



## ABORIGINAL and TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES and PSYCHOLOGY INTEREST GROUP/AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGIST ASSOCIATION JOINT NEWSLETTER

*The Australian Psychological Society (APS) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Psychology Interest Group (Interest Group) respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which our members live and work. Together with the wider APS, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Psychology Interest Group is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous psychologists and communities to meet the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

### **The Terms of Reference of the Interest Group are:**

- *promoting the psychological study and advocacy of issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;*
- *improving relationships between psychologists and the Australian Indigenous community;*
- *providing advice to psychologists working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;*
- *the development of ethical guidelines for the provision of psychological services; and*
- *conducting research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*

Artwork: Song Lines – Connecting Communities Across Country

*The artwork on our newsletter depicts the cultural connections between people and sharing Aboriginal cultural knowledge within communities. The piece also carries with it a depth of understanding of how beautiful yet fragile the land and our environment is that we collectively live on. It further reflects major cultural and environmental understandings (shared by Elders to the artists) of the role the natural world plays in the lives of humanity – and the importance of the eco-system and the connections between all living things and water ways– all dependant on working together to survive – similar to that of the collective humanity. Copyright held by the Sister Kates Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation, 2016.*

Issue #5 – May 2020



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## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Psychology Interest Group - Editorial

Dear Colleagues,

This year has certainly thrown a global curve ball at us and while we are facing the challenges of the pandemic it is important to draw on psychological science for the skills and resources we might need to help us in the management and recovery phases. We congratulate the APS on their prompt and strong response to assisting all Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have published a [range of resources and information](#) to offer support in this difficult time. The APS' advocacy to Government has resulted in some significant achievements, including:

- COVID-19 telehealth items for all Australians
- Gap fee options for all COVID-19 telehealth items, for all Australians
- Coverage for teleconsultations from Australian health funds during the coronavirus outbreak.

There is more work to be done, including continuing to push for access to more psychology services, in addition to those currently available, to support people in need of mental health support as a result of COVID-19. Perhaps more importantly, psychological science can help beyond individual mental health responses. Evidence on how to respond to the isolation and reconnect with family loved ones and our lives outside of our homes will be essential once restrictions are eased, as will the evidence around economic recovery and the associated challenges to identity from un(der)employment. It is important to remember that psychology is more than just mental health.

The importance of cultural safety in the provision of telehealth services should be highlighted too. Telehealth services can be challenging for the provider and the recipient; limited (or non-

existent if using telephone contact) visual cues and body language can impede the therapeutic relationship. In regional and remote areas the difficulties associated with phone and/or internet services renders already vulnerable persons and communities at a disadvantage.

Kind Regards, Co-Conveners Pat Dudgeon and Dawn Darlaston-Jones, on behalf of the Interest Group Committee.

### **Interest Group Committee Members:**

#### **Co-Conveners:**

- Pat Dudgeon
- Dawn Darlaston-Jones

#### **Secretary**

- Nikki Alderman

#### **Treasurer:**

- Sueanne Trindall

#### **Committee Members**

- Lynnette Toms
- Kelleigh Ryan
- Yvonne Clark
- Julianne Kealey
- Heather Gridley
- Kylie Cann

#### **AIPA Representative**

- Tania Hirvonen

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Dawn ([dawn.darlaston-jones@nd.edu.au](mailto:dawn.darlaston-jones@nd.edu.au)) ASAP.

## The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association

AIPA is committed to improving the social and emotional well-being and mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by leading the change required to deliver equitable, accessible, sustainable, timely and culturally competent psychological care which respects and promotes their cultural integrity.

The aims of AIPA are:

- AIPA will provide leadership on issues related to the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have access to equitable, timely, safe, sustainable, evidence-based psychological care that respects and promotes their cultural integrity, regardless of where they live.
- Psychology in Australia will be responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, values and belief systems and will be grounded in holistic Indigenous perspectives and the determinants of social and emotional wellbeing.
- The number of Indigenous entrants into undergraduate and postgraduate psychology programs, across all specialties, will increase and parity within the profession will be improved.
- AIPA will be the professional body responsible for quality control of workshops and training programs related to the application of psychology in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts.
- AIPA will engage in research to generate improved policy and social and emotional wellbeing and mental health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) is registered with ORIC has a Steering Committee that governs the functions and activities of the association. The AIPA Steering Committee is as follows:

**Director:** Leda Barnett

**Chair:** Tania Dalton

**Deputy Chair:** Paul Gray

**Board Directors:** Pat Dudgeon, Peter Smith, Yvonne Clark, Carmen Cubillo, Kelleigh Ryan, Vanessa Edwige, and Tanja Hirvonen

Please direct your communication to [aipa@psychology.org.au](mailto:aipa@psychology.org.au)

Follow this link to be taken to the AIPA website for more information: <http://www.indigenouspsychology.com.au/>



## AIPA - Editorial

Dear Colleagues,

The ongoing public health crisis has presented a challenge for every sector, and for our society generally. The social and economic impacts of the pandemic have emphasised the importance of a universally accessible mental health support system. Psychologists are continually adjusting to the needs of individuals, families and communities, and have seen an increase in telehealth to provide critical supports while observing physical distancing and isolation protocols to limit the spread of the outbreak. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, these essential services must respect and respond to the holistic social and emotional wellbeing needs of our communities.

The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association has been working hard to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists, and the needs of our communities, in response to this changed world. AIPA representatives have participated in the APS Industry Response to COVID-19 Meeting Group, have engaged mental wellbeing providers such as Beyond Blue regarding cultural competence and safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the recent GO8 report exploring a roadmap for recovery (see below). There is work underway with the Indigenous Mental Health Working Group at the University of Western Australia regarding the impact of COVID-19 on our communities.

AIPA has also been focused on moving our organisation forward. Building from our incorporation and inaugural Annual General Meeting late last year, AIPA has been focused on streamlining membership processes and strengthening our presence as a representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists, and as a strong voice for our communities in psychology research and practice. We continue to support and participate in the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) leadership group focused on social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention, and are building relationships with organisations such as the AFL to improve access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists, and other ways that we can support our members and our communities.

Finally, we would like to take this moment to pay our respects to one of the giants of our field, Koori Psychologist Professor Dennis Roy McDermott, a strong advocate for his people and supporter and inspiration to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists.

Kind Regards,  
Deputy Chair Paul Gray, on behalf of the AIPA Board.



## Events & News

### Remote Aboriginal Communities Call for Governments to Support 'Arks' for Most Vulnerable

Despite official assurances that remote communities are the safest place to be for vulnerable people, Aboriginal community organisations are calling on governments to support Elder Protected Areas amid fears that an outbreak of COVID-19 could be 'catastrophic'. Read [this important article](#) by Jack Latimore, Royce Kurlmelovs, Keira Jenkins for SBS.

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### The Answer to Indigenous Vulnerability to Coronavirus: A More Equitable Public Health Agenda

Dr Chelsea Bond is an Aboriginal (Munanjahli) and South Sea Islander Australian and a senior lecturer with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland. Dr Lisa Whop is a proud descendent of the Wagadagam tribe and Panai Clan of Mabuig Island in the Torres Strait, and a Senior Research Fellow at Menzies School of Health Research.



Chelsea and Lisa have authored an important article for The Conversation discussing some of the important considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in relation to COVID-9. Read the [article](#) and look into some of videos that are embedded throughout for more information.

### The Psychology of Isolation: Coronavirus Quarantine an Opportunity for Renewal

Self-isolation can be difficult and boring, but it can also be an opportunity for self-reflection and renewal. In many cultures, this is traditionally the purpose self-isolation has served. Self-isolation in religious traditions is in many ways about practising self-restraint and withdrawing from the ills of society. The [New Daily article](#) explores the importance of connection and a sense of belonging.

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### The Importance of Standing on Ground

AIPA Board Director and Kabi Kabi woman Kelleigh Ryan spoke with NITV about the importance of being on Country, particularly during the current pandemic. As western sciences catch up with Indigenous knowledges and practices, Kelleigh emphasises the importance of going outside and standing on ground to help maintain social and wellbeing throughout challenging times.

See [Kelleigh's video on NITV](#).

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### AIPA Welcomes Government Pledge to Support Mental Health During COVID-19

The commitment, totalling \$74 million, will support mental health services during the COVID – 19 pandemic. “We warmly welcome this commitment and thank the Australian Government for recognising the mental health needs of all Australians during these challenging times,” states AIPA founding Director Professor Pat Dudgeon. Please read the [full media statement from AIPA](#).



## Keeping Indigenous Communities Safe During the COVID-19 Pandemic

There is a nationally agreed virus management plan for most remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. However, many Indigenous communities say they're still not getting all the resources and information they need to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Listen to the [conversation on RN Breakfast with Fran Kelly](#).

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## The Coronavirus Supplement is the Biggest Boost to Indigenous Incomes Since Whitlam. It Should Be Made Permanent

Payments to the unemployed, single parents and students have effectively doubled in by Coronavirus supplement, but this support is limited to only six months.

Read [Francis Markham's article for The Conversation](#) demonstrating why this increased support must continue long after the pandemic.

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## 'Think About the Best-Case Scenario': How to Manage Coronavirus Anxiety

Emine Saner has written an [important article](#) for the Guardian - "We are not wired to tolerate uncertainty – and these are the most uncertain of times. But while increased anxiety is only natural, we can all adopt strategies to control it".

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## COVID-19 Community Impact Log

AbSec has set up a [community impact log](#) to record any issues Aboriginal communities are currently dealing with. Impacts can vary from consequences of the virus, such as health problems, to indirect issues, like the impact of the lockdown on families.

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## Queensland Mental Health Commission

To help build community health resilience and preparedness in the face of COVID-19, the Queensland Government is offering a \$27.75 million COVID-19 Grant Fund to mental health service providers. Please see the [QLD Mental Health Commission website](#) regarding the program, eligibility and application.

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## Living with Coronavirus- "It's Affected People in Different Ways"... Tanja Hirvonen.

Tanja Hirvonen, a Jaru and Bunaba is a Board Director with AIPA. Josef Egger caught up with Ms Hirvonen to discuss the current impacts of COVID-19 on First Nations Australians. Listen to this [important conversation here](#).

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## Assessing the Quality of Health Research from an Indigenous Perspective: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Quality Appraisal Tool

This [recently published journal article](#) presents the first tool to appraise research quality from the perspective of Indigenous peoples. Researchers hope that the uptake of this tool will improve the quality and transparency of research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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## Teachers Lack Confidence to Teach Indigenous Perspectives

Gamilaroi woman Michelle Bishop is an Associate Lecturer at Macquarie University and she writes about the challenges facing Australian teachers who attempt to teach Indigenous perspectives in a meaningful, rather than tokenistic, manner. Read her article for The Conversation [here](#).

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## Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and ACCHOs During COVID-19

The National Health and Leadership Forum has established a small reference group to develop a volunteer register to connect health professionals and/or academics who want to support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in relation to managing COVID-19. AIPA will be in contact as soon as a volunteer register has been established, so please keep an eye out for further information.

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## G08 – COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery

Over a hundred of the brightest scholars in Australia's leading universities came together to address the pressing question – How can society recover from COVID-19? The independent report includes a chapter specifically investigating the care of Indigenous Australians – [read it here](#).

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## APS Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Interest Group Student Award

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Peoples and Psychology Interest group (ATSIPP) is pleased to announce that we are offering *Indigenous Student Conference Attendance*

## Forthcoming Conferences

Given the ever-changing climate surrounding COVID-19 many conferences have been deferred or cancelled.

These details are current as of the publication of the newsletter, but may be subject to change.

### [21st International Mental Health Conference](#)

Gold Coast, Australia  
November 12 – 14, 2020.

### [International Congress of Psychology](#) -

Prague, Europe  
July 18 – 23, 2021.

### [Third World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference](#) -

Winnipeg, Canada  
May, 2021.

Awards for 2020. The purpose of the award is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attend an Australian Psychological Society (APS) conference to empower Indigenous students to continue in Psychology. The closing date is 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020. See for Website for more details on the award and how to apply

<https://www.psychology.org.au/About-Us/What-we-do/Awards-and-scholarships/ig/ATSIPP-award/ATSIPP-Indigenous-Student-Conference-Attendance>

If you have read a good article/chapter/book that is relevant for this Newsletter please send through the information to Dawn ([dawn.darlaston-jones@nd.edu.au](mailto:dawn.darlaston-jones@nd.edu.au)).



## Mind Food That We Like and Support

### The Power of Social Distancing

A [video from the Ohio Department of Health](#) provides an excellent visual representation of how social distancing can help keep us safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is similar to another [powerful video by Juan Delcan and Valentina Izaguirre](#), who used CGI matches to demonstrate the impact that one person can have in staying home to help stop the spread.

### Black Magic Woman Podcast

Wonnarua Birrigubba Gungalu woman Mundanara Bayles speaks with guest Professor Gracelyn Smallwood, a Birrigubba, Kalkadoon and South-Sea Islander woman who has been advocating against racism and violation of human rights against First Nations people for the past 45 years.

Check out the [latest episode of Mundanara's podcast Black Magic Woman](#)



### Staying Connected and Having Fun on TikTok

Known as the 'Backyard Blacks', these young and proud Indigenous people are making an impact on the social media platform TikTok and sharing their creativity from isolation.

Watch them introduce their mob [here](#) and see some of their dancing [here](#).

### Be Thankful the Pandemic Came in an Era of Sophisticated Communication

Ian Hickie writes about the benefits of modern technology in supporting the core pillars of mental health and wellbeing are personal autonomy and social connectedness during a pandemic. Ian is the Co-Director of Health and Policy at The University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre. Read Ian's opinion piece for The Age [here](#).

### New DC Comic Book Superhero Thylacine is an Indigenous Australian From the Pilbara

There's a new Aboriginal superhero in the DC Universe and she's a deadly Ngarluma hunter from the Pilbara.

Read ABC writer Teresa Tan's [article about Thylacine joining DC's Suicide Squad](#).



### **Kimberley Coronavirus Animation**

Watch this [brilliant animation](#) produced, directed and edited by Bernadette Trench-Thiedeman in collaboration with Nirrumbuk Environmental Health & Services (Pty Ltd) Chris Griffiths and Alana Hunt and Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services.

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### **DADIRRI (Official Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Video)**

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr collaborated with Producer and Director, Pip Gordon of The Gathering Tree with support from DLUX Media and Djilpin Arts in Katherine, with original music composed by Michael Kokinos, in producing a short teaser film about Dadirri - A Gift to The Nation. In Miriam's language, 'Dadirri', is the practise of Deep Inner Listening and quiet still awareness, which connects us and nurtures spiritual well-being. [Watch the promo video and feel calmer.](#)

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### **Therapy Dog Brings Comfort to ER Doctors on the Frontlines**

Service dog in training, Wynn, brings joy and comfort to the medical staff on the front lines of the Coronavirus fight in Denver, Colorado. Read [the full article](#) to learn more about the positive impact that the one-year-old Labrador is having in the hospital setting.

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### **Racism Alive and Well in the Alice**

A powerful article discussing the broken 'justice' system that consistently prioritises non-Indigenous people over Indigenous people. Written by Chris Graham, the founding and former editor of the National Indigenous Times – [read it here.](#)

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### **Addressing Racism to Improve Healthcare Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People**

Racism is pervasive within the healthcare system, and this publication investigates the impacts on health outcomes of Indigenous Australians specifically in relation to kidney care. [Read it here.](#)

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### **An Honest Reckoning with Captain Cook's Legacy Won't Heal Things Overnight. But it's a Start.**

Captain James Cook arrived in the Pacific 250 years ago, triggering British colonisation of the region. The Conversation are asking researchers to reflect on what happened and how it shapes us today. Sunanda Creagh interviewed Worimi man Professor John Maynard about the impacts of how Captain Cook's legacy has been told throughout colonised Australian history. Listen to the interview and read the transcript [here.](#)

You can see other stories in the series [here](#) and an interactive [here.](#)

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### **Dear Ancestor: A Poem by Dr Chelsea Bond**

Read the [powerful excerpt by Chelsea Bond](#) from '[Fire Front: First Nations poetry and power today](#)', edited by Alison Whittaker.

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## Resources

### Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia

Gayaa Dhuwi have published [20 Tips for Staying Healthy and Strong During the Coronavirus Outbreak](#).

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### Emerging Minds

Emerging Minds have published a variety of resources to help parents and carers [support children during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

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### Australian Indigenous Psychology Education Project (AIPEP) Update

One of the outcomes of this project was a 'clearing house' for resources that educators might use to include Indigenous knowledges in their classes. The website is being updated and transitioning to UWA shortly but you can check it out [here](#).

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### Black Dog Institute

Clinical psychologist, Kathleen O'Moore explains how to [complete a weekly personal mental health check-in](#) during Coronavirus, and why it's important at this time.

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### Croaky – Coronavirus

See [Croakey's website](#) for a roundup of the latest information relating to the coronavirus pandemic.

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### Useful Links

[Australian Psychological Society](#)

[Mental Health Australia](#)

[Suicide Prevention Australia](#)

[Roses in the Ocean](#)

[Black Dog Institute](#)

[Lifeline](#)

[Indigenous Allied Health Australia](#)

[Australian Indigenous Doctors Association](#)

[Closing the Gap](#)

[IndigenousX](#)

[NACCHO Aboriginal Health News Alerts](#)

[The LIME Network](#)

[National Indigenous Times](#)

## Mindfully – ABC Podcast

In partnership with Smiling Mind, ABC podcast 'Mindfully' have created a [series of four short podcasts](#) that focus on cultivating a sense of calm in this challenging time.

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## Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue have established a [Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#). The website will be regularly updated with information, advice and strategies to help people manage their wellbeing and mental health during this time. Beyond Blue also have a page that is informed by [Gayaa Dhuwi \(Proud Spirit\) Australia](#) specifically focussing on the [wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during coronavirus](#).

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## The Lowitja Institute: Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research

The Lowitja Institute is Australia's national institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, named in honour of, [Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG](#), who devoted her working life to improving the health and welfare of her people. She was named Australian of the Year in 1984 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the welfare of Aboriginal people. Lowitja is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organization, which works for the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples through quality research, knowledge translation, and in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

Please click [here](#) to be taken to the Lowitja website and [here](#) to subscribe to their eBulletin.

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## Tekwabi Giz: National LGBTI Health Alliance

Tekwabi (Tiwi island meaning "All of us") and Giz (Torres Strait Islander meaning "Connection") stands for "All of us connected". Tekwabi Giz is a national collaboration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and people, who are working with LGBTI people across Australia. Working in partnership with the National Health Alliance, as part of the MindOut National LGBTI Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Project.



To view this Project, please click [here](#). Tekwabi Giz provides support and advice to the National LGBTI Health Alliance and other organisations on effective and appropriate ways to recognise and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The knowledge of the group travels across the lifespan and uses the traditional ways of knowing and culture to work towards health and wellbeing.

For more information, please click [here](#) to be taken to their website.

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## **Anrows: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety**

ANROWS is an independent, not-for-profit company established as an initiative under the National Plan (2010-2022) to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children in Australia.

ANROWS is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of Australia. Their mission is to deliver relevant and translatable research evidence which drives policy and practice leading to a reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children.

This is shown in their strategic plan, which you can download [here](#) or for more information, click [here](#) to be taken to their website.

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## **Looking for Good Programs and Services in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention?**

The Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP) seeking best practice programs and services to add to a clearing house.

The [CBPATSISP](#) is assessing and highlighting best practice programs and services in order to support communities in furthering their suicide prevention programs and services.

There are six categories of best practice programs and services:

- Prevention
- Crisis Response
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing/Healing
- Training
- Postvention
- Clinical Services

Please click [here](#) to explore the current best practice programs and services.

Watch this space for forthcoming information, resources and research.

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