view of health held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, as detailed in the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017- 23.

Recommendation 3

Community based programs must be developed in consultation with Elders to ensure cultural appropriateness.

Recommendation 4

Suicide prevention and postvention programs must look beyond the short term, be flexible and designed and delivered as a result of consultation, engagement and partnership with the

community and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service sector.

To read the Submission in full, go to: <http://thirrili.com.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/SubmissionMental%20HealthRC2019.pdf>



Pat Dudgeon talks about indigenous suicide

In the June issue of Cultural Survival, a quarterly magazine that has a focus on advancing Indigenous Peoples' rights and cultures across the globe, Pat Dudgeon talks about combatting suicide among Indigenous Peoples.

To read the interview, go to:

<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/combating-suicide-amongst-indigenous-peoples-interview>

In the news

The National Indigenous Times (NIT) reported on 17 June that Western Australia will no longer jail people for non payment of fines and will release those currently in jail for non payment.

Western Australia is the last state to legislate in this way and the Aboriginal Legal Service WA (ALSWA) has welcomed the decision, saying in a statement the new amendments would "play a significant role in reducing the fracturing of Aboriginal families and even loss of life".

To read the full story, [click here](#)

