



MEDIA RELEASE

Indigenous young people share message of LOVE and HOPE in a song to prevent youth suicide

March 19, 2019

Racism and the fear of difference has crippled Australian communities over generations yet this difference is what makes us our very best as a nation. When we have the courage to understand and connect with each other, we find deep belonging in a national identity that is inclusive of all Australians, and one that values our Indigenous young people.

In the lead up to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21), a collective of young Indigenous people have released a song about connection and belonging. Entitled LOVE and HOPE the song asks the wider community to listen with their hearts to the lived experiences of Indigenous young people, their friends, families and communities and to consider the role they play in addressing the impacts of racism and the alarming rates of Indigenous youth suicide.

The LOVE and HOPE song and music video was produced by Culture is Life and the Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP), Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, University of Western Australia and the National and World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conferences in Perth Western Australia in November 2018.

The Conferences featured a dedicated youth stream, led by Culture is Life's Culture Squad Ambassadors. The song features Indigenous young people from Australia and Canada and was co-written by youth stream delegates with songwriting mentors from the Homelands Tour and the Youth Music Mentoring Project.

This release features original music by Glenn Skuthorpe with performances by Justice-Lee Quachegan, Natasha Eldridge, Deanne Moore, Delroy Bergsma, Kathleen Cox, Jaydan Ahmat and Thelma Cheechoo. The song was produced by Katie Symes and recorded, mixed and mastered by Colin Wynne at Thirty Mills Studios and also recorded across a number of other studios in Australia and Canada including Forest, Yama-Nui, David Dowe and Street Front Studios. The music video is by Brian Cohen at Media Unit B.

Belinda Duarte, Wotjobaluk/Dja Dja Wurrung woman and CEO at Culture is Life says this song encourages us to listen to communities that are faced with extreme loss and grief and the impact of trauma: "The song reminds us all of how deeply our families love and care for one

another and how important it is for us to maintain hope through the challenges we face from the loss within our communities. And it's a call to the broader Australian community to think about the role we all play in providing loving and hope-filled environments."

Professor Tom Calma AO, Kungarakan Elder, a member of the Iwaidja tribal group in the Northern Territory and Conference Patron AO said: "In human rights terms, a person and a community needs to have hope and we have to love each other, we have to love ourselves and I think this is part of the concern about why people take their own lives. They feel alienated, not loved, they feel disempowered and they don't have hope for the future. This impacts on their social and emotional wellbeing and on their mental health."

Professor Pat Dudgeon, Bardi woman and Project Director at the Centre for Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention said: "Our suicide rates are at least twice that of other Australians and we know from our own lived experiences, that there's not many families that haven't been touched. The reason this is happening is because this is the end result of the story of colonisation, where we were put into missions and reserves, where there was genocide, where we were taken from our families. You can't wipe out a history like that, it is transmitted intergenerationally. We are still one of the most disadvantaged groups. There is still racism. So, you know, put all that together, and it's no wonder that we've got the problems that we have."

Professor Tom Calma said: "The song fills you with pride. There's a very clear message for all of us and for all the young peoples' contemporaries. Love yourself and if you see someone who is down, help them up."

To view the music video and learn more about Culture is Life's #loveandhope campaign go to <https://www.cultureislife.org/campaign/love-hope/>

LOVE and HOPE single release in MP3 and WAV is attached and available for download on request.

For more information about CBPATSIISP's work go to <https://www.cbpatsisip.com.au/>

For help or support please call one of the following national helplines:

Lifeline 13 11 14, beyondblue 1300 22 4636, Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467, Q Life 1800 184 527 or contact a Critical Response Support Advocate on 1800 805 801.

Help is also available at https://www.gogentleaustralia.org.au/suicide_help.

For those living outside of Australia, please contact your local mental health or suicide prevention call back service.

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