



THIRRILI

ANNUAL REPORT 22-23

www.thirrili.com.au

Acknowledgement of Country

To the Bunuba Thirrili means power and strength, this is the essence of Thirrili. Through our ancient and collective knowing we draw from our deep ancestral connection to country; we derive strength and power from her in all ways. We honour this connection that reminds us of our sovereignty, working in ways that respect and rekindle our cultural values of relationship and reciprocity. Through the healing smoke from fire, we find space to remember peace and hope, bringing new days to our old ways. Thirrili acknowledges country, all of it sovereign. We acknowledge the shared grief and loss that country experiences through the very sorry time where there is bereavement from suicide or other traumatic death for our people. We pay our respects to our Ancestor's, and our Elders who walk alongside us always, past, present and future.

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

Thirrili acknowledges the individual and collective expertise of those people with a lived experience of suicide and other fatal traumatic incidents and their families, friends and supporters. Thirrili recognise their vital contribution at all levels and value the courage of those who share this unique perspective for the purpose of learning and growing together to achieve improved outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.

Acknowledgement of our logo and artwork by Luke Penrith

Luke Penrith's ancestry is connected through the Wiradjuri, Wotjobaluk, the Yuin and the Gumbaynggirr Nation. His passion is mentoring and nurturing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers and supporting Aboriginal businesses. Lore, culture and heritage are paramount to Luke. His art reflects what he sees, hears and can smell and touch; he is a modern contemporary Aboriginal artist living in Brungle NSW. Luke's bloodlines are connected through the rivers, the mountains, the coastline and the plains.



Story behind the artwork

In 2023, we decided to tell the story of Thirrili through an artwork that would reflect our spirit and intent. We chose artist Luke Penrith to complete this very special project. Luke lives in Brungle NSW, and his roots trace back to the Wiradjuri, Wotjobaluk, the Yuin and the Gumbaynggirr Nation.

The collaborative design process took a few months. In the final piece, Luke used his unique style to capture the essence of who we are and what we do. Symbols and colours connect Thirrili with Country, reminding us that caring for ourselves mirrors caring for Country. Yellow dots represent flames – warmth, knowledge, and the light of hope and remembrance. Rivers reach out in all directions, emphasising connection and outreach. Ripples, both on land and in water, echo the impact we have on the communities we're a part of. Luke's design is a patchwork of diverse landscapes – mountains, desert, islands, rainforest, freshwater and the sea – showing that Thirrili embraces and respects all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their ties to culture.

We're thrilled with the final result and extend our gratitude to Luke for sharing his incredible talents and creativity.

Thirrili by Luke Penrith, 2023



Thirrili by Luke Penrith, 2023

In the centre of the artwork we see the warmth and knowledge from fire, representing the lighting of a flame for someone who has passed, a light of hope and remembrance. We come together and mourn together. This community connectedness is a theme that is embedded deeply into the artwork.

Surrounding this heart, we see the circular green ladder, our fish trap, representing outreach. This is both the invitation from community to Thirrili to support them in their greatest time of need, and the reach of Thirrili to provide culturally led healing and trauma informed care. Thirrili advocates and holds space in this journey for communities to step back into their own power and strength.

Wrapping around this outreach story are the eight rivers of self-determination. They track the pathways through the community-led health and wellbeing journey. They reach toward the start of life symbol in the lower right corner, to the end-of-life symbol in the top left corner. These elements include representation of all our peoples from the mountains to the desert, the Islands to the rainforest, from freshwater to salt water, each unique culture and beliefs, and their journey through this world.

Between these two symbols are the yarning circles, meeting places and support systems Thirrili embodies. From the top middle, around in a clock-wise direction:

- Advocacy: We listen and support coordinated responses with our families and communities. Thirrili is invited in to advocate and hold space in their greatest time of need.
- Creation: Supporting families, linkages, belonging, creating safe spaces, advocating and building relationships.
- Strength and determination: Building self-determination and systems that change with ways of knowing, being and doing that build community strength.
- Connection: Connection to country, nature and seasons, balance, community, family, kinship and ancestral knowledge.
- Community centred: Working at the invitation of the community including yarning together and a place where everyone belongs (male, female, intersex) prompting collaboration and community-led collective impact.
- Representation: Ensuring representation and inclusion of all people this is to ensure that we are always able to show that Thirrili is truly inclusive and respectful of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their connection to culture, from the mountains to the desert, the Islands to the rainforest, from freshwater to salt water, each unique in culture and beliefs, and their journey through this world.

Surrounding the circular river, that is wrapping around our fish trap/outreach element is the blue area holding our people and spirits. Referring to Thirrili's services and expertise in supporting communities through experience and knowledge, and also to our Elders coming together to offer strength, wisdom, guidance and support. There are themes of family, kinship and connection.

Surrounding our Elders is the orange area (desert and inland), our ripple-effect, representing Thirrili as a change agent. Working with Governments, peak bodies, and organisations on culturally tailored postvention practices, and making change to impact community, creating a ripple effect of action and change. Within this area is also the flames, representing lighting a flame for someone who has passed, light of hope, people come together and mourn together. Sharing the same meaning as the central fire.

This ripple-effect is echoed through the green area (hills, mountains and plains) representing the life, growth, regrowth, hope, journey and purpose, and onto the blue area (oceans and waterways). Thirrili continues to make ripples, impact and change with their holistic service working with families and communities, working towards healing.



Thirrili is a Bunuba word from Western Australia, meaning power and strength. Channeling this energy Luke Penrith created a bespoke artwork to represent the intention and spirit of Thirrili.

CONTENTS

01

Story behind
the artwork

04

Message from
the Chair

05

Message from
the CEO

07

Who are we

08

Our Vision
Our Purpose

09

Our Cultural Values
Our strategic framework

10

Our Board

14

The Year at a
glance

15

Staff and Reach

17

Our Services
and Activities

18

Indigenous
suicide
postvention
services

19

Support for affected
families and
communities

21

Capacity
Building

23

Case Study:
Boorai Dreaming
project

24

New ACT Service
Delivery Model

21

Capacity
Building

26

Systems
Change

27

Funders

Warning: This report may contain names, images and voices of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am honoured to present the Thirrili Annual Report for the financial year 2022-2023. This year has been defined by a renewed sense of purpose and strategic focus that lays the foundation for our organization's future. As Chair of Thirrili, I am proud to share our vision, accomplishments, and our unwavering commitment to the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The past year has seen the Thirrili Board chart a new course, one characterized by a stronger, more ambitious vision. We have embarked on a journey to redefine success in terms of impact and outcomes, aligning ourselves with the imperative of measuring the real difference we make in the lives of those we serve. Our goal is not just to provide support but to lead in Aboriginal postvention, setting the standard for excellence in our field.

Central to our strategic vision is our commitment to advancing the practice of Aboriginal postvention. We recognize that true progress lies not only in providing immediate support to those affected by suicide and traumatic incidents but also in building a robust evidence base for best practice suicide prevention. Thirrili aims to be at the forefront of this endeavour, driving innovation, and leading the way for positive change.

In the pursuit of this vision, we have taken significant steps. We have reviewed our Model of Care to ensure it is client-centred and oriented towards self-determination. We have actively sought opportunities to engage in research, with a particular focus on postvention in Aboriginal communities. While much attention has been rightly directed towards suicide prevention, we acknowledge the critical role of postvention in breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma and reducing the impacts of suicide. Our work in this area has only just begun, and we are proud recipients of a seed grant from the Lowitja Institute, which has enabled us to explore innovative approaches such as digital storytelling in addressing intergenerational trauma.

Our dedication extends beyond research and support. Throughout the year, we have reached out to 200 communities, fostering valuable connections and partnerships. We have engaged with governments, organizations, and our fellow Aboriginal Community Controlled sector entities, increasing awareness of our vital mission and advocating for the collective impact we seek to achieve.

Our experiences underscore the importance of systemic change. We understand that to make substantial progress, we must address not only the immediate aftermath of suicide but also the broader determinants of well-being. This includes housing, education, employment, and social and emotional well-being. We are excited to continue working alongside our partners to lead change, improve outcomes, and place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities at the centre of our efforts.

As Chair, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated Thirrili staff for their unwavering commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities in times of suffering, grief, loss, and trauma.



Donna Murray
Chair



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I am pleased to present the Thirrili Annual Report for the fiscal year 2022-2023, providing insights into our operational achievements and the significant progress we have made in fulfilling our mission. This year has been marked by collaboration, growth, and a steadfast commitment to improving the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through our postvention services.

One of our most significant accomplishments is the composition of our dedicated team. I am proud to share that over 85% of our staff are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, and many of them hold qualifications in health or mental health, with others currently pursuing these studies. This commitment to a qualified, culturally sensitive workforce underscores our dedication to providing the highest quality support to those we serve.

Our investment in developing postvention expertise within Aboriginal communities is yielding positive results. Communities in Mildura, Robinvale, Numbulwar, Belyuen and Tiwi are showing the way towards self-determination in their journey away from suicide, thereby breaking the cycle and liberating future generations from the devastating impacts of suicide. We are deeply encouraged by these outcomes and remain committed to fostering this momentum.

Thirrili's active engagement in national suicide prevention efforts is another facet of our operational focus. We are proud members of Suicide Prevention Australia and play a vital role as a Board member of Postvention Australia. In addition, we have submitted recommendations and insights to numerous jurisdictional suicide prevention strategies developed during 2022-2023. Our involvement in these initiatives allows us to advocate for the importance of self-determination in shaping effective suicide prevention measures.

Furthermore, Thirrili has actively participated in the Steering Committee for the UWA Centre of Best Practice – Strengthening Colonial Responses. We have contributed our expertise and insights to strengthen the responses surrounding colonial processes related to suicide. This work reflects our commitment to advocating for comprehensive, culturally sensitive support for affected families.

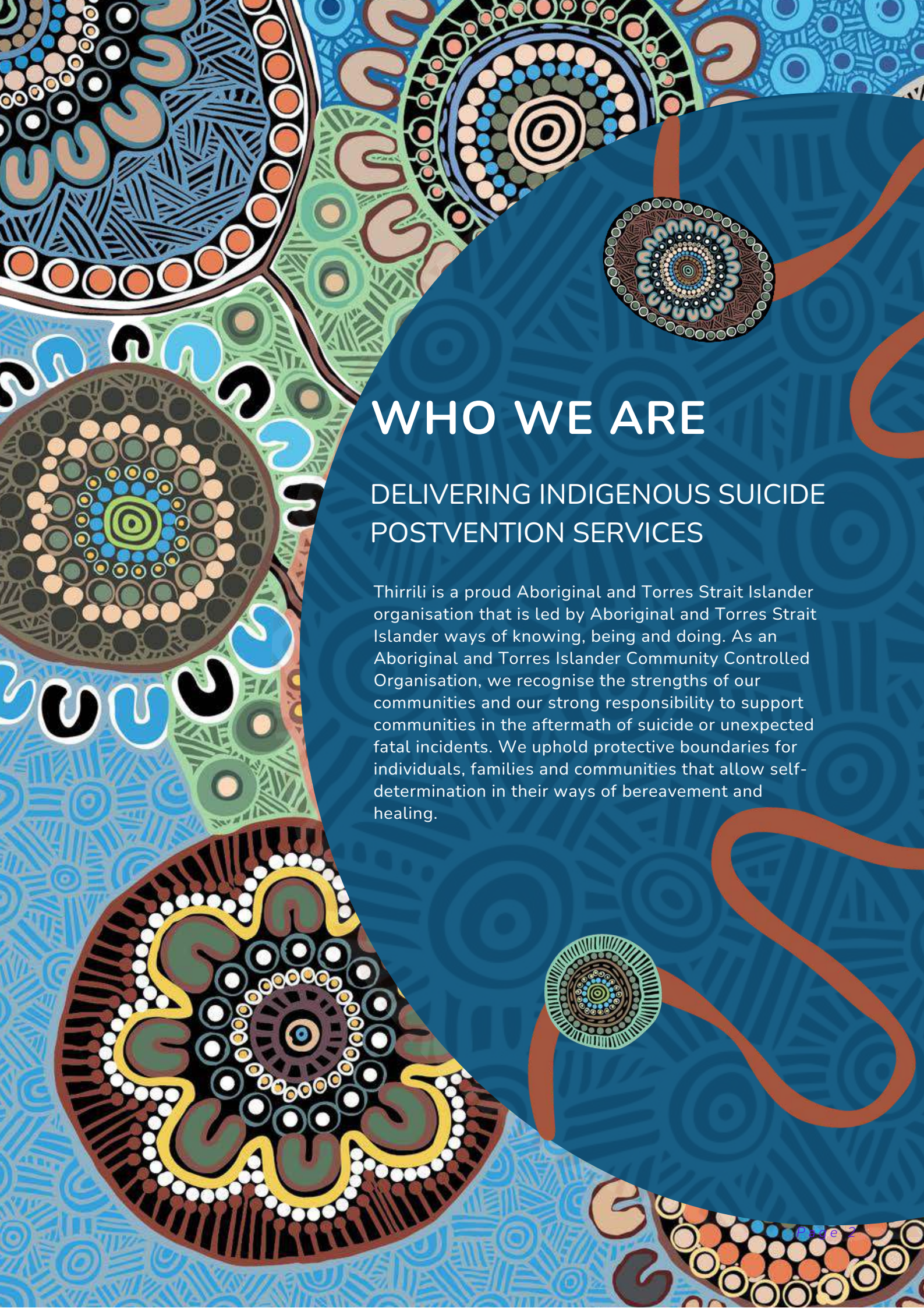
In the past year, we have also been privileged to share our knowledge and experiences at various forums, emphasizing the critical role of self-determination in suicide prevention initiatives. These opportunities to engage with stakeholders, policymakers, and communities have been instrumental in driving our mission forward.

As we reflect on our operational achievements during this fiscal year, we recognize that our work is far from over. Thirrili remains dedicated to providing unwavering support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities affected by suicide and traumatic incidents. We will continue to forge partnerships, empower communities, and advocate for systemic change to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma.

I extend my gratitude to our dedicated team, our funding bodies, stakeholders, and the communities we serve. Together, we are making a real and lasting difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Mickery
Chief Executive Officer





WHO WE ARE

DELIVERING INDIGENOUS SUICIDE POSTVENTION SERVICES

Thirili is a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation, we recognise the strengths of our communities and our strong responsibility to support communities in the aftermath of suicide or unexpected fatal incidents. We uphold protective boundaries for individuals, families and communities that allow self-determination in their ways of bereavement and healing.



OUR VISION

All our families and communities have healed from trauma and choose to live their lives in acknowledgement of our deep ancestral connections, drawing on cultural ways of knowing, being and doing and supporting our people to thrive and flourish in this and future generations.

Thirrili Ltd is a not for profit organisation which aims to contribute to the broader social wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- reducing the high rates of suicide through the delivery of a critical response service to support individuals and families affected by a suicide or other traumatic incidents
- providing social support, practical assistance, and advocacy support to affected individuals and families
- building the capacity of local communities and service providers to care for and respond to social disadvantage, including suicides and traumatic incidents in their community
- strengthening individual, family and community resilience and social wellbeing, and
- contribute to addressing the social disadvantage needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities



OUR PURPOSE

To provide crucial and timely support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the acknowledgement of shared, collective, continuous ancestral connections, by drawing on cultural ways of knowing, being, and doing. To achieve this purpose, we:

- Support communities in the aftermath of suicide or other fatal critical incidents.
- Work collectively with communities to build self-determined lives free from the impacts of suicide.
- Inform systems change at all levels.



OUR CULTURAL VALUES

Our cultural values are embedded into all aspects of our organisation. We are:

- **Collective**, working with communities by invitation to support community led decision making,
- **Respectful**, working with communities under their protocols, at their direction,
- **Reciprocal**, ensuring we provide support and service when communities grant us their trust,
- **Relationship based**: we understand, and respect that our relationship with individuals, families and communities is based on a continuum of care which reaches beyond any one incident or event, and is founded in our shared identity as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
- **Diverse**, our organisation reflects the complex composition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia, is inclusive and accessible to all.

Our organisation is immersed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community values. By our actions we demonstrate that all are welcome, everyone belongs, and everyone has a positive contribution to make. We invite communities to hold us accountable to these cultural values.

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Plan is informed and framed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges as well as priorities and targets set in the current policy environment, and evidence informed best practice. The framework is reflected in four main priorities:

1. Postvention Practices – Supporting and strengthening individuals, families, and communities.
2. Collective Action - Strong and culturally safe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community organisation.
3. Transformational Leadership - Providing expert, evidence-informed research advice to drive systems change and influence policy development and program design leading to improvements in the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
4. Self-Determination - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities being supported to design sustainable solutions that suit their communities to reduce the impacts of suicide.





OUR BOARD

COLLECTIVE SUPPORT

Thirrili Board plays an integral role in steering the direction, upholding the cultural integrity, and ensuring the sustainability of the organisation. Comprised primarily of respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, the Board is deeply connected to the community it serves, ensuring decisions are grounded in cultural knowledge, lived experience, and the aspirations of our people. Their governance not only provides strategic oversight but also strengthens the bond between the organisation and the community, ensuring that all initiatives are aligned with the principles of self-determination, cultural safety, and genuine empowerment. In guiding Thirrili, the Board embodies the essence of community control, ensuring our actions and strategies resonate with the very heart of the community we are privileged to serve.

Donna Murray

Director – Chair, Member of the Executive Sub-Committee

Ms Donna Murray a Wiradyuri and Wonnarua woman of NSW and the CEO, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA). Donna is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and provides strong strategic leadership across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs and the wider health sector. Donna brings over 25 years' experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and governance, Indigenous health, community development and engagement. Donna is actively involved in the Education sector as an Adjunct Associate Professor with the University of Technology Sydney.



Summer May Finlay

Director – Deputy Chair, Chair Finance Audit and risk sub-committee

Dr Summer May Finlay (CSCA, TAE, BSocSC MPHA, and PhD) is a Yorta Yorta woman who grew up on Awabakal country (West Lake Macquarie) and is a passionate advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Her passion is what has driven her to work in a number of public health fields including social marketing, communications research and policy. She has worked for a range of organisations in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health, not-for profit, university, and for-profit sectors. She is currently employed at the University of Wollongong as a Senior Lecturer.



In addition to working as an academic, she also works as a freelancer for organisations such as Croakey Health Media and the Commonwealth Department of Health. She is Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW Ethics Committee, and Co-Chair of the World Federation of Public Health Associations Indigenous Working Group Summer was previously Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vice President for the Public Health Association of Australia and was the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Special Interest Group Co-Convener.

She has received three awards from the Public Health Association of Australia for her work in public health and Indigenous health (Presidents Award 2017, Fellowship 2020, and Presidents Award 2021). You can follow her on twitter via her handle @SummerMayFinlay.

Jacqueline Flynn

Director – Company Secretary

Ms Jacqueline Flynn is a Larrakia/Tiwi woman and is a CPA qualified accountant with qualifications in commerce. Jacqui has worked for some of Australia's largest corporations with the past twenty years and is currently working in project management consulting across various sectors including Government, Mining, and Energy. Jacqui's personal experience with the loss of a loved one to suicide, drives her passion for the work undertaken by Thirrili Ltd. Jacqui is a Technical Expert Director. Jacqueline Flynn has held the role of Company Secretary since 9 April 2019, and as a qualified CPA Accountant, with a bachelor's degree in commerce is well placed to undertake the functions of this position.



Jacqueline Adams

Director

Ms Jacqueline Adams (Jaki) was born and raised in Garamilla (Darwin, Australia) on the beautiful lands of Larrakia Nation. Jaki is a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations/Indigenous Peoples of Australia), with ancestral links to the Yadhagana and Wuthathi Peoples of Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, traditional family ties with the Gurindji Peoples of Central Western Northern Territory and extended family relationships with the people of the Torres Straits and Warlpiri (Yuendumu NT).

Jaki's professional journey includes Hospitality; Secondary Teaching; and, over 18 years in the Australian Government spanning a variety of portfolios, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Health and Aged Care programs, and some 8 years within the Australian Department of Defence. Jaki joined The Fred Hollows Foundation in April 2012 and has held key leadership roles, including Country Manager of the Indigenous Australia Program (2012-2017) and Regional Programming Director roles (2017 - 2020) encompassing program implementation across Australia, Pacific (Trachoma and programming through FHFNZ), Timor Leste, Philippines, and Indonesia. In 2022 Jaki is leading the Social Justice and Regional Engagement Team within the Office of the CEO, with a focus on health equity, elevating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and allyship.



Jaki is a Board Director of Vision 2020 Australia; Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR); and Thirili Ltd. Also convenes the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) First Nations Special Interest Group and a member of the National Advisory Board for the Indigenous Eye Health Unit at the University of Melbourne.

Jaki has a personal and professional commitment to do whatever she can to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are leading decision making, and advocate for the right to good health for those most marginalised across the Australia/Pacific/Oceania regions.

Kim Laverne Bellear

Director

Ms LaVerne Bellear is a proud Bundjalung woman from the North Coast NSW. Her career encompasses over 30 years in health administration in both the public and not for profit sectors. LaVerne is the current Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Medical Service Cooperative Limited (Redfern).

Laverne has held several senior leadership and directorship roles, with a particular focus on Aboriginal Health reform and improvement. LaVerne is a board director for Sydney Local Health District; is the current Co-Chair for the Sydney Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Health Partnership and a Board Director for Thirili Ltd. Her involvement in previous appointments have shaped Aboriginal health strategies locally and nationally. LaVerne is a former Director of the National Aboriginal Community Control Health Organisation (NACCHO,) and former Director and A/CEO of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council.



LaVerne strongly believes that empowering Aboriginal people will create opportunities to make informed decisions and choices regarding personal management of health care, ultimately resulting in better health outcomes. LaVerne holds a Bachelor of Business has a Professional Certificate in Indigenous Research in Training and Practices and a Graduate Diploma of Public Health, University of NSW.

Tanja Hirvonen

Director

Ms Tanja Hirvonen is a proud Aboriginal Australian woman through her mother who was born in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, and Tanja identifies as Jaru and Bunuba. Her Grandmother is from the Barkly Tablelands region and Tanja's Grandfather is from East Kimberley, Western Australia. Tanja grew up in Mount Isa and has lived and worked throughout the Northern Territory for the past eight years and has been living in Queensland for the past 2 years.

Tanja is a Jaru and Bunuba woman. Tanja is a registered Clinical Psychologist and has a double degree majoring in psychology and human research management. She also holds a postgraduate degree, Masters in Clinical Psychology. Regarding working experience Tanja has had over twelve years of practical psychological experience, and has worked in academic, clinical, and executive roles as a clinical psychologist. Tanja is currently working as the Wellbeing Director with ABSTARR Consulting. Tanja is a current Board Director of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association and the Queensland Director for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance and The Black Dog Institute. Tanja is passionate about working in evidence based and culturally safe ways to make a difference to the health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Indi Clarke

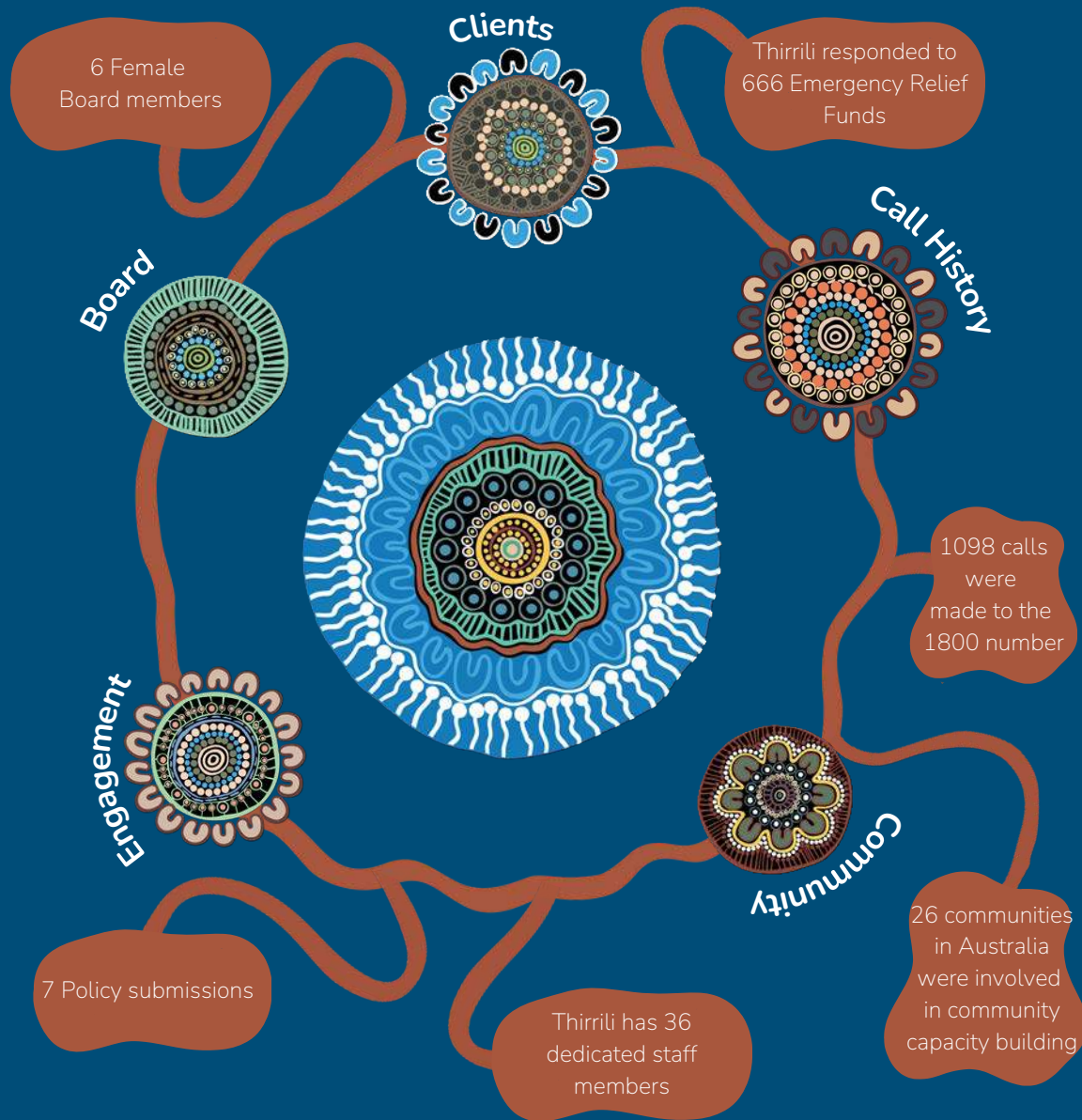
Director

Mr Indi Clarke is a proud Mutti Mutti, Wemba Wemba, Boon Wurrung, Trawlwoolway and Lardil man. Indi is a consultant at ABSTARR Consulting after completing his tenure as the Executive Officer of the Koorie Youth Council (KYC). Through his tenure at KYC, Indi supported critical work and change for young people as decision makers, driving social and systemic change including ground-breaking projects like the Ngaga-dji (hear me) project and the Wayipunga Resource project.

Indi is a passionate advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the power of strength-based approaches, and Aboriginal knowledge systems. Indi believes that the path to positive change starts with empowered families and communities, as well as a holistic approach to healing and wellbeing. Through his advocacy and passion, Indi sits on several governance committees and boards including as a board member of the Koorie Heritage Trust and is currently enjoying study, as one of the inaugural cohort members studying at Monash University completing his Masters of Indigenous Business Leadership.



THE YEAR AT A GLANCE



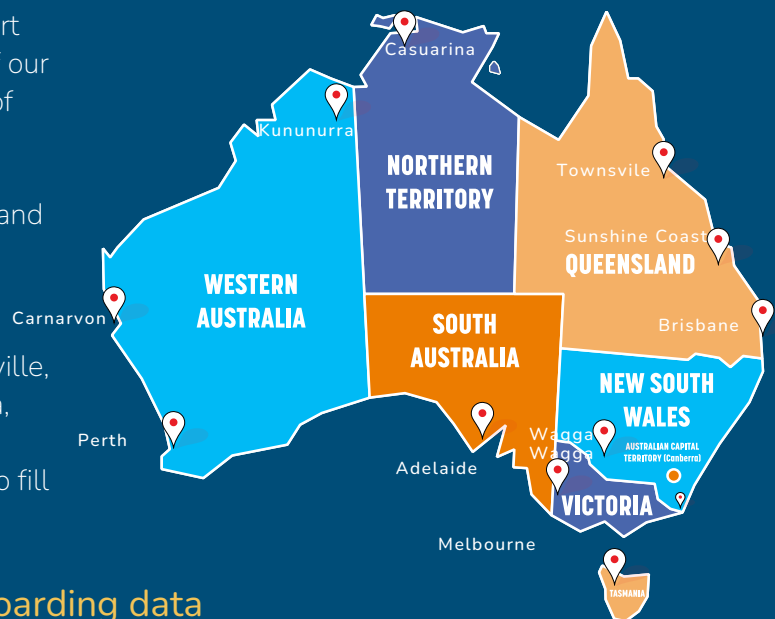
STAFF AND REACH

In our commitment to serving the community, Thirrili has strategically structured its team to ensure that we can meet a diverse range of needs. Our organisation comprises 36 dedicated members who play integral roles in our strategic plan. Our 18 full-time Advocates serve as the frontline support, offering guidance and assistance to individuals and communities in need. This approach allows each Advocate to engage with multiple cases, expanding our reach and impact.

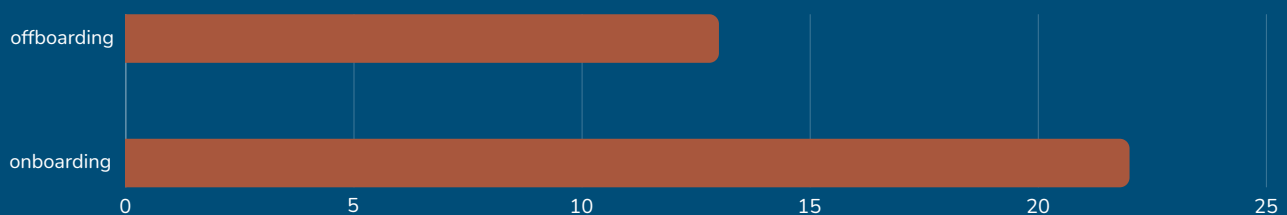
To maintain a regional focus and address varying community needs, we have designated three Regional Coordinators within our team. Their roles are vital in ensuring that our services are tailored to specific regional requirements. Overseeing the seamless operation of our organisation is our Practice Manager, who upholds our commitments.

Our corporate staff members, totalling 14, support our organisation, ensuring the smooth delivery of our services. With 88% of our total staff and 100% of the executive team identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, our cultural representation ensures that our services are culturally sensitive and resonate deeply with the communities we serve.

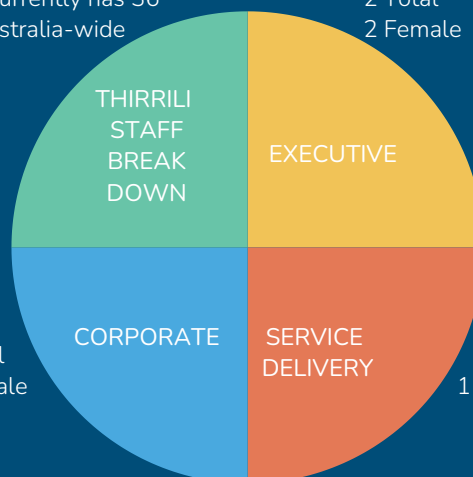
Our Advocates are strategically located across the country, including Darwin, Tasmania, Townsville, Adelaide, Wagga Wagga, Melbourne, Kununurra, Sunshine Coast, Perth, and other areas. We are committed to continuing our recruitment efforts to fill the few remaining vacant Advocate positions.



Thirrili Organisation onboarding/offboarding data



Thirrili currently has 36 staff Australia-wide



We have invested in building our organisational support capabilities to empower our Advocates with the necessary tools, resources, and assistance to excel in their roles. Importantly, most of our staff members have lived experience with suicide. They bring diverse qualifications and skill sets, which are invaluable in their direct interactions with families and communities.

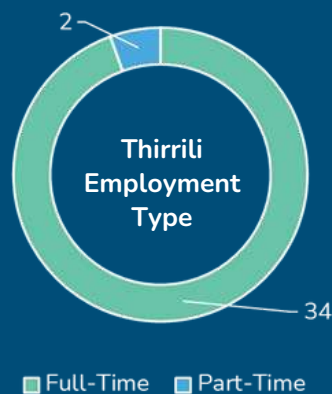
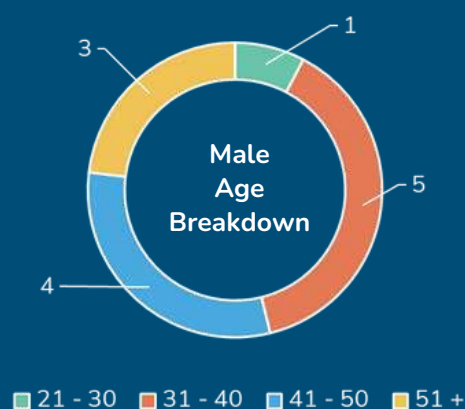
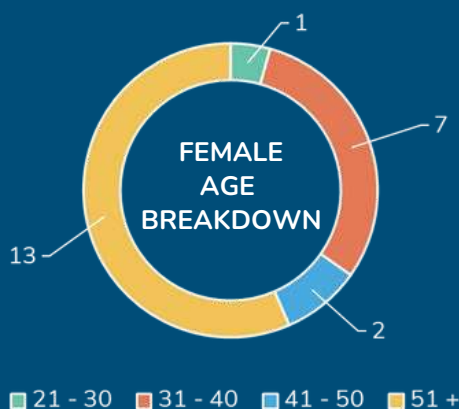
Thirrili staff also possess a wealth of cultural knowledge from various sovereign communities, which profoundly informs and supports their work with families. We are dedicated in our commitment to ongoing training and supporting the further education of our staff members. Our training and study schedule, along with study leave opportunities and tailored coaching and training programs, have been well-received.

Community awareness of Thirrili's services continues to grow across Australia. Our dedicated staff members have conducted productive information sessions and engaged in meaningful conversations with service providers to foster relationships and partnerships.

Throughout the organisation, Thirrili consistently amplifies the voices of our people to advocate for systems change. This collaborative approach enhances our response when working on the ground, in partnership with individuals, families, and communities, ensuring our collective efforts align with the evolving needs of our communities.



Female and Male staff ages breakdown





OUR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

INDIGENOUS SUICIDE POSTVENTION SERVICES

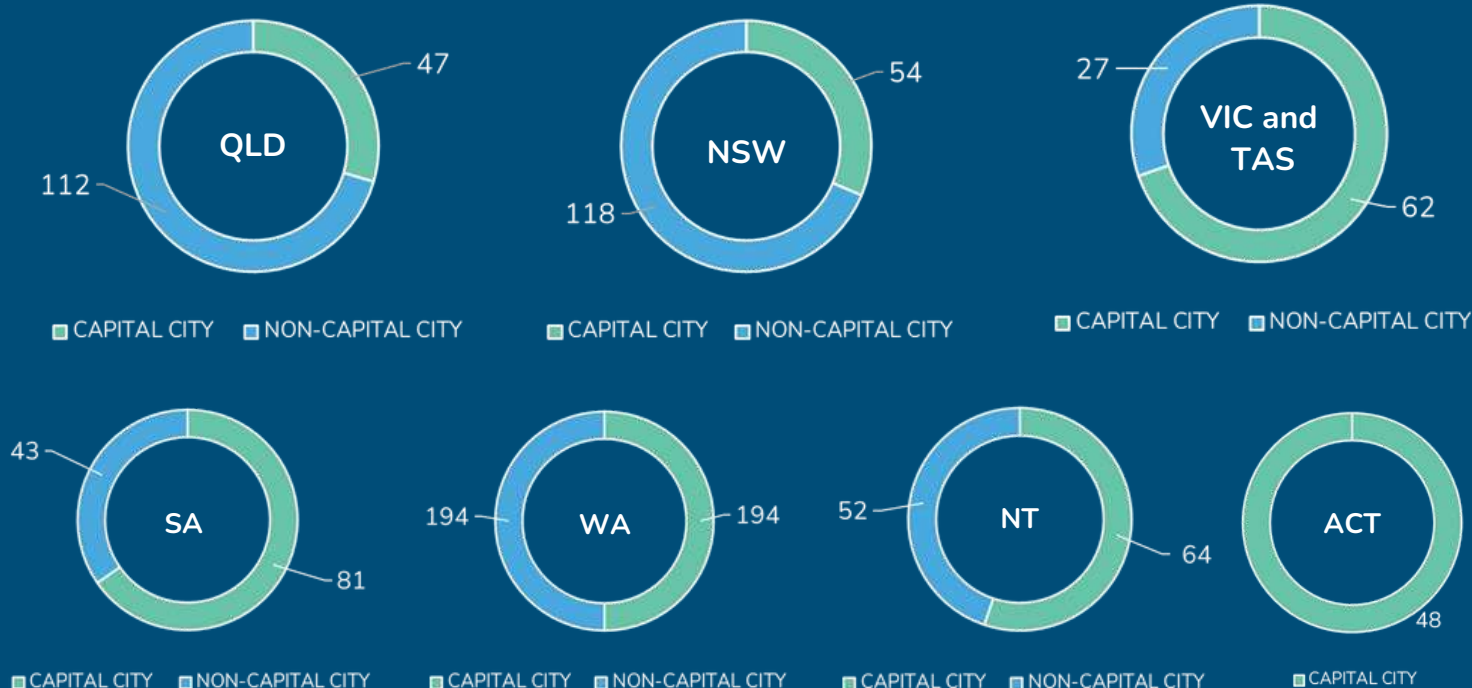
Our commitment to reducing the impact of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families has been evident in our continuous enhancement of postvention responses. The recent revision of our Model of Care has laid down the path for rolling out improvements across various stages of client engagement, aiding in efficient case management and ensuring the well-being of our families and communities.

We understand that a significant portion of our services address suicide contagion, rooted in the historic and present challenges faced daily by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals. Suicide is widespread among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities and reflects the legacy of intergenerational trauma and the systemic failings of settler colonial governments.

Throughout our services and activities, Thirrili works towards developing and implementing best-practice in postvention, collective action, transformational leadership, and self-determination as set out in our strategic plan.



Call Breakdown



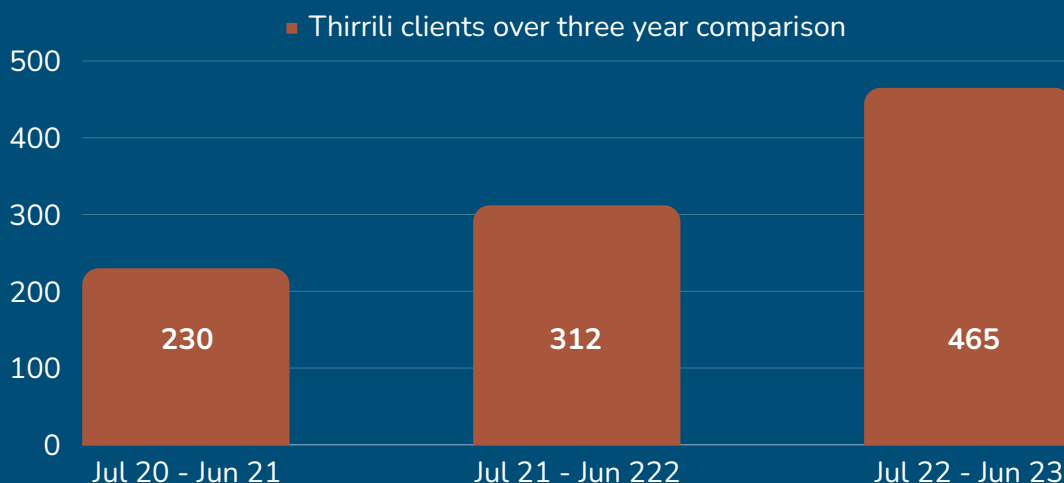
SUPPORT FOR AFFECTED FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



Thirrili's postvention suicide support service is accessible around the clock at 1800 805 801. All calls are answered by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to provide assurance that the caller will be met with empathy, cultural understanding, and actionable assistance.

At its core, Thirrili aims for holistic assistance to families and communities affected by suicide. Thirrili collaborates closely with local Elders, community members, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to ensure a community-led response offers place-based wrap around support to bereaved individuals, families, and communities. Our services range includes practical social support, linking individuals to an array of local social, health, and community services ensuring affected families have a voice.

Recognising the diversity of needs within different families, we adapt our approach accordingly. This includes respecting cultural obligations such as sorry business, honouring extended family connections, operating within community structures, and respecting boundaries in cases of intergenerational conflict. Our support is trauma-informed and acknowledges the presence of intergenerational trauma.

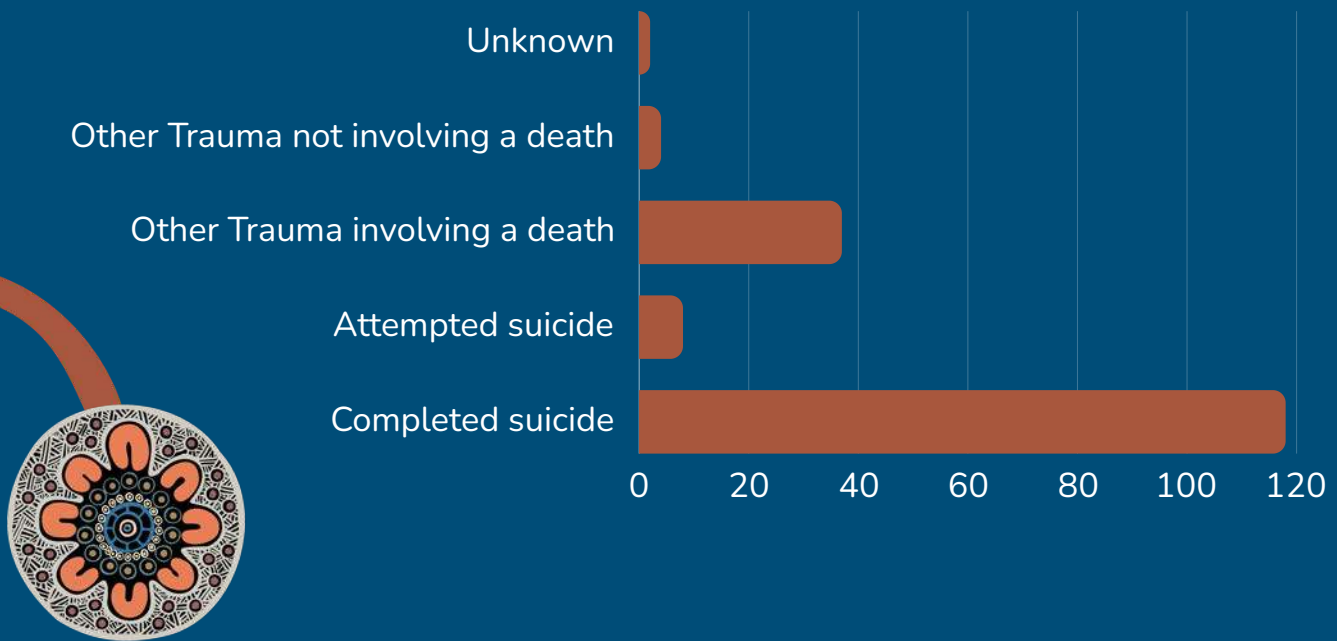


We do not seek to replace the valuable work done by local services. Thirrili objective is to complement and enhance their efforts to ensure the best possible outcomes for the affected families and their communities.

Where applicable, we maintain ongoing involvement with local services to ensure that care and support extend beyond the immediate aftermath of the traumatic incident. We are also advocates on behalf of families, assisting them in accessing the necessary support and resources during their time of grief.

In the year 2022/2023, Thirrili responded to 169 unique incidents, supported 156 families and 612 individuals, engaged with 34 communities (and developed intensive postvention plans for 5), and connected with 198 service providers to assist families with postvention support. As shown by the number of client engagements, the services offered by Thirrili have grown significantly over the last three years.

Notifications during the financial year 22 -23



Individual Families Supported

156

612 individual clients were supported

Community Consultation Yarns

48

82 community members and organisations participating

Service Providers Supported to Assist Families

57

Families required service providers

Individual Service Providers

139

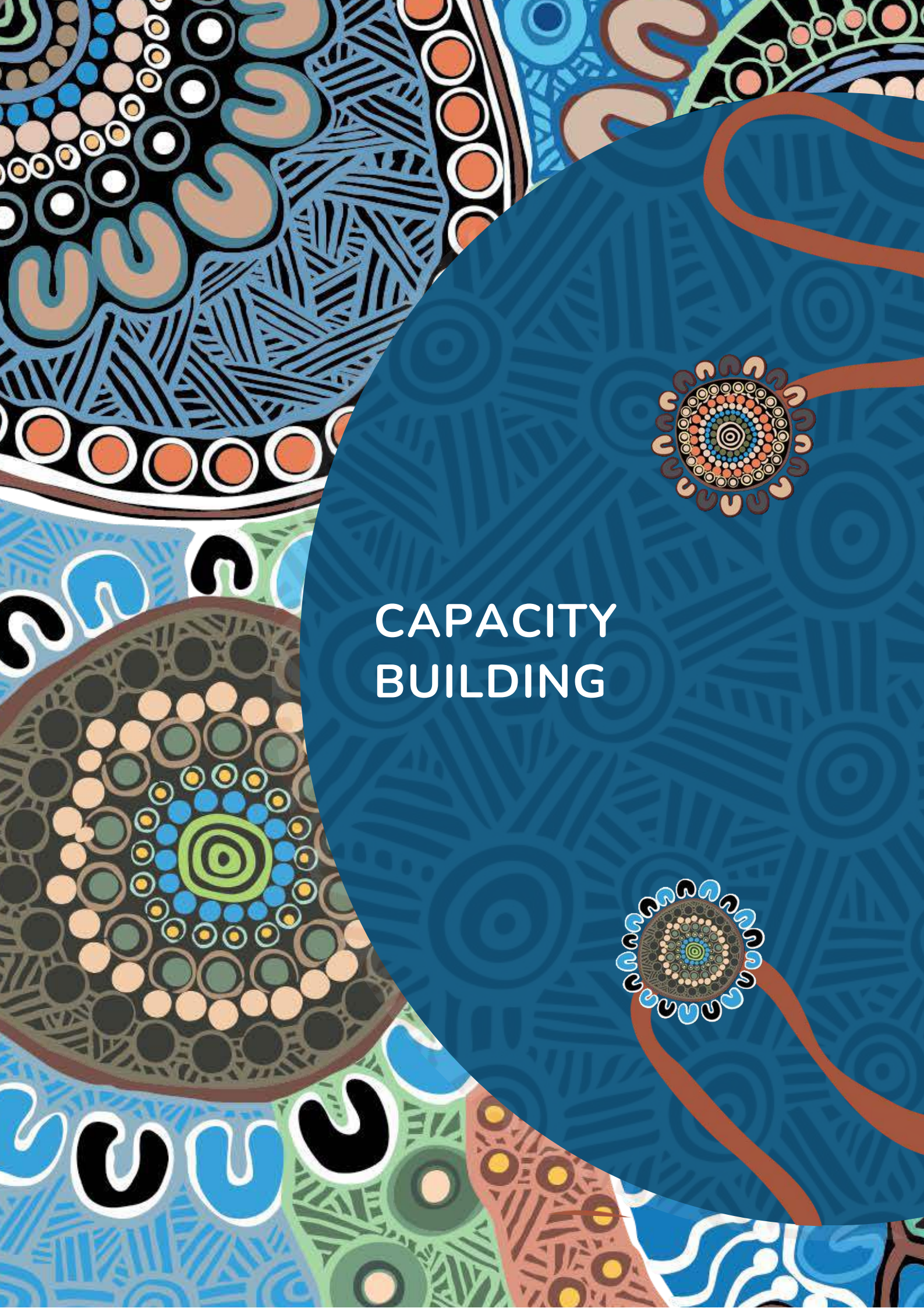
Individual service providers

Communities Initially engaged through postvention service

34

Communities engaged in intensive support to develop postvention plan

5



CAPACITY BUILDING

Thirrili has been dedicated to harnessing and strengthening community capacity and resilience, especially in areas where high levels of suicide have left lasting impacts. Our Model of Care is being developed to include our work with community capacity, restoration, and Healing. As part of our commitment, we provide communities and families with access to information from various service providers nationwide. These programs and workshops are designed to cater to the diverse interests and needs of communities. This approach empowers communities to make informed choices, a vital component of self-determination, ensuring that they have a say in the services that best suit their unique requirements.



We have undertaken a comprehensive review of our internal relationships, including Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and partnerships. Our focus has been on elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities. By placing them at the heart of our initiatives, we aim to create a collective momentum within our sector, fostering collaboration and responsive actions that align with the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These collaborative and supportive relationships remain a foundation of our commitment to strengthening community capacity and resilience. Thirrili has engaged in community capacity building activity in several communities and regions as shown in our community engagement map.

- Shepparton
- Mildura
- Gippsland
- Cherbourg
- Rockhampton
- Goldfields – Northam, Esperance
- Kimberleys - Kalbarri
- Southwest NSW – Nowra, Bega, Moruya.



New Communities in focus

- Southeast Coast NSW
- Cherbourg Qld
- Warwick Qld
- Mt Isa Qld
- Badu Island TSI
- Belyuen NT
- Numbulwar NT
- Yuendumu NT
- Northam WA
- Mt Barker/Albany WA
- Ceduna SA

CASE STUDY: BOORAI DREAMING PROJECT

Thirrili was awarded \$200,000 research funding from the Lowitja Institute to support The Boorai Dreaming Project which focuses on applying grassroots Blak Matriarchy to heal from intergenerational trauma and empower women, families, and communities around Mildura and Robinvale (Nth Western Victoria). The Women's Collective was established as an independent committee, to ensure the work done was objective, transparent and inclusive of all Aboriginal women living in the catchment area.

The Boorai Dreaming Women's Collective has developed community capacity through production of a website, artwork, and two digital stories. The Possum Mama and Blak Matriarch tell the stories of women intergenerationally impacted by child removals and the pathways of healing they experienced.

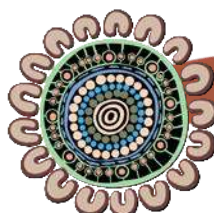
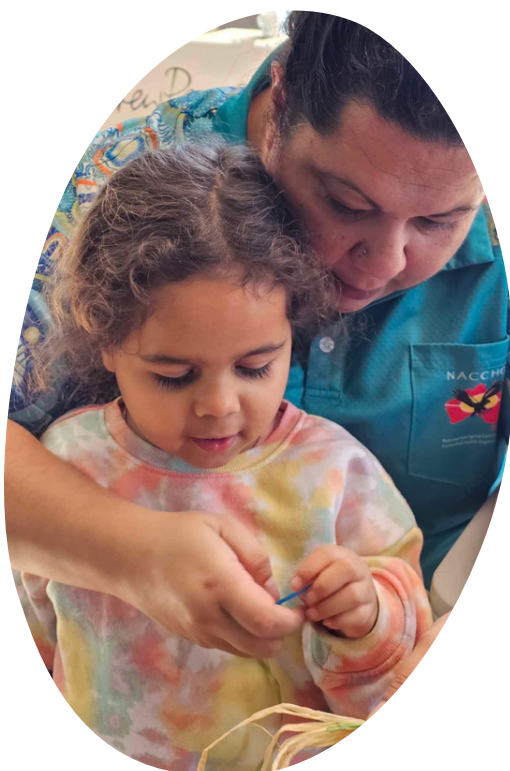
The Women's Collective has also been active in conducting healing camps for women and children impacted by suicide. The Boorai Dreaming Women's Collective held space for family's and community members to grieve and process the loss of their loved ones. The Women's Collective reported that the overall feeling of wellbeing at the end of the three day camp was much higher than at the start, not only because the women had had a chance to hold each other and cry together, but also because they had created a bond that would carry back with them into their community life and they would continue to support each other, and participate in the Women's Collective.



Thirrili has attended Mildura every two months to meet with representatives of the Women's Collective and discuss our support. The Women's Collective continues to

- Unpack the barriers and systemic issues that add to the vulnerability of young Aboriginal people in Mildura and Robinvale,
- Strengthen support for women at risk of harm, and
- Establish a healing space in Robinvale and identify and create opportunities for women to come together to support each other as Aboriginal women.

Women's Collective Leader: We could never have been able to do this without Thirrili's support. When the second camp had 40 women attend, we realised all of us had been impacted by suicide. We knew we needed to do this, we just needed that bit of extra help.



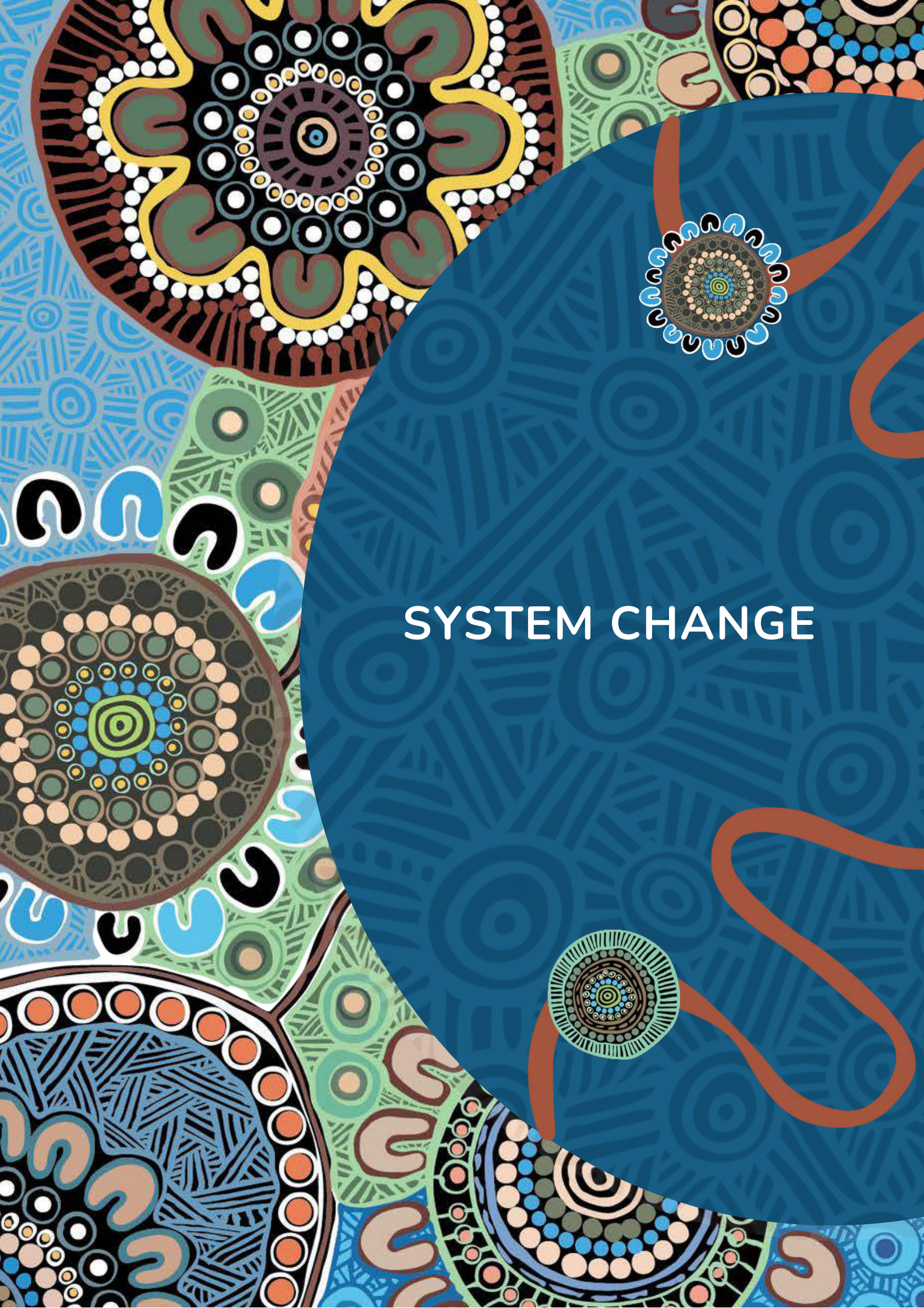
NEW ACT SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Funding from ACT Health marked a significant chapter for Thirrili in 2022. The ACT Health contract increased Thirrili's service scope from postvention to encompass a comprehensive suicide response to include prevention, intervention, and aftercare. This innovative ACT Service Delivery Model aligns with the ACT Government's holistic and culturally sensitive partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Thirrili engaged ABSTARR Consulting to facilitate community workshops and develop an evaluation framework recognising the need for a co-designed model of care due to the new environment and expanded services. This process analysed the findings from a desktop review, consultations, and survey responses to inform Thirrili's ACT model of care and underscores the importance of self-determination in our work.



Thirrili and ABSTARR Consulting gathered insights on local experiences, strengths, barriers, and service challenges through community co-design workshops and consultations. Thirrili's ACT model of care is envisioned as an evolving response to community leadership and the evaluation framework. The model encompasses a peer support network, a central respite and restorative space, hub and spoke referrals to existing providers, and a community of care and professional practice. The co-design process establishes the foundation for Thirrili's ACT model of care by addressing the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT and fostering cultural connections between Thirrili, its staff, and the local community.



SYSTEM CHANGE

SYSTEM CHANGE

In our pursuit of advancing culturally sensitive postvention support services, Thirrili advocates at the National, State/Territory, Regional, and Local levels to actively contribute to transforming systems that have failed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. Our commitment to fostering this transformation includes:

- Sharing insights into emerging best practices.
- Participating in established or establishing new networks to bolster postvention responses.
- Presenting at conferences on State/Territory and National levels.
- Offering training and capacity-building for service providers in postvention support.
- Engaging in networks capable of influencing service system development.
- Staying abreast of the latest policy and political developments that may affect program implementation.

Providing advisory services to leaders in the suicide prevention space.

Advocating for systemic change to address barriers to service access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Thirrili also contributes to system change through research and policy initiatives. Thirrili applied for two large Lowitja research grants and was successful with the awarding of \$200,000 to The Boorai Dreaming Project. The research team presented at several conferences and meetings to share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge about best practice in suicide postvention that can facilitate self-determined pathways to healing and systemic change. Thirrili presented at the 5th Desert Knowledges Intersections Symposium, the 3rd Lowitja International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference, and has been invited to share knowledge internationally at the Healing our Spirit Worldwide 9th gathering in Canada in 2023.

Thirrili has initiated a pro-bono contract with the international legal firm Norton Rose Fulbright to develop and produce 1. a plain language and culturally sensitive guide/toolkit to advise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who go through the coronial process due to the suicide of a family or community member, and 2. a comparative analysis across states and territory jurisdictions on coronial laws, policies, and procedures that help or fail Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people especially on cultural issues to influence the legal and policy frameworks in directions that support and respect Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.

In terms of policy developments, Thirrili has contributed to the several National and State policy frameworks that are relevant to suicide prevention and postvention. Thirrili provided public comment and feedback through submissions to the draft Implementation Plan for the Gayaa Dhuwi Proud Spirit Declaration, the National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy, the Victorian Government Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy, and the South Australia Mental Health Review Act.



WITH THEIR SUPPORT WE GROW

Our funders:



Our service delivery partners:



All our partners: who share our vision in providing holistic postvention support responsive to communities' needs:



The organisations: with whom we have entered into Partnership Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding:



State and Territory Governments: for their continued collaboration.

All the staff: who have worked with us over the past year and work so tirelessly to strengthen individual, family and community resilience and wellbeing through supporting our families after their experience of suicides and traumatic incidents.

