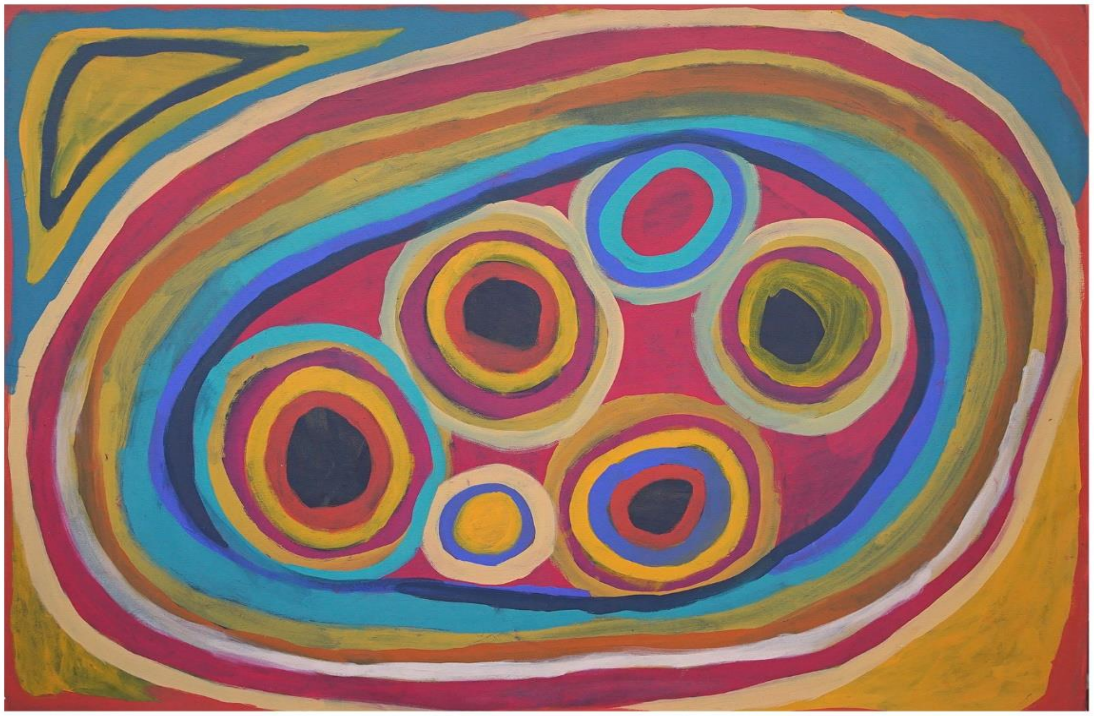


THIRRILI

ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018

From the CEO's desk

Welcome to the inaugural Annual Report of Thirrili Ltd. As Chief Executive Officer, I am proud to be leading a team of talented and inspiring people who are united in their commitment to strengthening the social wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Since we first opened our doors, we have shared the sadness of the families who have experienced the tragic loss of loved ones through suicide and other trauma. Our team has respectfully and sensitivity engaged with those who are hurting, providing holistic emotional and practical support. We have endeavoured to provide a speedy response to those in greatest need and we will continue to do so.

While our work is critical in reducing the levels of distress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities experience after a suicide or a traumatic incident, this work does not address fully the systemic and long-standing causal issues for which solutions have eluded us for too long. We know that suicide rates in the Kimberley region of Australia are more than six times than that of other Australians. And sadly, an emerging trend across Australia which we must address is the increasing tragedy of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women taking their lives. It is important we start working together to better understand the issues contributing to their deaths, so we can better provide support to stem suicide.

Thirrili Ltd has made outstanding progress over the past year and a half and we thank everyone involved in our work. This includes our funders, partner agencies and supporters.

I would also like to thank our inaugural Board Chair John Paterson and Michelle DeShong who have recently retired from the Board. Your work has created a strong organisation, ready and capable to meet future challenges head on. We thank you for your legacy.

Additionally, I would like to welcome the new Board Members: Indi Clarke, Belinda Duarte, and Jaqueline Flynn.

We very much look forward to your contribution.

Our Board: 2017-18

Left to right: Mark Wenitong, Technical Expert Director; **Wayne Kinrade,** Founding Director; **Michelle Deshong**, Technical Expert Director; **Adele Cox**, Founding Director and Chief Executive; **John Paterson**, Founding Director and Chairperson; and **Tim Goodwin**, Technical Expert Director.

Board achievements in 2017-18

During this reporting period, the key activities and achievements of the founding directors and Board from 27.02.2017 to 30.06.2018 have included:

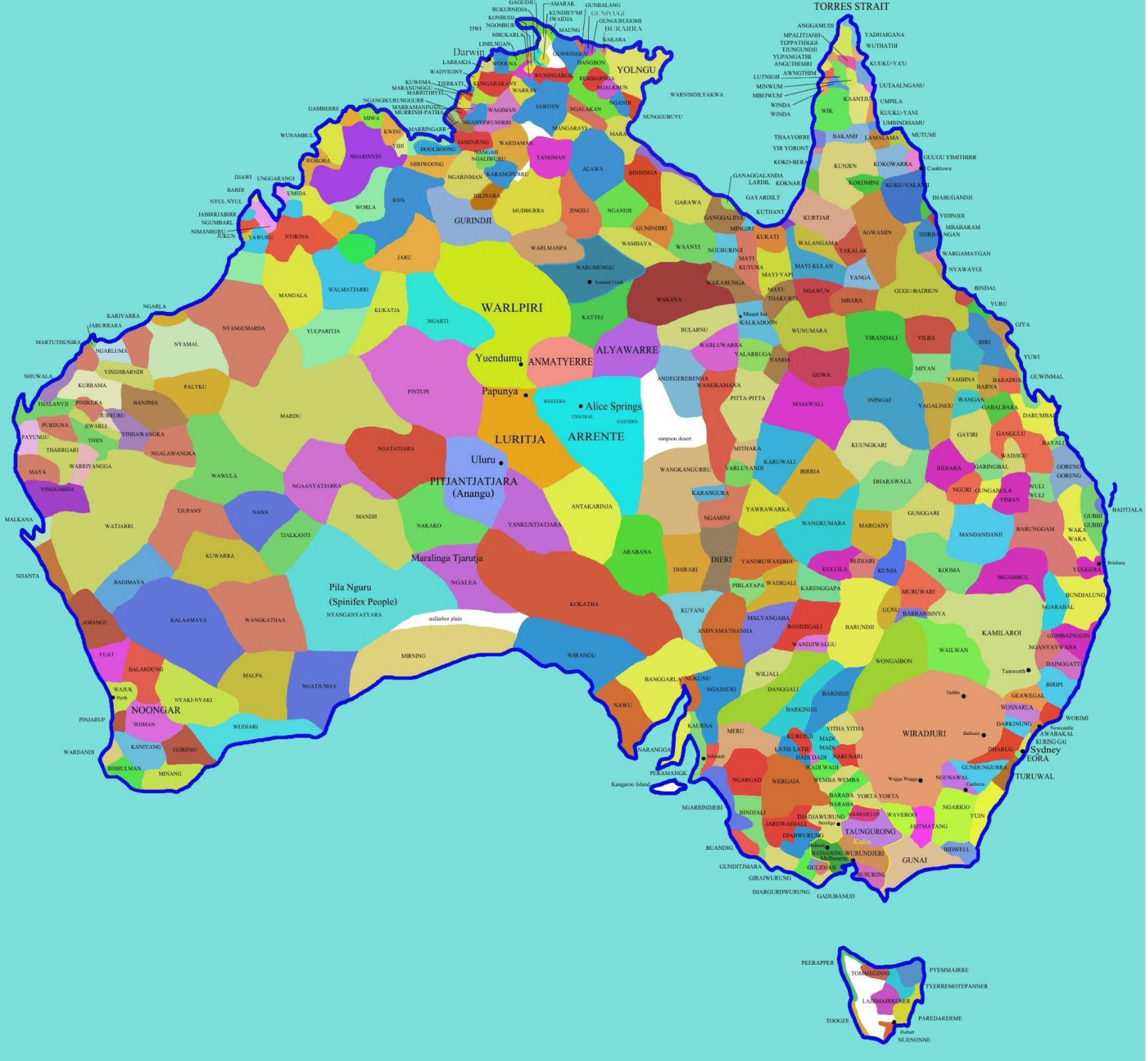
- **Establishing governance arrangements** for the new entity, involving recruiting Board members and establishing the Finance and Audit Sub-committee and Policy and Operations Sub-committee
- **Three board meetings**
- **Strategic planning to establish Thirrili Ltd's mission** of:

  Supporting social and wellbeing of our people to stem suicide and trauma

  Agreed strategies identified for the coming year includes:

  - Advocating on the big issues surrounding suicide
  - Strengthening the social and emotional wellbeing of communities
  - Using our suicide data effectively to inform and influence
  - Advocating the strengthening of suicide prevention services for young women
  - Articulating the need for change in the child protection system to better support our young people

The National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NICRS) operated across Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Victoria and Queensland in 2018



NICRS Advocates are located in:

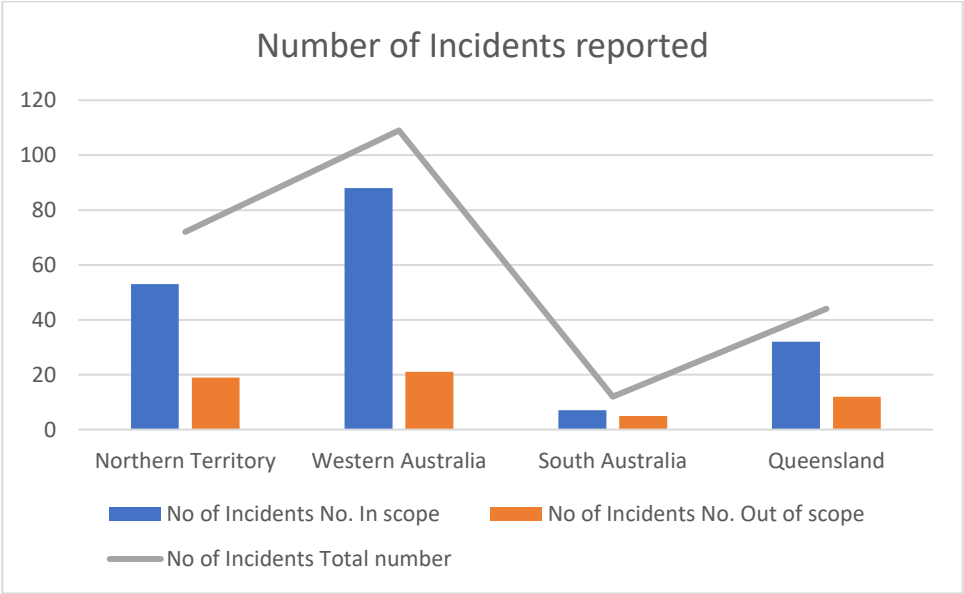
- Perth
- Adelaide
- Darwin
- Cairns
- Brisbane
- Melbourne

Thirrili Head Office located in Melbourne

NICRS incidents

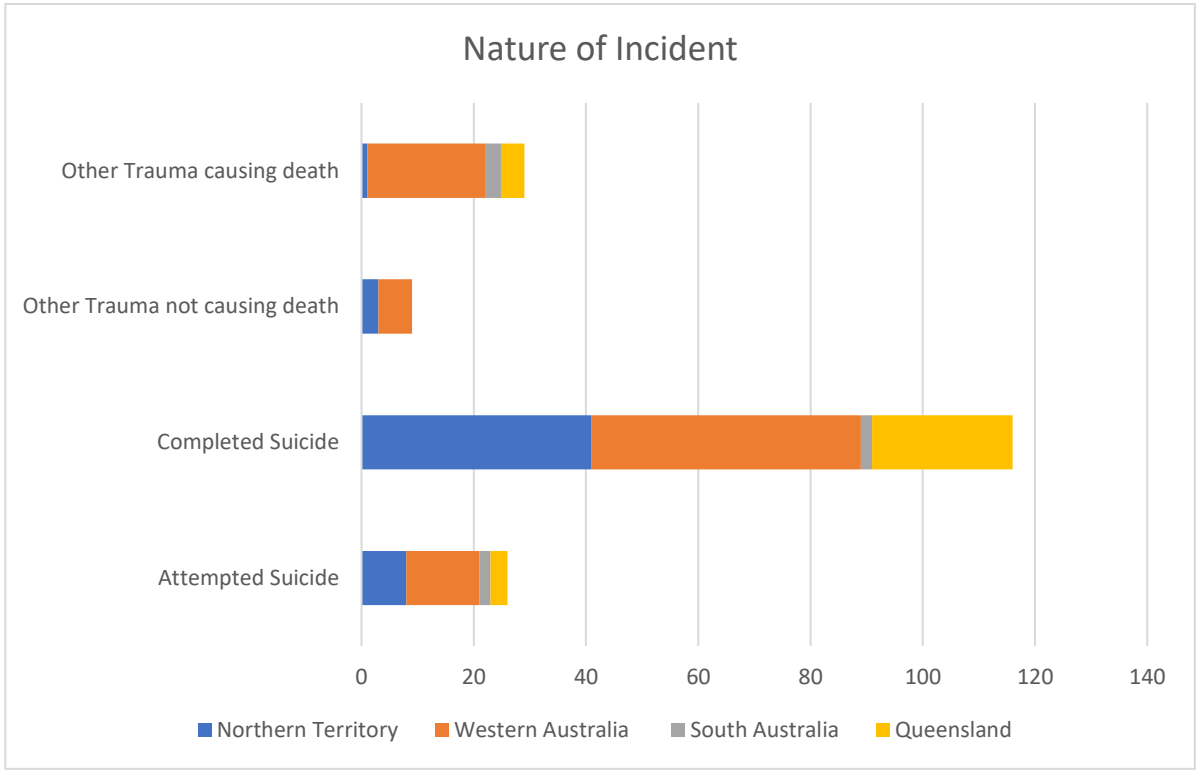
In the following pages we present data on the incidents reported to us over the period January 2017 to October 2018.

The graph below shows the level of incidents reported from Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia. The greatest number were from Western Australia.



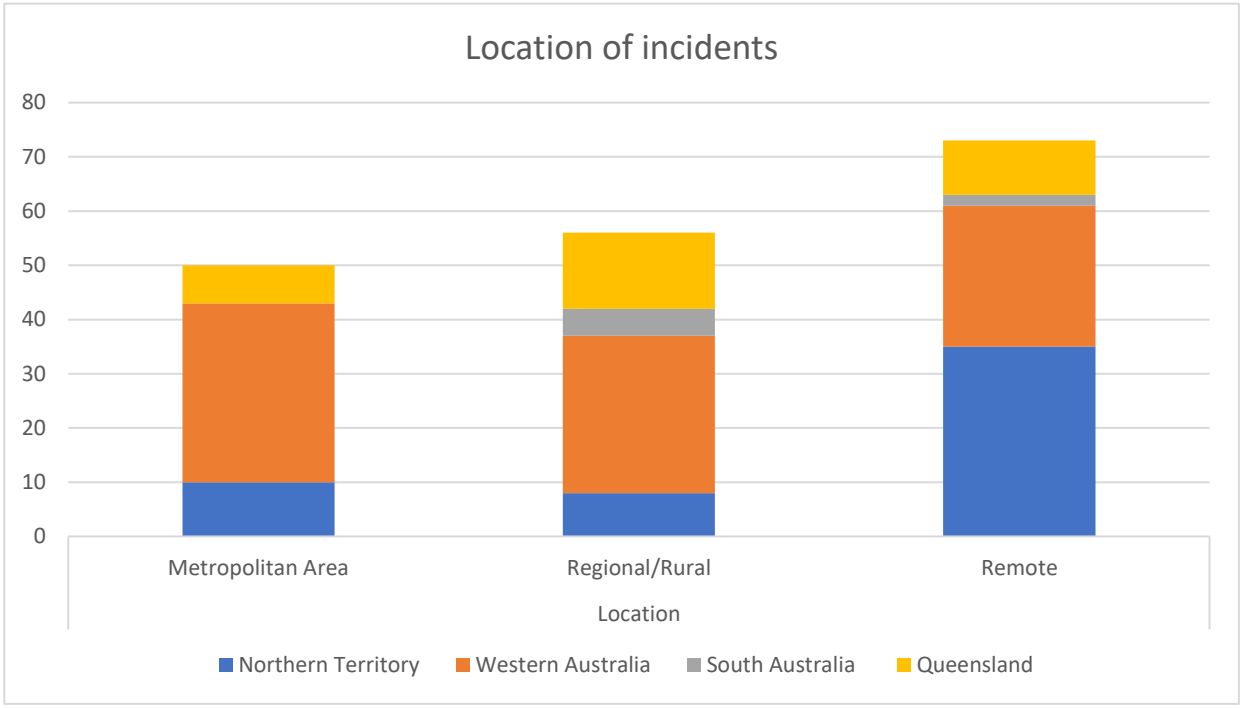
Incidents reported

Most incidents reported relating to a suicide, but significant numbers of incidents related to other trauma causing death and attempted suicides.



Numbers of families supported

The greatest number of families we supported were from remote communities, followed from those living in regional/remote locations, and those in metropolitan areas.



NICRS Services

The National Indigenous Critical Response Service supports individuals, families, and communities affected by suicide or other significant trauma.

A Critical Response Support Advocate can be contacted 24/7 by calling 1800 805 801.

Once we are notified of a loss we assess who is best placed to assist the family.

We work with local Elders, community and Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander organisations to ensure a community response is put in place to support bereaved individuals and families.

We can travel to provide support if invited by the family or we can provide advice to Community Leaders or Elders and local services on how best to respond. Our aim is not to replace the good work being done by local services. Rather, we seek to compliment the work being done by them to ensure the best outcome for families and their communities.

We meet with individuals and families to discuss their needs. We are able 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 can advocate on behalf of families to assist them access the supports they need in their time of grief. Our impartiality and independence enables us to be strong advocates for families, ensuring that services are working together to provide coordinated care.

StandBy NT - *Support after suicide*

In 2018 Thirrili began delivering StandBy support to those affected by suicide across the Northern Territory, providing face-to-face and telephone support services. Additionally, our National Coordinator provided a range of community development and professional development programs including:

- Pathways to Care Workshop in Katherine
- two Education Workshops with a focus on Suicide Bereavement, and
- three Professional Development Workshops.

Evaluation of Suicide Prevention Trial Sites with the University of Melbourne

We are currently working with the University of Melbourne to evaluate the Commonwealth Government's National Suicide Prevention Trial, with a focus in leading the evaluation at sites focussed on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The key objective is to assess the extent the strategies are appropriate, effective and efficient in preventing suicide at a local level and with at-risk population groups, and the implications for future suicide prevention activities.

Key activities will involve:

- visiting trial sites with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus and conducting interviews and workshops with local stakeholders regarding the trial, and
- assessing the information, developing findings and recommendations to inform future policy directions.

POLICE

THIRRILI