

Media Release



KIMBERLEY
Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial

2 April 2019

Young Aboriginal leaders driving change in the Kimberley

A three-day Empowered Young Leaders forum was held in Broome last week aiming to change the story for young Aboriginal people in the region and increase their uptake of mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services.

The forum is part of the Empowered Young Leaders Project which was identified in response to the significant rates of Aboriginal youth suicide in the region, as part of the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial.

During the three-day forum, a series of guest speakers, workshops and skills development took place, with about 25 young people aged between 18 to 30 attending.

Member of the project's working group, Jacob Smith, said he was hopeful that, as a result of this forum, more young people will feel empowered and comfortable to talk about their mental health and get help, if they need to.

"Just as importantly, they will be able to take away tools and techniques they can use for themselves and as youth leaders in their own communities," Mr Smith said.

The Empowered Young Leaders project is a vital component of the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial, according to its Working Group co-chair and Deputy CEO of Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS), Rob McPhee.

"It supports the work that came out of an earlier youth suicide prevention forum and is a practical way to implement the recommendations that were made at that time by young people for young people," Mr McPhee said.

Some of the key aims of the Empowered Young Leaders Project are the need to:

- move away from focusing on suicide and problems, and, instead, build on young people's strengths and solutions;
- change the story about young Aboriginal people, both among themselves and among the wider community; and
- invest in and empower the Kimberley's young leaders, to be able to take action and walk away with resources for their own communities.

The original youth suicide prevention forum and report were organised by Aarnja Ltd, as the Empowered Communities backbone organisation for the West Kimberley.

A second forum is being organised for the East Kimberley, which is slated for May 2019.



The Trial is led by WA Primary Health Alliance in partnership with Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services. For more information, email kaspt@wapha.org.au

A strong cultural framework underpins all the Trial's activities and all the projects identified by the communities must fit within the systems-based approach, guided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP).

The outcomes will be evaluated by the Australian Government, as part of a national evaluation to find the most effective approaches to suicide prevention for at-risk populations and share this knowledge across Australia.

Helplines

If you find yourself in an emergency, or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. Other 24-hour services include: Lifeline on 13 11 14 and Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

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About the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial

The Kimberley Aboriginal 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 focused on the following nine areas: Broome, Bidyadanga, Dampier Peninsula, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra, Wyndham and Balgo.

The four-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.