

Winners of 2017 LiFE Awards for Excellence in Suicide Prevention announced at National Conference Dinner

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 9pm 28 July 2017

Australia, 28 July 2017: We are delighted to announce the 2017 recipients of the LiFE Awards for Excellence in Suicide Prevention.

LiFE Awards Judging Committee Chair and Suicide Prevention Australia Board Director Matthew Tukaki said of the winners: "We were overwhelmed with the number of quality nominations this year showcasing the exciting, innovative and diverse range of programs being undertaken within the field. The nominees ranged from mainstream programs to local 'grass roots' organisations and dedicated individuals. The Awards celebrate the commitment and energy of the nominees and their vital contribution to the reduction of suicide within our communities."

2017 Winners

Many congratulations and thanks to the winners listed below (more information on each in the appendix):

- The recipient of the **LiFEtime Achievement Award** is: **Michael Dudley**
- The recipient of the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander category award** is: **The Suicide Story Program**
- The recipient of the **Media Award** is: **Gus Worland**
- The recipient of the **Community Development (Organisation) Award**: **Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Live4Life program)**
- The recipient of the **Community Development (Individual) Award** is: **Wendy French**
- The recipient of the **Workplace Category** is: **Danielle Driscoll**
- The recipient of the **Community Engagement (Organisation) Award** is: **SPEAK UP Stay ChatTY**
- The recipient of the **Community Engagement (Individual) Award**: **Debbie Knight**
- The recipient of the **Local Hero Award**: **Kerrie Keepa**
- The recipient of the **Research Award** is: **Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention.**

About the National Suicide Prevention Conference

The 2017 conference will be held at the Sofitel Brisbane Central, Queensland, 26 – 29 July 2017. The theme *Relationships, resilience and respect: Responding to vulnerability in life* is designed to bring to the fore these thematic issues in suicide prevention and how they may help or hinder implementation of initiatives at the community level. [Find out more on the conference website.](#)

Also, starting from 6pm tomorrow, the country's biggest community suicide prevention event, the national 24-hour treadmill challenge

From 6pm on Friday 28 until 6pm Saturday 29 July, thousands of Australians in hundreds of Anytime Fitness clubs to keep treadmills running for 24 hours to raise funds and awareness for Suicide Prevention Australia. [Visit the Treadmill Challenge website to register to run or donate today.](#)

Media Contact: Kim Borrowdale, kimb@suicidepreventionaust.org 0406 149 099.

Appendix: Award citations

The recipient of the **Media Award is: Gus Worland**

Gus Worland is a broadcaster with Sydney's Triple M radio station and a passionate advocate for the health and happiness of Australian men. He is the presenter of three-part television series which aired on the ABC in October 2016, *Man Up*, created by Heiress Films in collaboration with the University of Melbourne's Professor Jane Pirkis, Movember Foundation, the ABC and others. *Man Up* follows Gus visiting community organisations such as Lifeline to learn about the support services available for people struggling with life's challenges or thinking about suicide. He also speaks to men who have attempted suicide to understand what led them to that depth of despair and, importantly, to ask: how did they recover? The series is intensely personal for Gus, who lost one of his best friends to suicide in 2006. The episodes chart Gus's attempt to understand what his friend was thinking and why he didn't reach out for help. In doing so, Gus explores the stoic ideals of manhood ways that are heart-warming, humorous and, at times, heartbreaking.

The series is a ground-breaking approach to reach men on the issue of male suicide in Australia through a holistic approach to entertainment, education, community engagement, research and evaluation. The TV series is supported by a social media campaign, an online resource and academic evaluation on male viewers' perceptions of suicide, help-seeking behaviours and awareness of support services led by internationally-regarded researcher Jane Pirkis, one of Australia's leading suicide experts. It seeks to learn from, and reaches, men from all walks of life, not just the experts.

The recipient of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander category award is: **The Suicide Story Aboriginal Advisory Group, Mental Health Association of Central Australia's Suicide Story Program**

Suicide Story is a suicide prevention and community capacity building program developed at the request of and with remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. The program content was developed in collaboration between Mental Health Association of Central Australia (MHACA) and local Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and the content reflects the teachings and guidance of Aboriginal people.

The Suicide Story Aboriginal Advisory Group (SSAAG) is a group of community leaders and Aboriginal allied health workers who ensure cultural competence and storytelling integrity throughout workshop deliveries. They have been described as "cultural brokers", maintaining cultural integrity across a huge geographical scale, in 20 language groups, supporting safe discussion of an issue that's difficult for many people.

Workshops are delivered by local Aboriginal facilitators trained in the Suicide Story content and 'both-ways' learning and who use cultural pedagogy to guide participants through the process of understanding suicide and reducing stigma so that participants can effectively identify and respond to the suicidal risk signs within their communities. The SSAAG (in collaboration with MHACA program staff) monitor, evaluate and review all workshop deliveries and provide critical assistance with community relationship building. These evaluations show an increase in both knowledge and resilience with 97% of participants capable of identifying the 'warning signs' of suicide and 98% stating the workshop 'strengthened their fire' (emotional spirit).

The recipient of the **Community Development (Organisation) Award: Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Live4Life program)**

Live4Life is a schools and community partnership, locally place based initiative that has focused on mental health promotion, in the Macedon Ranges, central Victoria since 2010. It was developed in response to a number of youth suicides in the local area and the community driven desire to increase youth conversation and engagement in mental health, wellbeing and help seeking.

The goal of Live4Life is to educate young people and their communities empowering them to seek help and help others who may be dealing with a mental health issue. Live4Life partners with community organisations and five secondary schools in the Macedon Ranges to deliver interactive mental health awareness education sessions to year 8 students. A group of 30 Year 9 and 10 students form the Live4Life crew and assist in the delivery of education and events to year 8 students.

Live4Life also delivers Youth Mental Health First Aid training to parents, teachers and the broader community several times each year to further support young people and Teen Mental Health First Aid Training (for year 11 students) was added in 2014. Live4Life has young people and mental health awareness at the heart of everything they do. They focus on every young person's wellness rather than targeting only those with an identified mental illness or who have been identified as "at risk". Live4Life is about a community passionate about everyone in its community connecting more, conversing more and learning more about their own mental health and others.

The recipient of the **Community Engagement (Organisation) Award is: SPEAK UP Stay ChatTY**

When his younger brother Ty took his own life in 2013, Mitch McPherson founded the suicide prevention charity SPEAK UP Stay ChatTY, to spread the message that nothing is so bad that you can't talk about it. Stay ChatTY work in partnership with Relationships Australia Tasmania.

SUSC's dedicated approach to suicide prevention and awareness has seen the charity positively affect the lives of thousands of Tasmanians, using personal experience to promote the importance of checking in with family and friends to identify possible hidden issues affecting individuals. Since 2013, SUSC has spoken to more than 600 school groups, workplaces and sporting clubs throughout Tasmania and partners with key community groups, businesses and sporting identities.

SUSC has raised awareness throughout the community with visual reminders of more than 30,000 bumper stickers, over 8,000 wrist bands and more recently a full clothing range.

In 2014 SUSC partnered with Relationships Australia Tasmania to further the reach of the charities key messages. As a result of this partnership, the #TeamChatty Schools Program has been developed and delivered to more than 750 Grade 9 and 10 children in seven Tasmanian schools.

In 2016, SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY (SUSC) was awarded the Communities in Action for Suicide Prevention Tasmanian LiFE Award, recognising the huge impact the grass roots charity has had in raising awareness of mental health and suicide prevention within the Tasmanian community. "Stay ChatTY" has become a household name in Tasmania due to the dedication, commitment and tireless work of Mitch and his team of supporters.

The recipient of the **LiFEtime Achievement Award is: Michael Dudley**

Dr Michael Dudley AM is a Senior Staff Specialist in Psychiatry with Sydney's Prince of Wales Hospital Adolescent Service and Conjoint Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, University of New South Wales. He primarily works as a clinician to young people, families and parents in an adolescent mental health service. As a conjoint academic, he is involved in teaching suicide prevention and youth mental health to medical students at UNSW, and serves on various boards and committees. He maintains interests in rural and Indigenous suicide and mental health issues, ethics, and the role of religion/spirituality and mental health in contemporary culture.

In 2011 Michael became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for work in child and adolescent mental health and a range of professional associations and has been acknowledged by the NSW Health Department's Better Health Awards, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry and ReachOut.com. This has included specific recognition for his work on gun control as well as his extensive experience working with youth, Indigenous people, and refugees who are at risk of suicide and self harm.

He is a reviewer for the Medical Journal of Australia; the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry; Australasian Psychiatry; Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology. His memberships have included the Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Committee (ASPAC), the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Mental Health Advisory Sub-Group and the New South Wales Suicide Prevention Advisory Committee.

In 1992 he became a founding Director of Suicide Prevention Australia and was the Chair of the organisation between 2000 and 2015. Under his leadership SPA widened its responsibilities and established its role as the peak body for all organisations and individuals working in suicide prevention.

In the last decade, he has been author or co-author on over 40 publications.

It is impossible to calculate the value of his research and teachings to the suicide prevention field in Australia. We are honoured to present a LiFEtime Achievement Award to Michael Dudley.

The recipient of the **Community Development (Individual) Award is: Wendy French**

Wendy French has worked in a variety of suicide prevention programs in Tasmania and throughout Australia. She was responsible for implementing a local site of a national suicide bereavement service in North West Tasmania, which she then managed for five years. 2009-2013).

Her attitude of “Tasmanians helping each other out” is evident in her use of her “spare time”, supporting individuals, families and communities after hours, on weekends, and in the middle of the night, travelling wherever she was needed and ensuring that anyone who needed information and support could get it, when they needed it.

Following a suicide in Tasmania, which had a terrible impact on a small rural community, Wendy was contacted by members of the community looking for help and volunteered her time and knowledge to support the local services and organisations. This, in turn, enabled them to mount an appropriate response, ensuring that those impacted had adequate and informed support.

Wendy has been an active member of the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network and was involved in community consultations for the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy (2016-2020); the Australian Government Senate Inquiry into Suicide in Australia; the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy; the Youth Suicide Prevention Plan for Tasmania; and the Suicide Prevention Workforce Development and Training Plan for Tasmania. She won the 2016 Tasmanian LiFE Awards Lifeline Outstanding Contribution Award in 2016 in recognition of her tireless suicide prevention and bereavement support work in Tasmania and throughout Australia.

While much of Wendy’s work was conducted as part of her employment, her commitment to going that extra mile has meant that individuals, families and communities suffering suicide loss receive the best possible care at the time of their greatest need, and makes her a worthy recipient of this LiFE Award.

The recipient of the **Local Hero Award: Kerrie Keepa**

Kerrie Keepa is passionate about suicide awareness and prevention. She founded SOS Fast (Survivors of Suicide Fighting Against Suicide Toll) in response to the loss of a brother, two sisters, nephew and her son Chris to suicide, following Chris's discharge from hospital. SOS Fast hosts regular events to reduce stigma and promote community engagement, raising awareness of mental illness and suicide prevention.

Through tireless commitment, Kerrie collected over 65,000 signatures on a Change.org petition calling for better mental health training for hospital emergency department staff. She also established a facebook page SOS Fast that now has a following of more than 30,000 people across the world. As a result of her tireless commitment, Kerrie met with Minister for Health Cameron Dick who in July 2015, announced funding to enhance the capability of Queensland hospital emergency departments.

Kerrie says "Our Accident & Emergency staff need to be trained to help all sick people, not just people with physical illnesses". Since Chris' death, Kerrie has been actively urging the government to make mental health reforms. The resulting training package, SRAM –ED (Suicide Risk Assessment and Management for Emergency Department Settings), is a blended learning design that incorporates four eLearning modules along with face-to-face simulation training sessions for all accident and emergency staff. Approximately 150 staff across Queensland were selected and trained to deliver the face-to-face simulation workshops.

Kerrie has also presented at AISRAP's Lived Experience Panel on World Suicide Prevention Day in 2015 and in 2016, sharing her story and the effect of her advocacy. She has been appointed as a member of the Queensland Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council with a role in the ongoing review of Queensland's mental health policy. She was a finalist in the Courier Mail Pride of Australia People's Choice Medal, and her achievements for suicide prevention were featured as one of the top 14 online petitions that changed Australia in 2015

The recipient of the Community Engagement (Individual) Award: **Debbie Knight**

In 2004 Debbie Knight lost a close friend to suicide. Her loss was just one case in a community which was becoming all too familiar with an issue being labelled as epidemic in the Mackay Region. As often happens, she and a group of friends got together with a view to raising awareness around suicide prevention. They did some fundraising and created the beginnings of a powerful and highly regarded organisation, Grapevine Group Mackay.

Debbie has been with this group from the very beginning and in the past 13 years Grapevine has become a foundation stone which underpins the entire mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention movement in the Mackay region. The group's focus - and that which Debbie has campaigned strongly and consistently for - is education.

In partnership with local community suicide awareness and fundraising body Run For Mi Life, as well as LifeLine and the nationally renowned Living Works, Grapevine brought to Mackay the highly regarded safeTALK and ASIST programs in 2014. In conjunction with the lobbying and research work conducted behind the scenes, Debbie was also the key driver in designing, constructing and then effectively disseminating a series of powerful awareness campaigns which were strategically published across mainstream, digital and social media platforms.

The most prolific of these were the Grapevine Group's Christmas Awareness Campaigns. Through the pages of newspapers and via digital and social media platforms, everyday people in the Mackay region had unprecedented and easy-to-understand information about the signs and triggers, risks and times of need within the community. At a time when few media organisations would consider broaching the subject of suicide prevention around Christmastime, this campaign initially launched in 2011 amid a strong spike in the local suicide rate as the "12 Days of Suicide Prevention for Christmas". This campaign was then nominated as a finalist in the 2011 PANPA Newspaper of the Year National Advertising Campaign Award, an award recognised throughout the Asia-Pacific. Media organisations and other businesses engaged in the campaign adopted email signatures and produced a suite of in-house collateral.

During the Christmas 2016-17 Campaign, these display advertisements and a suite of accompanying memes were viewed over 30,000 times. It was real, it was positive and it was compelling. It has stood the test of time and vast changes in the Mackay region's economic and social disposition. It has also been the backbone for Grapevine Group's website and exceptional social media presence. Here is a commitment fuelled by a belief that every single member of a community has the right – and should have the means – to be empowered to understand and help those in need. And in a regional setting – where the rules of metropolitan, state-wide and national coverage are diluted and seldom applicable – making connections and maintaining them over time and social change, is not just vital, but in this case, it is life saving.

The recipient of the Research Award is: **Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention**

The Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) has been a research centre at Griffith University since 1996, delivering high quality research, clinical services, training & education in suicide prevention.

Since 2008 AISRAP has been a National Centre of Excellence in suicide prevention informing the Department of Health on policy, prevention and best-practice initiatives nationally. AISRAP is the only World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention in Australia, and one of only five centres in the world of this kind.

AISRAP made significant contributions to the 2014 *WHO Preventing suicide: A global imperative* report and has collaborated with numerous stakeholders in suicide research and prevention both nationally and internationally over the past 2 decades. Its researchers are highly respected international experts, with over 200 peer-reviewed journal publications and presentations in the last five years.

In response to the absence of accurate and standardised recording systems for non-fatal suicidal behaviour, AISRAP designed and operates a unique database for monitoring of suicide attempts and self-harm presentations at hospital emergency departments (World Health Organization Suicide Trends in At-Risk Territories (START) Study). AISRAP has produced 16 volumes of *Suicide Research: Selected Readings*, a biannual critical literature review series that identifies and outlines recent advances and developments in international research in suicide prevention, collating all newly released publications that explicitly refer to fatal and/or non-fatal suicidal behaviours and related issues.

AISRAP's highly innovative Screening Tool for Assessing Risk of Suicide training in suicide risk assessment has recently been translated into 5 languages. The Institute's Life Promotion Clinic is the only outpatient treatment/research clinic providing an alternative to hospitalised-based care for those with a history of suicidal behaviour.

The recipient of the Workplace Category is: **Danielle Driscoll**

Danielle Driscoll has been the pivotal driver behind TAFESA's delivery of the LivingWorks ASIST, Suicide First Aid training. Since being trained as a trainer of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training in May 2015, Danielle has delivered 15 Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training sessions. This equates to over 300 people with their Suicide First Aid Certificate, 200 of those in 2016 alone.

She is strongly advocating within TAFE SA to provide ASIST training to all staff, improving their ability to support their students and communities. She believes education is the ideal space to nature intervention and prevention skills for young people and their families and their workers. Danielle also works with people outside of her paid role within TAFESA to ensure the message of suicide prevention is top of mind in communities and that everyday families act safely.

Danielle insisted on the inclusion of suicide prevention skills in the TAFE SA qualifications including youth work, juvenile justice, mental health, sport and recreation and community services. She has streamlined ASIST and trauma informed intervention training so that students who are in training to be new and emerging workers in frontline services can be better prepared for the work roles with specialised suicide skills training. She has does this across TAFE campuses across SA.

Danielle's firm belief in access to education and suicide prevention drives her passion for delivery of the training and integration of training into her own community.