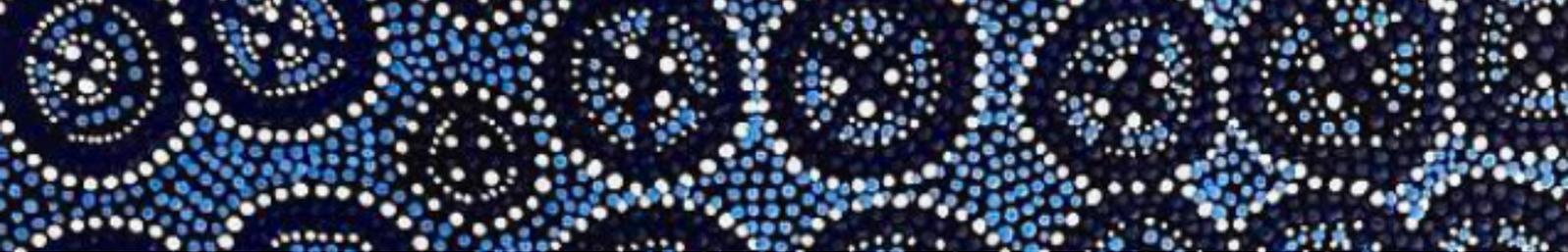


2021-25

KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL
SUICIDE PREVENTION
REGIONAL PLAN



Acknowledgements

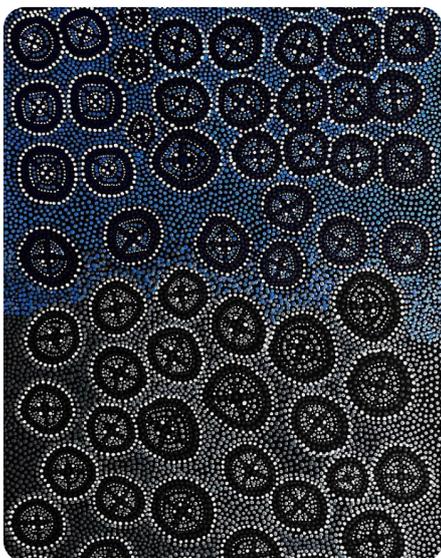
We wish to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across the Kimberley, Elders past and present, and emerging young leaders. We acknowledge and respect the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and the rich and diverse languages, cultures, and histories of Indigenous peoples across Australia.

We acknowledge and value the individuals and communities who generously shared their lived experience, knowledge and wisdom to inform the development for this Plan.

The development of the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan was led by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services, funded by the WA Mental Health Commission. We would like to acknowledge the members of the Aboriginal Regional Governance Group as the drivers in the development of the Plan, and as the interim regional governance group to provide oversight and implementation.

It is important to note that Aboriginal people and communities must be the drivers in the implementation of this Plan, with support from organisations and service providers.

This Plan is dedicated to the lives of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the Kimberley who we have lost to suicide, and those who are struggling today.



Broken Blues by Joseph Bin Omar

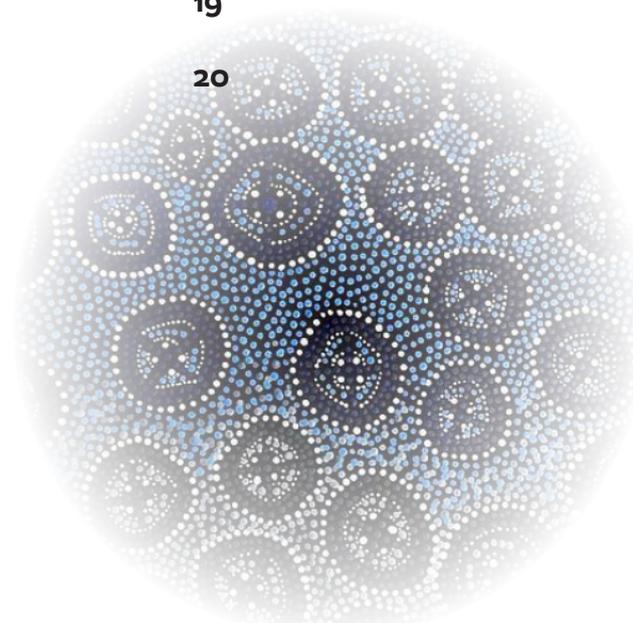
A symbolic interpretation regarding the artist's personal mental health journey. A split of blues reflecting two states of emotion. The piece is patterned in different sizes with the lighter circles representing a tight cycle of holding the blues together. A slightly structured yet fluid depiction of imbalances, trying to regulate emotions.

Artist - Joseph Bin Omar, a 25-year-old Broome man from the Bin Omar and Sibosado family of Gudumul and Lombadina. Joseph belongs to the Baad and Nimanburr groups and also of Malay heritage

Joseph describes his work as expressionist, using creative art form to depict stories, emotions and ideas as a form of emotional management and expression. Growing up in the Kimberley, Joseph comes from several family and friends who have faced hardship and difficulties whether that was through suicide or the impact from a lost loved one, causing trauma and impacts on mental health.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Introduction And Purpose	5
Policies and Processes	6
An Integrated Systems-Based Approach	6
Principles	8
Structure	9
Activities And Strategies To Prevent And Reduce Self-Harm And Suicide (Recommendations And Actions)	10
Universal / Indigenous Community-Wide	10
Selective – At-risk Groups	15
Indicated – At-risk Individuals	17
Common Elements	18
Measure Of Success	19
Making The Plan A Success	19
Adequate and Sustainable Funding	19
Monitoring and Evaluation	19
Next Steps	19
Selected References	20



Vision

For all Aboriginal individuals, families and communities in the Kimberley to be strong, resilient, and achieve sustained empowerment and wellbeing.

Purpose

To guide suicide prevention and community wellbeing initiatives and strategies for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley through a collective and sustained effort and investment into all Closing the Gap targets to achieve meaningful impacts.

Goal

To achieve a significant and sustained reduction in self-harm and suicidal behaviours in Aboriginal people in the Kimberley towards zero.

Recommendations:

1. Aboriginal-Led Governance And Community Empowerment
2. Language And Culture At The Centre
3. A Focus On Social And Emotional Wellbeing
4. Culturally Secure Services And Supports
5. A Sustainable Aboriginal Workforce
6. Promotion Of Health And Wellbeing
7. Natural Helpers And Safe Spaces
8. Enhance Local Services And Community Connections
9. Kimberley Emerging Young Leaders
10. Invest In The Early Years
11. Targeted Services For At-Risk Individuals, Families, And Communities
12. Data, Research And Evaluation
13. Support At Every Door

Next steps and implementation:

- The Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan
- The Community Liaison Officer/s and the Aboriginal Regional Governance Group
- CLO meeting with community working groups for place-based priorities
- Activities and Events across the region
- Connecting communities with services
- Reviewing the Plan end of year I

Introduction and purpose

Aboriginal individuals, families, and communities in the Kimberley have long advocated for Aboriginal-led, place-based strategies to reduce and prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviours in the region. Supported by significant investment and long-term commitments, Aboriginal people and communities are best placed to coordinate culturally secure suicide prevention activities which achieve meaningful outcomes. While various commitments have been made and activities undertaken over the years to reduce the impacts of self-harm and suicide for Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley, these have not been designed as a single and cohesive plan for the region.

The Western Australian Mental Health Commission – via its Suicide Prevention Framework 2021–2025 – has called for the development of a Western Australian Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Strategy prioritising culturally secure approaches to social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention, with dedicated regional plans.

This document is the dedicated regional plan for Aboriginal people and communities in the Kimberley region.

The Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan (the Plan) identifies a range of practical, place-based approaches to prevent and reduce the impacts of self-harm and suicidal behaviours for Aboriginal people and communities in the Kimberley region. The Plan sets out recommendations, with activities and next steps for implementation.

Many of the recommendations and activities outlined in this Plan are not new. Instead, they draw on the extensive work done by Aboriginal people and communities throughout the Kimberley over many years. These include the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial (KASPT), as well as several activities and strategies that have been documented in various reports. These include, but are certainly not limited to, the following:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (2017) (ATSISPEP)
- Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing (2020)
- The Coroner's inquest into the deaths of Thirteen Children and Young Persons in the Kimberley Region (2017)
- The Elders' Report into Preventing Indigenous Self-Harm and Youth Suicide (2014)
- Kimberley Empowered Young Leaders Forums (2019)
- Learnings from the message stick (2016)
- Statement of Intent on Aboriginal youth suicide (2019).

The recommendations and actions outlined in this Plan reflect the extensive work undertaken to inform the many previous strategies, reports and documents that have been developed for the region. They also reflect the feedback received during community consultations in April and May 2021, both online and face-to-face. The Aboriginal Regional Governance Group (ARGG) was established early 2021 as an interim regional governance structure with the collective commitment to come together and guide the development of the Plan.

Process to develop the plan:

1. Desktop review of existing plans, reports and strategies
2. Aboriginal Regional Governance Group (ARGG) established to guide the development of the Plan
3. First Draft reviewed by ARGG
4. Community feedback on Second Draft - 30 online submissions & 118 community members and service providers participated in face to face consultations
5. Final draft reviewed by ARGG
6. Submission of Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan to WA Mental Health Commission

Policies and processes

This Plan is one of many initiatives on foot in the Kimberley, Western Australia and across Australia with the purpose to address the systemic challenges contributing to poor health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people.

All individuals, communities, organisations and services have an important role in reducing and preventing self-harm and suicidal behaviours. It is recognised to achieve the vision of this Plan, a systems-based, coordinated approach across the Kimberley region is necessary. This takes into consideration the social, political, historical and economic determinants of health, and acknowledges the interconnectedness of other strategic policies and processes.

This Plan will work alongside other strategic policies and processes, such as:

National

- Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy (in development)
- Closing the Gap National Agreement and Priority Reforms
- The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing (2017-2023)

State

- WA Suicide Prevention Framework (2021-2025) and associated Regional Plans
- WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy (in development)

Kimberley

- Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing (2020)
- Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy (in development).

The WA Mental Health Commission has committed resourcing for a Community Liaison Officer (CLO), along with \$100,000 seed funding per year for three years, to support Plan implementation. The CLO role will have significant regional engagement with organisations and service providers to encourage collaboration and accountability, and support regional and place-based activities to ensure meaningful outcomes. It is acknowledged that the recommendations in this Plan are broader than the scope of the CLO role, and will require additional and sustained state and commonwealth commitments and investments.

An integrated systems-based approach

This Plan and its recommendations are designed to represent an integrated systems-based approach to prevent and reduce the impacts of self-harm and suicidal behaviours for Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley. The foundations for this are underpinned by the concepts outlined in the ATSIPEP Report and the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework (as described in the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework 2017-2023 (The National Strategic Framework)). Both documents are well recognised, validated and endorsed to support mental health reforms and prevent suicide amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia, with the integration of the two providing a systematic framework from which to implement and evaluate suicide prevention programs that best support Aboriginal peoples in the Kimberley.

The Aboriginal holistic concept of Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) acknowledges the connections to land, culture, spirituality, family and community. It recognises that social, historical, political and cultural factors intertwine and impact on wellbeing. Improving SEWB for Aboriginal people is the foundation of resilience, self-determination, and life outcomes.

Figure 2: Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework



SEWB Diagram adapted from Gee et al., (2014)

Principles

The following four principles guide all the recommendations and activities outlined within this Plan.

Principle 1: Prioritise Culture And Healing

"If we lose our culture we are lost, without it we are finished as a people."¹

Culture includes connection to Country, knowledge and beliefs, language, self-determination, kinship and cultural expression. When these cultural factors are strengthened, they can have a protective effect on SEWB, reducing the risk of self-harm, suicidal behaviours. This means that culture – and the healing contribution that it offers – must be central to all efforts to prevent and reduce self-harm and suicidal behaviours amongst Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley.

Principle 2: Community Self-Determination

"Self-determination and empowerment must be given emphasis in initiatives, policies and programs relating to Aboriginal people in Western Australia."²

For Aboriginal communities and Elders, being empowered to make decisions about the most suitable strategies and activities for their communities ensures that solutions are designed by and for Aboriginal people. This is critical to ensure that any initiative to prevent or reduce self-harm or suicide is designed from an Aboriginal perspective, and therefore recognises the importance of the various Aboriginal approaches to healing, community and culture. This links to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and supports the approach to embed a human rights framework.

Principle 3: Place-Based Approaches

"A program which is effective in one area with a defined group may not be effective elsewhere in the Kimberley, given that language, traditions and cultural practices vary across the Kimberley and reflect the diversity of Aboriginal people."²

The Kimberley is rich in diverse Aboriginal cultures. No two Aboriginal communities are the same – customs, cultural practices and protocols, language and histories vary from community to community. Each community must define and determine how strategies are designed on the ground and implemented, ensuring that it is reflective of the specific needs, practices and cultures of the community. It is only by doing so that the diversity of communities can be addressed adequately.

Principle 4: Sustainability And Continuity

Strategies and activities to reduce and prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviours requires significant investment and a long-term commitment. There needs to be a genuine commitment over the long-term, with continuity in programs, activities, funding and purpose to deliver meaningful outcomes.

Practically, this requires that all new strategies and activities are funded appropriately, and that sufficient time is afforded to design, implement, evaluate, and enhance these initiatives in ways that build trust amongst Aboriginal communities, rather than reinforcing the impacts of short-term programs and policies with insufficient resources and adequate time to succeed.

It is acknowledged that whilst this has been a guiding principle in the development of the Plan, the significant investments and long-term commitments required to meaningfully achieve this principle have yet to be realised and will continue to remain a priority for advocacy during the implementation of the Plan.

While expressed in language that aligns to the Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley, the principles are aligned to the Guiding Principles set out in the Western Australian Mental Health Commission's Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-25.³

¹ Andrew Dowadi, Maningrida, N.T. (Elders report)

² Inquest into the deaths of: THIRTEEN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS IN THE KIMBERLEY REGION, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

³ The Guiding Principles set out pages 20 and 21 of the Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-25

Structure

This Plan and the following recommendations follow the structured, systems-based approach identified in the ATSIPEP Report that is designed specifically to reduce and prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviours for Aboriginal people and communities. This structure is set out below:

Success Factor	Sub-Factor
Universal / Indigenous Community-Wide <i>Indicates community-wide responses (rather than population-wide responses as the term usually indicates)</i>	Primordial Prevention <i>Activities that aim to prevent the risk factors for suicide and include interventions addressing upstream risk factors</i>
	Primary Prevention <i>Activities that aim to prevent a completed suicide or a suicide attempt occurring but in the context of an Indigenous community-wide approach</i>
Selective – At Risk Groups <i>Activities aimed at groups who are identified as being at higher risk of suicide</i>	School Age
	Young People
Indicated – At Risk Individuals <i>Activities aimed at individuals who have been identified as at risk of suicide, or who have attempted suicide</i>	Clinical Elements
Common Elements <i>Features of a systems-based approach that are common to all success factors</i>	Community Leadership/Cultural Framework
	Provider

Recommendations and activities

This section outlines the recommendations and activities that are designed to reduce and prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviours amongst Aboriginal communities in Kimberley. These have been designed to leverage many of the successes of past and current activities, while ensuring a practical and readily implementable approach. These recommendations have been consulted on within Kimberley communities, as well as through a period of online consultation and endorsed by the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group.

Aboriginal-led Governance and Community Empowerment	Universal / Indigenous Community-Wide	
	Recommendation I : Aboriginal-led Governance and Community Empowerment	
	Strengthen whole of Kimberley and local community partnerships to target the determinants of health and wellbeing.	<p>The Kimberley has existing structures to support a coordinated and collaborative approach to the planning and delivery of services to achieve local outcomes. This is demonstrated by the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum and District Leadership Groups.</p> <p>Current structures often present challenges for service providers across the Kimberley region to work together to address the common goal of targeting the determinants of health and wellbeing. Service duplication, siloed delivery, and significant gaps in access do not support meaningful outcomes.</p> <p>Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region experience high rates of mental health related illness and exposure to traumatic and stressful life events. This is impacted by the social, political, historical and economic determinants of health, including socio-economic position, employment status, education, housing, racism and discrimination, and access to basic human rights.</p>
	Activities	Next Step
	I.1 The Kimberley community calls for a formalised Voice to all levels of Government for Aboriginal People, to enable and support effective governance and to properly address the determinants of health and wellbeing through this plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aboriginal Regional Governance Group (ARGG), in consultation with the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum and District Leadership Groups, to provide leadership, governance and, advocacy, to support the implementation of the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan.
	I.2 Strengthen whole of Kimberley and local community partnerships to advocate and influence data-informed regional priorities to target the determinants of health and wellbeing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. MHC funded CLO role to support new/existing governance structures (such as working groups) in communities who are ready and willing to collaboratively set priorities and create pathways to place-based decisions and actions to address the determinants of health and wellbeing. Priorities set by these community level working groups can be considered in terms of annual allocation of the MHC seed funding by the ARGG.
I.3 Support strong cultural governance and leadership structures through empowering and resourcing regional and community leaders to govern this roadmap in an integrated, effective, and transparent manner.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. ARGG to act as an interim Kimberley Regional Aboriginal Governance Group to support the establishment of processes for commissioned service accountability against the priority areas of this plan. This aligns with the ARGG Terms of Reference to establish a partnership agreement with the State and Commonwealth agencies in line with the Closing the Gap priorities. 	
I.4 Support communities with adequate training and resources to lead the local design, development, implementation, management and continued quality improvement of the recommended activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. ARGG to support the call from communities for accountability and transparency in services delivered across the region. Establish cross- and whole-of-sector partnerships between different community sectors and government departments in the Kimberley to share information and data to build the evidence-base to inform future regional priorities and actions. 	
I.5 Enable accountability, transparency, and collaboration of governance, ensuring that there is no duplication of effort.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Identify training and resources to enhance the skills, capacity, and experience of local community members to lead and contribute to local governance structures. 	

Recommendation and activities 2 :

Language And Culture At The Centre

Build Identity, SEWB and healing	<p>A strong connection to language and culture fosters resilience and is a source of Aboriginal peoples' identity, strength, and pride. This is integral to positive sense of wellbeing. To strengthen healthy communities, it is critical to build a greater understanding of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - past traumas relating to colonisation - more recent traumas such as stolen generations, and - current and cumulative traumas. <p>To foster healing and restore wellbeing, it is essential to acknowledge and understand the impacts of the historical and current traumas experienced by Aboriginal people and communities.</p>
Activities	Next Step
2.1 Acknowledge Elders are the cultural authority and play an important role in building identity, SEWB and healing in communities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocate for funding to the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) to support the expansion of the work to communities throughout the Kimberley. This includes considering funding to create a regional alliance of Kimberley language centres, and a community register of traditional language speakers.
2.2 Support individuals and communities to heal from historical, current, and cumulative traumas to build identity and strong communities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Support recommendations for embedding language and cultural leadership within Kimberley Schools and as part of youth activities such as the Yiriman Youth program and Empowered Young Leaders project, to enable transgenerational knowledge transfer.
2.3 Strengthen connection to language and culture by resourcing sustainable programs and services such as language, culture, arts and healing centres.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Support and resource community-based programs focusing on healing, resilience, regulation and recovery, including trauma-informed care, SEWB and healing programs.
2.4 Embed local Aboriginal histories, languages, and cultures into school curriculum for all Kimberley students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Under the leadership of the ARGG, support the evaluation of existing language cultural activities to validate their value and strength, and expand throughout the Kimberley.

Recommendation and activities 3 :

A focus on Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Embed a holistic approach to wellbeing to better meet the needs of Aboriginal people and communities.	<p>SEWB and holistic services and supports are critical to ensuring a positive sense of wellbeing, and fosters resilience of Aboriginal people. This means that all work undertaken by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and other providers (when working with Aboriginal people) relating to self-harm and suicide must be done in the context of SEWB.</p> <p>The ACCHS SEWB Service Model was developed by the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia in consultation with member services to inform the provision of SEWB within WA ACCHS. To encourage a cross- and whole-of-sector approach, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and other providers are encouraged to embed the concept of SEWB, and implement relevant aspects of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing (2017-2023).</p>
Activities	Next Step
3.1 Services across the Kimberley to embed an SEWB and holistic approach to inform the delivery of care.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kimberley ACCHS to refine and expand SEWB services by applying the ACCHS SEWB Service Model locally in the delivery of care. 2. Assist and support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and other providers to embed the concept of SEWB, and implement relevant aspects of the National SEWB Framework. 3. Support engagement of the Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health subcommittee (DAMH-SC) of the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum (KAHPF) in the review of the National SEWB Framework and a view to considering the implementation of relevant aspects of this framework in each service in the Kimberley.

Recommendation and activities 4 :

Culturally Secure Services and Supports

Enhance the cultural security of Service providers.

Health and social service providers contribute to supporting and responding to Aboriginal people experiencing self-harm and suicidal behaviours.

Working in a culturally secure way is an ongoing journey for all services, and requires meaningful engagement and feedback from individuals, communities and Elders. By enhancing cultural security, this will ensure services are responsive to, and respectful of, the cultural rights, values, beliefs and expectations of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region. It is recognised cultural security is a key factor to increasing access to safe, high quality and effective services and care, and improves wellbeing outcomes.

Activities

4.1 Encourage and promote the implementation of the Cultural Security Framework for Mental Health, Social and Emotional Wellbeing, and Alcohol and Other Drugs Services and Supports (CSF) to improve cultural security of services and supports.

4.2 Service providers to commit to all staff receiving locally developed face-to-face cultural competence and protocols training informed and endorsed by Elders.

Next Step

1. DAMH-SC and other service providers undertake the self-assessment as per the CSF Guide and Self-Assessment Tool, and develop Continuous Quality Improvement Plan/s to implement improvement activities.
2. Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum (KAHPF) to provide guidance and support for member services to implement the CSF and gather information and data from organisations to share key lessons learnt and challenges to inform next steps.
3. KAHPF to ensure member service providers implement the CSF and are held accountable in meeting the standard of the framework with the view of a public register of services undertaking the CSF quality improvement process at least twice a year and having accountability to their service users in this process.
4. Continue the work of the No Wrong Door initiative. Refer to Recommendation 13.

Recommendation and activities 5 :

A Sustainable Aboriginal Workforce

Develop and invest in a sustainable Aboriginal workforce with the capacity, capability and confidence to support people in need.

Fundamental to the success of this plan is development and investment in long term, sustainable employment opportunities and career pathways for Aboriginal people across the Kimberley.

A major limitation to the accessibility and availability of culturally secure services is the need to develop and invest in the Aboriginal workforce with the training, support and increased capacity to deliver safe services and care to prevent, reduce, and respond to self-harm and suicidal behaviours.

Activities

5.1 Invest in the development of a sustainable Aboriginal workforce with the capacity, capability, and confidence to respond to the needs of the Aboriginal communities relating to self-harm and suicidal behaviours.

5.2 Invest in the professional development of the Aboriginal workforce through strategies and initiatives, such as training, mentorship and shadowing programs, supervision, and succession planning.

5.3 Service providers acknowledge and appropriately support and remunerate the wealth of experience and Cultural expertise of the Aboriginal workforce, and recognises the value this brings to enhance service delivery.

5.4 Provide funding and support to programs and initiatives that foster a strong and resilient Aboriginal workforce.

Next Step

1. Service providers to develop and implement Aboriginal Employment Strategies and initiatives to attract, employ and support Aboriginal People. These are to include (but not be limited to):
 - Investing in the professional development of the workforce;
 - Creating a culturally safe work environment;
 - Developing effective care models, including the treatment, support, training and/or care provided;
 - Adopting systems and process which meet the unique needs of the Aboriginal Health Workforce, ensuring that these are embedded in structures, policies, procedures, and programmes.

For further information on targets and strategies, refer to the Cultural Security Framework.

Promotion of Health and Wellbeing	Primary Prevention	
	Recommendation and activities 6 : Promotion of Health and Wellbeing	
	Promote positive health and wellbeing to reduce stigma associated with mental health, self-harm and suicide.	Activities promoting positive health and wellbeing enables people to increase control over their health and prevents the development of self-harm and suicidal behaviours. This can include public awareness campaigns and community-wide education programs with positive, strengths-based language. The stigma related to mental health, self-harm and suicide, continues to prevent individuals accessing services and supports. Challenging stigma is everyone's responsibility, and will improve awareness and help-seeking behaviours.
	Activities	Next Step
6.1 Reframe 'suicide prevention' to strengths-based language, such as 'wellbeing', whilst ensuring that the significance of 'suicide prevention' remains, to ensure funding is not impacted.		1. Rename suicide prevention activities to 'wellbeing', where appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including the name change for this 'Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan' to the 'Kimberley Aboriginal Wellbeing Plan.'
6.2 Promote place-based community 'Wellbeing' campaigns to address the stigma associated with mental health, self-harm and suicide.		2. Continue to promote wellbeing through awareness campaigns and community-wide education campaigns 3. Consider the learnings from the evaluation of the <i>Wot Na Wot Kine?</i> campaign to support the co-design and development of place-based versions

Natural Helpers And Safe Spaces	Primary Prevention	
	Recommendation and activities 7 : Natural Helpers And Safe Spaces	
	Support Aboriginal communities to access safe spaces to share stories and knowledge, and support community wellbeing.	Safe spaces foster a supportive and respectful environment for people to heal, share experiences, and support one another. Promoting safe spaces and events empowers individuals and communities to address the stigma associated with mental health, self-harm and suicide. The concept of culturally safe spaces includes age and gender appropriate programs. Natural Helpers are Aboriginal family, friends, community members and Elders who provide care, support and assistance for people to seek help. They provide a non-judgemental, safe space for their loved ones to access day or night as a place of sharing and healing. There is a strong need to establish support structures and build the capacity, capability and confidence of Natural Helpers as the first responders, recognising the importance of this role in reducing self-harm and suicide.
	Activities	Next Step
	7.1 Improve access to activities and events for community members to come together to share stories and celebrate their strengths.	1. Community to identify training and development priorities, such as LIYAN Natural Helpers Training and the Kimberley Empowerment, Healing and Leadership Program (KEHLP), with ongoing resourcing for events and engagement. 2. Sustainable funding to be identified to resource culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal people in each town and community. 3. Support the development of an Aboriginal Lived Experience Network in at least one location per year to inform future models across communities in the Kimberley.
7.2 Resource and support new and existing culturally safe spaces and programs for Aboriginal people to share their experiences in each town and community.		
7.3 Build skills, confidence and develop Aboriginal people as Natural Helpers by providing formal and informal training and development opportunities.		
7.4 Support the co-design and development of place-based Aboriginal Lived Experience Networks across the Kimberley.		

Recommendation and activities 8 :

Enhance Local Services And Community Connections

Increase the awareness of, and connection to, services and supports within Aboriginal communities.

All individuals, communities, organisations and service providers across the Kimberley have the common goal of preventing and reducing self-harm and suicidal behaviours. This requires a commitment to a collective approach built on strong effective, partnerships and structures that empower Aboriginal people to share decision-making.

Aboriginal community members who have the passion, interest and understanding of community needs are best placed to coordinate activities which achieve meaningful results. Employing and resourcing community-based roles to act as community navigators / connectors will ensure Aboriginal-led, place-based approach, which involves all community members in decision-making process.

Aboriginal community-controlled services with strong community relationships are most suitable to resource and support these roles.

Activities

8.1 Build awareness of services and supports available to individuals at-risk of self-harm or suicide to encourage help-seeking behaviours.

8.2 Resource at least one male and female Aboriginal position within each town and community, reflective of language groups, cultural protocols, and need. These roles will act as community navigators and connectors to:

- increase awareness of, and provide linkages and warm referrals to, services and supports; and,
- act as a facilitator of community building, educational activities and soft entry point of people seeking support that are at-risk of self-harm and suicide.

8.3 Improve referral, follow-up and aftercare services which are accessible, available, and person-centred to enhance continuity of care.

Next Step

1. Resource and employ Aboriginal community members for each town and community to act as community navigators / connectors.
2. Commit funding for Aboriginal-led, place-based activities, including the co-design and delivery of resources and awareness building materials, and local responses to suicide prevention.
3. Increase funding to enable employment of one male and one female (at minimum) for each main town and large remote community embedded within an appropriate Aboriginal community-controlled service. .
4. Ensure that these roles have the support and professional development opportunities , to be skilled and confident to achieve meaningful outcomes.

Selective - At-Risks Groups

Recommendation and activities 9 :

Kimberley Emerging Young Leaders

Support and empower young people as the emerging leaders and drivers of change through building skills, responsibility, confidence, and capacity to amplify their voice.

Substantive work has been undertaken by Kimberley young leaders to capture and outline the views and recommendations of young people to address the significant rates of Aboriginal youth suicide in the Kimberley region. The Empowered Young Leaders project (EYL), through the EYL Report 2019, highlights the next steps to continue to build the skills, responsibility, confidence, and capacity in young people, and to amplify their voice.

Emphasising the strengths and resilience of Aboriginal young people is the key to changing the deficit narrative associated with being 1: Indigenous, and 2: a young person.

As summarised in the EYL Collective Impact Statement:

'As Empowered Young Leaders, we commit to lead and action positive change to improve our future and the future of our next generations; and in doing so, we acknowledge and accept our inherent obligation being passed on to us...We stand together in solidarity, to ensure we are included; our voices are heard and we are supported and given opportunities to lead and take action...With passion and determination, we seek your support to walk alongside us as we have a new way forward into our future. In hope, strength and solidarity.'

Activities

9.1 Continue to support the development of strong and resilient Aboriginal young leaders in each town and community by building their skills, responsibility, confidence, and capacity through training, development, leadership and employment opportunities.

9.2 Support whole of Kimberley and local community governance structures for Aboriginal young people to have a voice.

9.3 Ensure young people are decision makers in directing youth-specific programs and services, and consulted on funding allocation. Including supporting place-based and peer-led youth programs and services to promote wellbeing, **Nothing about us without us.**

9.4 Support youth empowerment, and language and culture programs (including healing and on Country activities) for Aboriginal young people. Empower young people to learn histories (including past and more recent traumas) and languages through transgenerational knowledge sharing with Elders. To foster healing, build identity, and strengthen culture.

Next Step

1. The EYL lead agency coordinator/s to implement the recommendations from the EYL Report 2019 in meaningful collaboration and guidance from the EYL network to consistently move forward.
2. The EYLs to design, develop and establish regional and place-based Aboriginal youth networks in towns and communities across the Kimberley with guidance and support from key Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Elders to foster succession planning.
3. Key Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Elders to provide ongoing cultural advice and support to the EYL to encourage transgenerational knowledge sharing and youth empowerment.
4. Service providers and EYL network to identify and provide the opportunities and support for young people to take on positions of leadership and decision making, both regionally and within their communities. This includes:
 - a. Service providers to engage and consult with young people to advise, direct, and guide the design, development and delivery of youth-specific programs and services;
 - b. EYL network members to identify appropriate training and development opportunities to increase capacity to lead, govern, and inform suicide prevention programs;
 - c. Service providers to develop and provide employment opportunities and career pathways for young people within their communities as this will empower and support self-determination.
5. The EYL lead agency to support the regional and place-based Aboriginal youth networks to host action orientated forums to provide leadership, training, and development opportunities, build skills and confidence, and facilitate shared learning and collective impacts.

Recommendation and activities 10 :

Invest In The Early Years

Support children with the best start to life to improve lifelong wellbeing outcomes .

The early years are the most critical phase to encourage a healthy and positive start to life, and enable children to thrive and reach their full potential. Investing in the early years is crucial to develop the foundations of a child's knowledge and skills for life and learning, as well as positively influencing physical health and wellbeing outcomes.

Protective factors foster resilience within individuals, families, and communities, and plays an important role in suicide prevention. For children, there is an opportunity to embed the protective factors of SEWB early in their life to minimise the risk of self-harm and suicidal behaviours.

Next Step Activities

10.1 Enable individuals, families and communities to support children to thrive through improved access to Kimberley-specific, community-based, culturally safe perinatal, child, and family health and wellbeing services and supports.

1. Improve access to, and where gaps exist the development of, Kimberley-specific evidence-based positive parenting and family wellbeing programs and services. This emphasises the important role that mothers and fathers play in the developmental progress of their child and in creating a safe and support home environment

10.2 Resource the delivery of Kimberley-specific positive parenting and family wellbeing programs that foster the value of family, language, and culture to build strong families and communities.

2. Scope the potential for the development of Kimberley-wide Aboriginal Community Controlled Early Childhood Services, such as perinatal health, childcare, and family health and wellbeing services.

Recommendation and activities 11 :

Targeted services for at-risk individuals, families, and communities

Deliver targeted services, supports, and interventions for at-risk individuals, families, and communities.

The factors that influence self-harm and suicidal behaviours are complex and interconnected, they differ from individual to individual, and across communities. A range of services, supports and interventions are necessary to provide support to at-risk individuals, families, and communities. Activities should focus on identifying clear pathways to access timely and culturally appropriate care.

Particular communities, families, individuals and groups can be at greater risk of suicidal behaviour. These risks can be short term or lifelong and vary in their acuity. Targeted services, supports and interventions must be developed and made available to ensure risks can be avoided and wellbeing maintained

Activities

11.1 Design, develop and deliver data-informed targeted services, supports, and interventions for at-risk individuals, families, and communities.

11.2 Co-design and implement Kimberley-based postvention services to support individuals, family and community members impacted by critical incidents, including suicide, to manage grief, trauma, and loss, and into moving towards recovery.

11.3 Address and increase access to 24/7 or after-hours mental health and SEWB services and supports for people in mental health distress and/or suicidal crisis, including safe spaces and Natural Helpers.

Next Step

1. Create and / or enhance existing community-based services, supports and interventions for at-risk individuals, families, and communities (informed by data).
2. Fund the development of an Aboriginal-led suicide prevention hotline, with specific provision to support Natural Helpers through secondary consult, debrief, advice and supports.
3. Evaluate the Kimberley Postvention Services model and processes to inform future delivery.

Indicated - At- Risks Individuals

Many of the recommendations that are noted above under "Primary Prevention" and "Selective – At Risk Groups" are relevant to individuals that are at-risk of self-harm and suicide. For this reason, the following table identifies additional recommendations for at-risk individuals.

Recommendation and activities I2:

Data, Research And Evaluation

Invest in data, research, and evaluation to create a robust understanding of at-risk individuals, families, and communities.

High-quality, validated data influences access to timely and appropriate services and supports for Aboriginal people across the region. This includes providing access at the community-level as a valuable resource to identify, predict, and prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviours. Measuring impact is pivotal to showcase success and provide insights to ensure services and supports are resourced effectively.

Data exists that identifies broad trends amongst at-risk individuals, families, and communities. Due to high levels of underreporting the full extent of self-harm and suicidal behaviours amongst Aboriginal people in the Kimberley is difficult to measure. Likewise, a lack of data sharing impedes timely service access and a holistic approach to care. There is a significant need for a collaborative, standardised approach to the collection, monitoring and reporting of self-harm and suicide data. This will inform and direct service delivery, and specific suicide prevention strategies.

Activities

I2.1 A cross-jurisdictional commitment to improve data collection, coordination, monitoring and reporting to equip services to access current and accurate information to aid rapid and appropriate responses to self-harm and suicide.

I2.2 Sustainable investment in data, research and evaluation to build an evidence-base, demonstrate measurable impacts on self-harm and suicidal behaviours, and inform a proactive SEWB and mental health services and support approaches.

I2.3 Ensure all data, research and evaluation activities are Aboriginal led, have community ownership and data sovereignty.

Next Step

1. Establish a cross-jurisdictional partnership to support a Kimberley self-harm and suicidal behaviours monitoring system to improve the quality, accessibility and timeliness of data.
2. Design and adopt a minimum data set for self-harm and suicidal behaviours for the Kimberley.
3. The ARGG to meet with Kimberley Aboriginal Health Research Alliance to discuss SEWB, and specifically suicide prevention research priorities for the Kimberley.

Common Elements

Recommendation and activities 13 :

Support Every Door

Provide support and care to everyone seeking help. Individuals must be able to access the help they need, when they need it, where they need it, and by whom they can access.

The No Wrong Door project was an initiative of the KASPT as a key systemic priority composed of four key elements;

1. Improve access to services and supports;
2. Build the capacity of formal and informal services to those seeking help;
3. Connect people to family, community and culture;
4. Consider the scale and scope of the service system to support meaningful outcomes.

This involves a collective commitment to:

'Work together to meet the needs of community, including young people, through cultural and clinical healing and coordinated partnership to prevent deliberate self-harm and suicidal behaviours in the Kimberley' – No Wrong Door 2019 Workshop

Providing support and care to individuals at the time that they are seeking support can make a significant difference to ongoing engagement in the service system.

R Activities

13.1 Support service providers to have the appropriate tools / models of care, and skilled and confident staff to screen for and assess risk, and facilitate care for individuals, including warm referrals.

13.2 Resource and build the capacities of families and communities as Natural Helpers to coordinate care and support for individuals in need.

13.3 Capture the journey of people seeking services, supports and care in the mental health, SEWB sector to map the patient experience and identify gaps.

13.4 Map services and supports in the Kimberley with a focus on Mental Health and SEWB as a tool to provide information about what services and supports are available and how to access.

Next Step

1. Secure immediate funding to deliver training to services across the Kimberley to equip the workforce with the skills and confidence to screen, access, and facilitate care for at-risk individuals.
2. Resource and deliver Natural Helper programs, training, and activities to build the capacity, capability and confidence of families and communities to coordinate care and support for individuals in need.
3. Undertake mapping activities on the patient journey in the mental health, SEWB sector to capture patient experiences and perspectives to identify strengths and gaps in service delivery, and initiate quality improvements across the system.
4. Collate information on the services and supports in the Kimberley with a primary focus on mental health and SEWB as a tool to provide information to services providers and community members about services and supports available, and how to access. Ensure this is easily accessible online and in hard copy across the Kimberley.

Measures of success

With the successful implementation of this plan, Aboriginal people and communities across the Kimberley will have the opportunity to heal from the ongoing trauma related to suicide. The Kimberley will be freed from an ongoing cycle of suicides and trauma allowing Aboriginal people and communities to focus on healing and growing wellbeing. Aboriginal people and communities throughout the Kimberley will have their self-determination upheld in designing and dictating how their differing needs will be met. Accessing culturally safe supports both within and outside of services from relatable faces will become the norm whenever help is needed. Support systems will be strengthened to provide a holistic approach to wellbeing with a strong focus on Culture, Community and Country as essential elements of Aboriginal wellbeing.

Making the Plan a Success

Adequate and Sustainable Funding

Significant investment and long-term commitments with adequate and sustained funding are necessary for the recommended actions to have meaningful impacts. The establishment of partnerships with commonwealth and state governments is critical to ensure there is appropriate and coordinated investments with genuine commitments to reducing and preventing self-harm and suicidal behaviours amongst Aboriginal people and communities in the Kimberley.

Adequate and sustained funding is vital for this roadmap to succeed in delivering impactful change and meaningful outcomes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This Plan is intended to be a living document – to be flexible to respond to shifting regional and place-based priorities. Formal evaluations will occur under the guidance of the ARGG on an annual basis.

An Evaluation framework will be established as a part of a lead agency implementation plan for this work under the governance of the ARGG. Shared regional outcome measures will need to be established and tracked throughout this process.

With any investment must come rigorous monitoring and evaluation, both on an ongoing basis and on the achievement of defined milestones. In the case of the various recommendations identified in this Plan, it will be essential that the intended outcomes are agreed prior to the commencement of work. This must then be coupled with investment into appropriate monitoring and evaluation processes and systems.

This process will allow for all of the recommended activities to be measured for efficacy on an ongoing basis, allowing for changes in direction and approach to be readily identified and acted on. It is only by adopting such a rigorous framework that it will be possible to develop a responsive and effective approach to reducing and preventing self-harm and suicidal behaviours amongst Aboriginal people and communities in the Kimberley.

Next Steps

This Plan has been prepared by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS) as an input to the WA government development of the regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan for the Kimberley. It has been informed by various documents reports and strategies, and confirmed through a period of community consultation and endorsed by the Kimberley Regional Governance Group.

The Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plan, will be submitted to the WA Mental Health Commission to be included in the state-wide Suicide Prevention Strategy. This Plan will provide direction forward to reduce and prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviours for Aboriginal people and communities in the Kimberley.

The WA Mental Health Commission has committed to fund a lead organisation in the Kimberley to employ a Community Liaison Officer and utilise annual seed funding to implement this Plan. Once the lead agency for the Kimberley has been confirmed, they will:

- Work with the ARGG to establish an implementation plan articulating the activities to occur in year 1, 2 and 3
- Establish community facing communications in relation to this Plan
- Establish the evaluation framework and shared outcome measures to track and evaluate the Plan including a process for formal annual review
- Support the Community Liaison Officer in governance of the implementation activities.

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