

National Empowerment Project

Promoting Cultural, Social and Emotional Wellbeing

NEP newsletter, June 2016

Dear NEP Community Consultants, Partner Organisations and National Advisory Committee members,

As you are aware the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference was held in Alice Spring on the 5th and 6th May 2016. This was part of ATISISPEP project, see website - <http://www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/natsispc-2016> (go to the Flickr to see the fabulous photos of everyone)

NEP held a meeting in Alice Springs on the 4th May so people could attend the Conference. Many NEP people presented at the Conference and we thank you for this!

Some of our NEP highlights:

- Indi Clarke hosted a youth roundtable breakfast, which Stephen Oliver attended - story on page 3.
- Indi was also on a panel titled “Racism and Suicide” with Joe Williams, Professor Helen Milroy and Tracey Jerri.
- Glenis Grogan and the QLD team presented the NEP CSEWB program delivery in Kuranda and Cherbourg.
- TJ and Dezi presented on the Stolen Generations panel and Vicki McKenna and Brendan Cox presented the Kimberley Empowerment Healing and Leadership Program.

From all accounts the Conference was incredibly successful and we thank you all for attending!

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Pat on bringing the Conference together.

Go to the ATISISPEP website to see the fabulous Conference Photos, you simply open the ATISISPEP link below and click on the ATISISPEP blue circle

<http://www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/natsispc-2016>



NEP team and A/Prof Ted Wilkes at the opening of the Conference

Although it was impossible to attend all plenary sessions we did receive very positive feedback from those who attended our NEP teams presentations.

We would also like to thank Professor Tom Calma for his wonderful welcome to the Conference and Richard Weston, Tom Brideson and Glenn Pearson from the NEP National Advisory Committee, for sharing in the plenary sessions.

We also express sincerest gratitude for the great work done by our Indigenous Psychologist and Counsellor team, lead by Kelleigh Ryan and ta big thankyou to Patty councillor, Tanja Hirvonen, Vanessa Edwige, Graham Gee, Brendan Cox, Vicki McKenna, Stacey Vervoort, Bronwyn Murray.



Psychologist – Kelleigh Ryan

SEWB Support Team with Patricia Councillor –
From left - Brendan Cox, Vicki McKenna, Stacey Vervoort, Graham Gee, Tanja Hirvonen, Vanessa Edwige, Kelleigh Ryan

Highlights from the joint NEP, NAC and PO meeting, 4th May 2016, Alice Springs

39 people attended the joint NEP meeting with the all inclusive group. Highlights included Pat's conversation about the progression of the ATSIPEP program and how the NEP sites and partner organisations were contributing to the evaluation tool.

Pat and Adele also outlined the next steps for NEP and the ongoing work that will be progressed by the team at UWA. Some additional funding recently received will assist the UWA team to ensure work continues through to March 2017. This will include:

- Ongoing work around the topic of gender
- Further development of the SEWB program materials and training resources
- Production of academic papers for publication in peer review journals
- Evaluation of NEP led by Professor Darlene Oxenham
- Progressing ideas for further funding and research grants to undertake detailed analysis and research on the intricacies of the project, to support the development of its own paradigms and methodologies, and promote the evidence base of the uniqueness of the project and its outcomes.

Meeting participants expressed the following after the meeting:

“Excited, hopeful, inspired, motivated, feeling positive, refreshed and hopeful, can’t wait, optimistic, very hopeful, looking forward, committed, seeing a ripple effect of empowerment through education, working smarter not harder to look after yourself, using our head, heart and hands, feeling love and respect”.

Indi's thoughts on the Youth Breakfast – 4th May 2016

“We had 23 Youth present at the breakfast, it was amazing to see 23 deadly young people at the Conference.

The breakfast was used as a meet and greet and a place to create a safe space for those that attended and to gain extra support from external people and people of the similar age.

The breakfast and meet and greet session, had a great feel and vibe to it. While the informal discussions were being had towards the end, we did seek feedback from participants and they did enjoy the breakfast.

But it was tabled and discussed why there wasn't a particular focus on Youth throughout the Conference, e.g. In the concurrent workshops (Youth needed to be in there somewhere or have sessions throughout the Conference where their voices are heard).

As stated Youth account for 50% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, so a recommendation was that there needs to be more focus on the Youth for example concurrent workshops etc.

Overall the Youth enjoyed the breakfast and enjoyed meeting others around their age, which was part of having the additional support around you at the Conference. However, needs to be more focus on Youth as stated above.”

We wish to express a big thank you from the NEP team who attended the Conference!

Here are some snippets expressing thoughts and feelings about the Conference!



Denise Taylor from Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Services wrote: *I thought the Conference was amazing with powerful messages from Rosalie Kunoth-Monks and Stan Grant. The most important message that I got from the Conference is that suicide prevention is like an umbrella of collective efforts of organisations. And all health practitioners and mental health workers and families coming together to work out on how to reduce or take away this ugly thing called suicide and trying to reduce the incidence of suicides.*

Donna Ingram from Sydney thought: *The Conference was one of the most powerful and important events that I have attended, and I have attended a lot. It is always humbling and fantastic to see how much Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people care for each other, their families and their communities. That is why this issue cuts so deep for our mobs.*

This coming together as one with a common cause is a great thing for all; to be able to reconnect with people, connect with new people and to gain strength and love from each other is something I won't forget.

I was incredibly proud to be at this Conference, especially as a member of the NEP family.

- 1. Happy with the final result!!*
- 2. Proud to meet Joe Williams, countryman.*
- 3. Lovely to see my old friend Sandra Levers.*
- 4. Great to see my old hostel parents, Doug and Jan Edwards. (Alice Springs locals).*



Angela Ryder shared her thoughts.....

I thought the location for the Conference was appropriate and it was awesome to walk on the beautiful land. The conference was extremely well planned. The Welcome to Country with the smoking ceremony was beautiful and powerful. The speakers and presenters were all thought provoking, strong and passionate. The range of sessions offered throughout the two days was comprehensive and inspiring. I would have liked to have seen more time given to the presenters but understand the need to give the opportunity to all of those who wanted to share their story and project information. The Conference could easily have been more than two days.



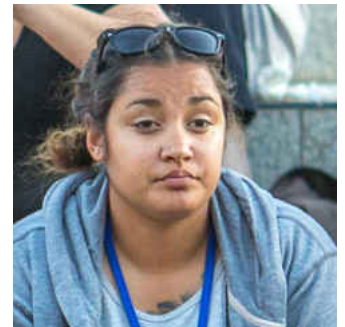
It was a heartbreaking, thoughtful and vocal inaugural Conference. I look forward to seeing the recommendations and hope that the future for our people is not continually touched with sadness and heartbreak from more suicides.

Well done to the organisers and helpers. A particular thanks to the counsellors who were kept busy providing support when needed.

The most important messages I got from the Conference is that we must never give up on ourselves, our families, our children and each other. Our children are our future. We need to work on preventing the horrifying suicides that have no doubt touched each of us. It is important that our children know their language, their culture, who they are and where they come from. This fundamental knowledge is missing from many of our families for many reasons. When we are strong in culture, we will be strong resilient spirited people for ourselves, our families, our children and each other.

Further, we need to support each other and build capacity where we can, whether it is in our family, our community or across nations.

Briana Hayden from Mallee District Aboriginal Services in Mildura thought: *The Conference was, captivating and heartening. To see so many people come together for a reason as important as suicide prevention left me in awe. A mass of people had many ideas and stories that they wanted to share and this Conference gave them the opportunity to do that in a safe and trusting environment.*



The most important messages I got from the Conference were: - The solution to the problems start with us, the community. - Be careful of YOUR actions towards others, you just don't know what they may be going through. - It takes more than one person to keep the changes occurring, however it only takes one person to make a stand and get those changes commencing. That person could be you.

I too thought the Conference was amazing and everyone did a great job pulling it all together. I was very proud to be at the conference, especially as a member of the NEP Family.

Jill Abdullah from Langford Aboriginal Association said: *the Conference was great and had fun networking with so many people from across Australia.*

The most important messages I got from the Conference were the passion of the participants for this very relevant issue which I am so in despair that it even needs to be such a significant topic for us to be meeting and learning about how many people it impacts on. The other message is the number of children who have suicided and what a loss, and the toll it has on our future generation and leaders.



CONGRATULATIONS INDI

Mildura's young citizen recipient encourages Indigenous youth to embrace culture

Young Mildura leader Indi Clarke believes Indigenous youth need to embrace their culture and "walk together" with the broader community towards reconciliation year-round.

Mr Clarke, Mildura's 2016 Young Citizen of the Year, has spent part of Reconciliation Week in Melbourne at an Aboriginal Victoria Forum on self-determination, discussing Koorie Youth Councils and Indigenous representative structures.

Aboriginal Victoria's series of self-determination forums across the state have explored ways Indigenous people can have a stronger voice at the highest levels of government.

Go to link for further information - <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-30/indigenous-leader-calls-for-community-to-walk-together/7460206>

Indi has two fabulous articles that have been posted on the NEP website, talking about the conference and NEP. Go to the NEP website to see these –

<http://www.nationalempowermentproject.org.au/#!mildura/c1f6a>

Video Resources

Pat and Mick Gooda spoke about Lateral Violence – please go to the following link to view this recording – Please Note, this is a draft and is nearly completed

DRAFT ONLY

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8ubzmpevzbqa8i8/UWA%205min%20final%201.mov?dl=0>

Website/s

We encourage you to check out the website for updates and to contribute news to the website. Please let Carolyn know any news of interest relevant to you and your community that we can post on the website.

There have been quite a number of recent news articles posted on the NEP and AATSIPEP websites.

<http://www.atsispep.sis.uwa.edu.au/natsispc-2016>

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