

## Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre appointed to map cultural activities

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**The Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC) has been engaged to map cultural activities across the region, acknowledging the critical role of culture in building a strong sense of identity, connection to country, wellbeing and resilience in Aboriginal communities.**

This project is part of the Kimberley Suicide Prevention Trial, that aims to identify new and effective culturally sensitive, community-led suicide prevention models that meet the unique needs of the region's Aboriginal communities.

KALACC's project will establish the status of cultural activities currently provided by more than 40 Aboriginal organisations, programs and schools, map those in development and highlight others still required. Consultation with the wider Aboriginal community will build a clear understanding of their expectations and identify any further gaps.

A final report will inform the Suicide Prevention Trial's multi-agency approach to providing the tools and systems to address mental health and suicide prevention.

Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS) deputy CEO and co-chair of the Kimberley Suicide Prevention Working Group, Rob McPhee said the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP)* which guides the work of the Trial, recognises culture as an essential element of each of its four success factors for Aboriginal suicide prevention.

"Culture needs to be embraced and embedded across a range of mainstream services, given the compelling evidence of its beneficial health effects.

"The work that KALACC will be doing is fundamental, as it will ensure the plans developed by each of the nine communities the Trial is working with to reduce self-harm, prevent suicide and support postvention are informed by culturally appropriate practices," Mr McPhee said.

KALACC Coordinator Wes Morris, who is leading the project, said undertaking this work as part of commissioning means the priorities of Aboriginal people will form the basis of the suicide prevention model.

"While the project is primarily intended to contribute to the very important collaborative planning processes currently underway in the Kimberley, KALACC is confident it will have a usefulness and value beyond the immediate short-term context, and in a wider context, including informing important research and policy development," Mr Morris said.

Federal Member for Durack, Ms Melissa Price said the Australian Government remains committed to reducing suicide in the Kimberley's Aboriginal communities and the best way to do so is by funding research and trials to deliver the best approaches.

“The appointment of KALACC sends a strong signal that the Trial is being led by Aboriginal people and is listening to what is important to them. I am confident it will deliver outcomes that will make a sustainable difference to their long term mental health and wellbeing,” Ms Price said.

The KALACC project will identify and survey Aboriginal organisations, hold a series of workshops in major towns and communities across the Kimberley, conduct interviews with schools who engage in cultural activities as part of their curriculum, and consult with the wider community.

The project team includes cultural bosses, researchers, anthropologists and community engagement specialists, who are either from the Kimberley, or have a strong connection to it.

Consultations will include two-day workshops in Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Kununurra, and one-day workshops in the Dampier Peninsula, Bidyadanga, Warmun and Mt Barnett.

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#### **About the Kimberley Suicide Prevention Trial**

The Kimberley Suicide Prevention Trial Site is one of 12 sites nationally identified by the Australian Government as priority areas for suicide prevention due to their high-risk populations. The Trial aims to identify the best approaches to doing this, which will inform a wider national approach.

The Trial is guided by the recommendations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP) and is focussed on the following nine areas: Broome, Bidyadanga, Dampier Peninsula (including Beagle Bay, Lombadina, Djarindjin and Ardyaloon (One Arm Point)), Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra, Wyndham and the Kutjunka region (including Balgo, Billiluna and Mulan).

The three-year Trial comprises a planning and implementation phase and its findings and outcomes will be evaluated by the Australian Government, as part of a national evaluation.

The Kimberley Trial is led by the WA Primary Health Alliance, Country WA PHN. It has partnered with the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS) who is responsible for the Trial’s operationalisation. A Working Group, co-chaired by the Minister for Indigenous Health, Ken Wyatt AM MP and the KAMS Deputy CEO, has strategic oversight of the Trial and a Steering Committee has operational oversight.