



MEDIA RELEASE

LOVE and HOPE: Two powerful forces to prevent Indigenous youth suicide

November 19, 2018

A new campaign launched as part of the 2nd National and World Indigenous Suicide Prevention conference urges all Australians to help turn the tide of Indigenous suicide - especially among young people and children - through a powerful message of love and hope.

Culture is Life's LOVE & HOPE Suicide Prevention Campaign [November 9 - December 6] asks all Australians to listen with their hearts to the lived experiences of First Nations young people, their families and communities - and to play an active role in forging change.

Culture is Life CEO and Wotjobaluk woman, Belinda Duarte said the new campaign highlighted the fact that culture, love and hope are powerful protective factors against suicide.

"When our children have love and hope in their lives, it can reduce their sense of hopelessness and keep them safe from self-harm," she said.

"We are asking all Australians to show our young people that there is cause for love and hope in their lives - because Australians of all backgrounds share a deep sense of pride in who they are, in our inspiring cultures, and in our strength."

The campaign is being launched to coincide with the 2nd National and World Indigenous Suicide Prevention conference <http://ispc2018.com> from November 20-23 in Perth.

The global conference – which will bring together Indigenous suicide prevention experts from around the world, will share lived experiences, evidence and solutions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It will also showcase the voices of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait people led by Culture is Life's Ambassadors, the Culture Squad.

In Australia, suicide remains a leading cause of death for young people. The suicide rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is more than double the national suicide rate.

Ms Duarte said the aftershocks of colonisation and trauma from past policies and ongoing racism contribute to a sense of helplessness, which is driving these alarming rates of suicide.

“With suicide rates at an all-time high and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people some of those most at risk, we must act urgently to build connection to love and hope, to strengthen and protect them, and to deepen their sense of belonging.” she said.

The new campaign <https://www.cultureislife.org/campaign/love-hope/> features a series of videos highlighting how the legacies of history continue to shape the lives of Indigenous people and communities, featuring Indigenous leaders in conversation with young people.

Professor Pat Dudgeon, a Bardi woman and the Project Director at the Centre of 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 inter-generationally. 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.”

Keerray Wurrung and Peek Wurrung man and Culture Squad Ambassador Will Austin said:

“When I think about the very essence of our culture, it’s those fundamental and traditional values of respect, authenticity, vulnerability and resilience. No matter what our people go through, we always seem to be able to find more love and more hope.”

Cultures is Life deepens connection and belonging by backing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander led solutions to prevent youth suicide and to support young people to thrive.

Culture is Life’s LOVE and HOPE Campaign runs November 9 - December 6, and urges all Australians to listen with their hearts to the lived experiences of First Nations young people, their families and communities. #loveandhope #culturesquad #cultureislife #atsispc #wispc

The 2nd National and World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference runs November 20-23, 2018 in Perth.

If you or someone you know needs help or support, you can call Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours-a-day), contact your local Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation, call beyond blue on 1300 22 4636 or call Q Life 1800 184 527.

For media enquiries contact:

Katie Symes - katie@cultureislife.org | +61 4 08 900 960 | www.cultureislife.org

Sarah Puckeridge - sarah@33creative.com.au | +61 4 22 156 258 | <http://ispc2018.com/>