



THIRRILI

Thirrili Ltd

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 13

7 JULY 2020

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Chief Executive Officer Update

Hello Everyone

I have said before that I am honoured to have taken on the CEO role with Thirrili and one of the most gratifying and inspirational aspects is the team who work tirelessly to support our Clients – and those in the ‘backroom’ doing critical work to ensure we can provide quality, timely and Indigenous specific cultural support to families and communities during their time of grief and loss.

I also want to acknowledge that our team have continued working resolutely throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, turning their homes into their office – I want to thank all of our team for being so flexible during such worrying times.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK: Our Survey is important

The Board and I have discussed the need to gain regular feedback from our Stakeholders about what we are doing well; what might we

do better; and what we could do to address any concerns.

Your feedback is important – we want to ensure that Thirrili is growing and learning from our experiences to ensure we continue



to deliver culturally responsive and secure postvention services to individuals, families and communities.

We are also keen to ensure we are building solid partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and services; government (across all tiers) and the not-for-profit and non-government sectors.

To that end, Thirrili will shortly send a Survey Link to our

Stakeholders. If you, or anybody you know who has used our service, would like to be included, please send your contact information to:

Peter.S@thirrili.com.au .

RECRUITMENT: Opportunities around

We are currently seeking people to join our National Indigenous Postvention Advocate team – positions are available in many regions and the location of the Advocate is flexible so long as they are in the region and can easily access other locations:

- ◆ South-West WA
- ◆ Midwest/Murchison/Gascoyne, WA
- ◆ East Kimberley, WA
- ◆ South Australia
- ◆ New South Wales
- ◆ Far North QLD – Townsville, Cairns or elsewhere in the Region
- ◆ South QLD – preferably Toowoomba/Cherbourg or surrounding areas

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COVID-19 information updated

As we pointed out in last week’s edition, the threat from COVID– 19 has not passed. While some of us are in a ‘better place’ in terms of lockdowns for example (particularly compared to those of us in the suburbs of Melbourne), we all need to continue to do all the little things required to stay safe. Please continue to follow the advice of officials from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and your state or territory below:

- [NIAA](#)
- [ACT](#)
- [Commonwealth](#)
- [NSW](#)
- [NT](#)
- [QLD](#)
- [SA](#)
- [TAS](#)
- [VIC](#)
- [WA](#)

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- ◆ Victoria – location flexible
- ◆ Central Australia, NT/SA/ or potentially QLD (for example, Mt Isa)

We are really keen to build our gender balance within the team, so we strongly encourage both men and women to apply for these roles. For further information and to obtain a copy of the Position Description, Contact: angela.t@thirrili.com.au.

Note: Advocate roles are designated as having a genuine requirement to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

We will also shortly be advertising two new roles – the Practice Manager and the Regional Implementation Manager – watch this space – these are exciting roles that provide opportunities for people with management and leadership experience to join this growing organisation.

.....and some internal staffing and recruitment

We have recently had some changes in our team – with many of our people moving into new roles. A full listing of the current Thirrili staff is included on page 3 of this newsletter – including email contacts, their roles and telephone details.

The following are now in new roles:

- ◆ Catherine Elvins, Executive Manager Corporate Services
- ◆ Rachael Schmerl, Executive Manager Programs and Policy
- ◆ Angela Threlfall, Manager Corporate Relationships & Systems

Kaytlin Kelly, Peter Stephenson, Chenoa Dowling and Shannon Kearing are continuing in their current roles.

Aunty Gracelyn Smallwood has joined our team of National Indigenous Postvention Advocates whilst we undertake recruitment.

April Barry is continuing her work on the South Australian Covid -19 Project.

Joan Washington is also continuing in her role as the Standby Coordinator in Darwin.

As always, these people work collaboratively every day to ensure Thirrili delivers their much needed services.

....staff survey

We are also commencing a new Staff Survey to check on the wellbeing of our people – the first Survey will commence this week, with monthly “Pulse Checks” so we can check on progress – especially critical as new people join our organisation.

Scholarship Program commences

I am incredibly delighted to advise that our first group of Scholarship Participants commenced their six week formal program on Monday 6 July. An initiative of the interim CEO, Ms Kerry Arabena, I am very pleased to see this program come to fruition. We have a wonderful group of 15 participants – and our team, together with the amazing Tanja Hirvonen will spend the next six weeks in delivering a program that includes:

- ⇒ Thirrili Model of Cultural Engagement
- ⇒ Roles and Responsibilities of a Suicide Postvention workforce
- ⇒ Strategies that help families when working in complex situations.
- ⇒ Workplace orientation and buddy matching,
- ⇒ Reflections.
- ⇒ How to manage our social and emotional wellbeing,
- ⇒ Final assessments
- ⇒ Assistance with CV's and written references from the Program Leader, Tanja Hirvonen

I look forward to hearing from our Participants throughout the program to gain their thoughts – and share them with our readers.

Partnership with South Australia extended

We are pleased to report that our COVID-19 Partnership with the SA Government has been extended to the end of September 2020.

This Partnership delivers much needed support and service coordination to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in South Australia who may be affected with mental health issues due to isolation, physical distancing and, in some cases, unable to return to Country due to COVID-19.

I congratulate the South Australian government for their ongoing commitment to ensuring all citizens have access to services and supports during this time.

As part of this agreement, we will be seeking to employ an additional Advocate in South Australia – this role is specifically designated to be filled by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We are also keen to recruit a male to this position to ensure we can provide culturally appropriate support to South Australian First Nations peoples. More information can be obtained by emailing Rachael Schmerl at: Rachael.s@thirrili.com.au.

Our Board and Strategic Planning

Our Board has been working towards a new Strategic Plan to guide Thirrili and the National Indigenous Postvention Service into the future.

The Board has a further two workshops scheduled for July-August and we hope to have the final plan available in mid-late August 2020.

Finally, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns – Thirrili is committed to a continuous quality improvement approach to all the work we do.

Take care, be well and farewell until next time

Jacqueline

Jacqueline McGowan-Jones
Chief Executive Officer



Applications extended to 17 July

National Indigenous Postvention Advocate (NIPA)

Multiple Locations – WA: Kimberley, Midwest/Murchison, Gascoyne;

Far North Queensland; NSW/ACT; Victoria/Tasmania; South Australia; Central Australia

Full-time

(fixed term to 31 December 2020)

Contact Angela Threlfall, –Systems and Business Relationships Manager, Thirrili via email angela.t@thirrili.com to obtain a copy of the Position Description and selection information.

To discuss the role in more detail, please contact Rachael Schmerl, Executive Manager – Policy and Programs, on 0418 482 050.

Job advertisement and Position Description are also available at <https://thirrili.com.au> . Come and join the team!

Thirrili Staff Contact Information

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>E-mail</i>
Jacqueline McGowan -Jones	Chief Executive	PO Box 41855 Casuarina NT 0811	jacqueline.m@thirrili.com.au
Adelle Morgan	Executive Assistant		adelle.m@thirrili.com.au
Peter Stephenson	Communications Coordinator	Melbourne, VIC	peter.s@thirrili.com.au
Catherine Elvins	Executive Manager (Corporate)		catherine.e@thirrili.com.au
Shannon Kearing	WA CRSA	Perth, WA	shannon.k@thirrili.com.au
Kaytlin Kelly	Administration Officer		Kaytlin.k@thirrili.com.au
Rachael Schmerl	Executive Manager (Programs & Policy)	Adelaide, SA	rachael.s@thirrili.com.au
April Barry	Community Development Worker – SA Virtual Support Network		april.b@thirrili.com.au
Angela Threlfall	Corporate Relationships and Systems Manager	Cairns, QLD	angela.t@thirrili.com.au
Gracelyn Smallwood	QLD NIPA	Townsville, QLD	gracelyn.s@thirrili.com.au
Tanja Hirvonen	Clinical supervisor		tanja@iaha.com.au
Chenoa Dowling	QLD NIPA	Brisbane, QLD	chenoa.d@thirrili.com.au
Joan Washington	NT Stand By Coordinator	Darwin, NT	joan.w@thirrili.com.au

Meet more of our Scholarship participants

This week we introduce you to some more of our deadly participants in Thirril's first ever Scholarship Program



Brooke Mendes

Brooke Mendes is a highly motivated Gunai/Kurnai and Djapwurrung woman with over 10 years' experience working with community and facilitating various programs. She is extremely passionate about her culture and embedding culture within workplaces and schools.

Brooke grew up in a 'western environment', not knowing much about her culture or where she came from. She had a loss of identity and struggled learning about her culture, feeling like she had to constantly justify who she was.

As Brooke left school and started working closely with community, she had the opportunity to become more connected with her culture. Brooke found her calling and finally found belonging, identity and connection. Her niche was working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth and she took a job working as an Indigenous Liaison Officer for Noosa District State High School.

In addition to her work in schools, Brooke became a Master trainer for You Me ~ Which Way – a program which provides opportunity for Aboriginal community members to explore suicide and self – harm and it's impacts on individuals, families and communities.

Brooke is now busy delivering and

promoting the 'You Me ~ Which Way' program across Australia, which has now become full-time employment with StandBy.



Shannon Kearing

Shannon Kearing is a Nyoongar man from the south west of Western Australia. He has been teaching culture for over 30 years through Nyoongar cultural dancing, bush foods and medicines, cultural awareness and history; as well as being a cultural ambassador in Germany.

Shannon worked as an outreach officer for Moorditj Koort Health and Wellness Centre for 2 years and spent 7 years at Relationships Australia before that; holding various roles including outreach worker, Men's Group Coordinator and facilitator. In the latter role, he co-facilitated grief and loss workshops.

Every year Shannon and his family hold the Isiah Kearing Memorial Cup Basketball Carnival to promote mental health through depression and suicide. This Carnival is in his son's name whom he lost in 2013.

A frequent workshop presenter, Shannon presented a workshop as a guest speaker at the 2nd National and International Suicide Convention 2018, held in Perth. He has also presented as guest speaker at various suicide awareness conferences all over Western Australia.

A NICRS Advocate for Thirrili since 2018, Shannon is participating in the

Scholarship Program both as a professional development opportunity in preparation for other roles in the postvention sector; as well as to share some of his vast cultural knowledge as a Nyoongar man.



Jane Lai

Jane is a highly qualified Holistic Health and Wellbeing Professional for over 25 years, specialising in Mental Health and Mindfulness, Stress Management and Meditation.

As a Social and Cultural Anthropologist with a foundation in Acute Nursing and Metaphysics of Healing in Mind, Body, Spirit and Cultural Healing modalities, Jane is passionate about educating, empowering and enhancing the lives of Indigenous Australians and to coach them to speak up and be listened to when facing life's challenges.

Jane has been researching her own heritage and has only recently connected with her Chinese Indigenous mob up in Darwin, where there is a big mob of Chinese with the same surname of "LAI".

Her great grandfather, Lai Ah Chee came from a region in China called HAKKA with a group of young adventurous men who were lured by the Goldrush days of the 1800's in Australia. He ended up marrying one of the Larrikiya women and became a market gardener.

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"Brooke grew up... not knowing much about her culture or where she came from. She had a loss of identity and struggled learning about her culture, feeling like she had to constantly justify who she was".

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Jane is also the author and illustrator of a book called, MEGASOARUS, about a Central Australian wedgetail eagle.

She is very grateful and happy to be part of the Thirrili family —and United Synergies and Standby— and looks forward to becoming part of the Team.



April Barry

My name is April and I am very proud Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara woman with family roots from the APY Lands.

I am also an extremely proud mother of 2 beautiful young boys and currently live in, and call Adelaide home.

I grew up in Alice Springs and regularly travelled on the holidays to visit family on the lands.

I absolutely loved growing up in what I like to call, two worlds, living in Alice Springs but also living apart of the Lands.

I am currently working with Thirrili as a Community Development Officer – SA Virtual Support Network, specifically around Covid-19.

I look forward to my future with Thirrili. I am very excited about working among an intelligent group of staff and cannot wait to work more closely with the wider Aboriginal community.

I am so excited to be apart of this scholarship program and to learn new things - connecting and networking with people from all around this beautiful country we live on.

I look forward to getting to know each one of you and learning and thriving as a team.



Our Mission and Values

At Thirrili, our Mission is *Supporting our people and communities to stem suicide and trauma*. It is this Mission which underpins our planning and strategy and thus everything we seek to do.

Our Values give us the ‘how to do what we do’. At Thirrili, our stated values include:

- providing respectful and responsive support
- working in trauma informed and culturally safe ways
- honesty and integrity in our relationships
- working collaboratively with communities, and
- strengthening resilience and wellbeing of communities.

Each of these values are written in such a way that they guide our actions and provide the ‘compass’, both morally and directionally, to lead us towards being successful in our Mission.

When the Values of the organisation ‘line up’ with the people within it, there is no limit to what can be achieved!

We look forward to continuing to ‘live’ Our Values in everything we do.



Significant events

A reminder that NAIDOC Week has been postponed due to COVID –19 until 8-15 November.

This year’s theme is *Always Was, Always Will Be*.

For more information, 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/>

In the news

Today show reporter and Gamilaroi woman Brooke



Boney has ‘called out’ Queensland Senator Pauline Hanson for her attacks on public housing tenants in lockdown on Channel Nine’s Today show.

The Guardian Australia reported that Brook told ABC’s Q+A program on Monday night that she was happy Hanson was dropped from Nine, noting Hanson had said hurtful comments about Aboriginal people in the past.

To read the full story, go to: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jul/07/qa-brooke-boney-completely-heartbroken-over-pauline-hansons-public-housing-comments>

Want to be included on our mailing list?
Something relevant you’d like us to share with our readers?
 Email: peter.s@thirrili.com.au

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

Updated 6/7/2020. A quieter week in terms of reports, however, sadly we still had one notification of a suspected suicide.

	Gender			State or Territory*						Total
	Male	Not known at this time	Female	QLD	WA	NT	VIC	NSW	SA	
Completed suicides	45	2	16	21	14	9	8	5	6	63

Age range	17 and younger	18-30 inclusive	Older than 30	Not known at this time	Total
Completed suicides	11	32	16	4	62

	Total
All other incidents include attempted suicides and/or traumatic incidents with or without fatalities	53

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

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