



Geraldton
Regional
Aboriginal
Medical
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An organisation of Aboriginal people, for
Aboriginal people, controlled by Aboriginal people

Engaging Local Community in the Development of Community Safety and Well Being Action Plans- an initiative of GRAMS

Preamble:

The Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS) has been funded by WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) to facilitate the development of a set of "Community Safety and Well Being Action Plans" for the communities of Geraldton, Mt Magnet and Carnarvon as part of the Midwest Suicide Prevention Trial. GRAMS has engaged the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. to facilitate the necessary community engagement processes to ensure optimum contribution to, and ownership by each community in the formulation and implementation of these Community Safety and Well Being Action Plans, and meaningful involvement by all relevant stakeholders, especially local indigenous residents and their leadership.

Philosophical Framework:

The processes of engagement and formulation will be based on a Asset based Community Driven (ABCD) model which seeks to discover, map, connect and mobilise the voices, gifts, insights, ideas, resources, aspirations, experiences and leadership of local community members and their organisations and networks in both designing and implementing actions to build stronger, healthier and resilient families and communities. It is based on the belief that the wisdom of the community always exceeds the knowledge of the outside experts. It taps into this community wisdom and local stories of strengths, resourcefulness, and resilience to find solutions to issues like suicide prevention.

Such a framework is a significant departure from traditional community development methodologies that viewed community residents as clients, consumers and recipients of outside top down service delivery programming. Instead of an approach that does things 'To' and 'For' community members, ABCD focuses on 'With' and 'Of/By' community members.

ABCD always starts with conversations that give community members a genuine voice in identifying what matters to them and their wellbeing. It looks at what helps, not just what is harming. It encourages co-design processes into the identification of solutions and possibilities.

An ABCD approach resonates with the messages being communicated by national and state leaders regarding the importance of a new way of engaging with First Nations people; including-

- **PM Scott Morrison** on delivering 'The Closing the Gap 2020 Report' - *"for 12 years, I have sat in this chamber and listened to Closing the Gap speeches. It's a tale of hope, frustration and disappointment. A tale of good intentions. Indeed good faith. But the results are not good enough... Over decades, our top down, government knows best approach has not delivered the improvements we all yearn for... We perpetuated an ingrained way of thinking, passed down over two centuries and more, and it was the belief that we knew better than our Indigenous peoples. We don't... We also thought we understood their problems better than they did. We don't. They live them. We must see the gap we wish to close, not from our viewpoint, but from the viewpoint of indigenous Australians before we can hope to close it, and make a real difference... What I know is that to rob a person of their right to take responsibility for themselves; to strip them of responsibility and capability to direct their own futures; to make them dependent - this is to deny them of their liberty - and slowly that person will wither before your eyes. That's what we did to our First Nations people.. We thought we were helping when we replaced independence with welfare. This must change. We must restore the right to take responsibility. The right to make decisions. The right to step up. The opportunity to own and create Australian's own futures. It must be accompanied by a willingness to push decisions down to the people who are closest to them. Where the problems are, and where the consequences of decisions are experienced... Be it grief; the protection of our lands against bushfire; an understanding of our native ecosystems; or the inter-generational responsibilities to the land and to each other; there is so much we learn from Indigenous communities and peoples.. Our new approach... is built on partnership. On giving back responsibility. An approach of listening. Of empowering... We know that when Indigenous people have a say in the design of programs, policies and services, the outcomes are better - and lives are changed..."*



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- **Hon Ken Wyatt**, Minister for Indigenous Australians- “We have got to stop doing things ‘to’ Indigenous Australians and instead ‘do with’..Governments can facilitate, but let the energy of response come from the community level”
- **Ros Fogliani**, W.A. State Coroner into Kimberley youth suicides – “Services continue to be provided from a mainstream perspective, adapted in an endeavour to fit into a culturally-relevant paradigm. ..it may be time to consider whether the services themselves need to be co-designed in a completely different way, that recognises at a foundational level, the need for a more collective and inclusive approach towards cultural healing for Aboriginal communities”
- **Senator Pat Dodson** - “The real necessity is to not only listen to First Nations people, but to develop action plans and to address those matters at the regional level.... I am pleased the Coroner had made note of the importance of including Indigenous people when devising responses to suicide...This is a welcome sign, from at least the Coroner’s insight into where the change ought to happen, but it will take political will, and commitment and resources. Really the onus is on the Government to follow through with the co-design processes, involving local and regional leadership to find solutions and to act on those solutions”
- **The WA Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2021-2025 Principle** - “Communities are empowered to lead local efforts which are tailored to local circumstances and priorities”
- **Apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People from the Australian Psychological Society (2017)** – “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the proud custodians of the longest surviving cultures on our planet. With this in mind, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ resilience and resourcefulness could make a significant and positive impact on Australian society should they have the opportunity to contribute routinely in their areas of expertise. We, as psychologists, have not always listened carefully enough to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have not always respected their skills, expertise, world views, and unique wisdom developed over thousands of years....To demonstrate our genuine commitment to this apology, we intend to pursue a different way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that will be characterised by diligently: -listening more and talking less; following more and steering less; advocating more and complying less; including more and ignoring less and collaborating more and commanding less”.



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Proposed Process:

Four stages are being proposed- to the formulation and implementation of the Community Safety and Well Being Action Plans, namely-

1. Initial conversations with all key identified stakeholder groups in each of the three communities to seek input and response to-
 - Feedback to the overall process and framework?
 - Whose voices need to be listened to in the community engagement process?
 - What are key community issues/challenges related to the suicide prevention?
 - Who is doing what in terms of suicide prevention?
 - What would work best in this community regarding an effective engagement initiatives?
 - What are the best timings and settings for a community engagement process in this community?

Accompanying the conversations in Stage 1 will be the commencement of the 'Community Asset Map' to begin to identify, map and connect community assets and resources useful in designing and implementing a "Community Safety and Well Being Action Plan".

Proposed dates: 15-18 June 2020 – Geraldton and Mt Magnet and 22-24 June 2020 - Carnarvon

2. The facilitation of a two-day community engagement exercise in each of the three communities that seeks to engage community residents and groups through multiple structured conversations, workshops and idea generation activities. Opinions, suggestions and priorities relating to community safety and well-being will be sought in response to the following key questions "What works and we must KEEP?", "What doesn't work that we must DROP?", "What could be improved by MODIFYING?" and "What aren't we doing that we must START?" . Finally, the question- 'WHO is willing to do WHAT?'.

Part of Stage 2 would involve specific youth engagement initiatives to listen to the voices of young women and men.

Designing and implementing a "Community Safety and Well Being Action Plan".

Proposed dates: 6-9 July 2020 – Geraldton and Mt Magnet and 13-15 July 2020- Carnarvon

3. Formulation and presentation of an initial "Draft Community Safety and Well Being Action Plan" and the opportunity for the community to respond, modify and improve.

Proposed date - July/August 2020

4. Finalisation of final "Community Safety and Well Being Action Plan" with implementation strategies.

Proposed date- September 2020

Facilitation Team:

Here are the facilitation team that will be guiding the Community Safety and Well Being Action Plan:

GRAMS Coordinator: Elaine Laraia, Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Process Coordinator and lead Facilitator – Peter Kenyon OAM, Director of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S.

Youth Facilitator – Rhys Williams, former WA Young Person of the Year and currently Mayor, City of Mandurah.

Background Information: www.bankofideas.com.au

Appendices:

- Brief Bio data for Peter Kenyon
- Brief bio data for Rhys Williams
- Bank of I.D.E.A.S. Community Values

‘To all people I would say: “Come, listen to us, we will tell you our culture. Learn from us. That way we will all survive. We share this country. We need to work together and learn from each other”.’

-Kathleen Kerner Wallace, The Jewel in the Desert

Appendix 1: Brief Bio Data – Peter Kenyon, Director, Bank of I.D.E.A.S.

Peter refers to himself as a community enthusiast and social capitalist. He is motivated by the desire to help create caring, healthy, inclusive, connected and enterprising communities, where all community members feel ‘they matter, belong and can contribute’, and where communities discover and mobilise their strengths and transform themselves.

Peter has had a background as a youth worker, teacher, youth education officer, tertiary lecturer and senior public servant. His employment experiences have included Director of Employment in Western Australia, Manager of the Community Employment Development Unit in New Zealand, Coordinator of the Natal KwaZulu Job Creation and Enterprise Strategy in South Africa and international youth and employment adviser to 26 countries in Africa, Pacific, Middle East, Asia and Europe.

Through his organisation, the Bank of I.D.E.A.S (Initiatives for the Development of Enterprising Action and Strategies), Peter has worked with over 2,500 communities across Australia, New Zealand, Southern Africa and North America and undertaken work assignments in 59 countries helping communities spark their own ideas and invest themselves in building sustainable futures.

In recognition of his community and local enterprise building initiatives, Peter received a Centenary Medal in 2001, was acknowledged as the Senior West Australian for 2017 and awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the 2019 Queens Birthday honours.

Appendix 2: Brief Biodata-Rhys Williams

Rhys Williams is the Mayor of the City of Mandurah, Western Australia’s largest regional city. He was elected in 2017 as one of the youngest Mayors in West Australian history, and is a passionate advocate for addressing social and economic disadvantage.

At the age of 17, Rhys founded a youth development charity, and over the period of a decade, led a number of initiatives focused on the capacity building of young West Australians. For this work, Rhys was recognised in 2015 as the Young West Australian of the Year.

Rhys’ expertise in facilitating community-led solutions to address local social and economic challenges has seen him work with more than 100 communities across Australia, as well as assignments in Cambodia, New Zealand and the Middle East.

In his role as Mayor, Rhys is working with his team to deliver a transformational agenda for the City of Mandurah, with a strong focus on economic diversification, community wellbeing and enhancing community pride and aspiration



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Appendix 3: Bank of I.D.E.A.S. 10 Key Community Development Beliefs

The starting point for all Bank of I.D.E.A.S. involvement is the following ten beliefs –

BOI Belief 1.

Meaningful and lasting community change always originates from within, and local residents/members in that community are the best experts on how to activate that change.

BOI Belief 2.

Community residents act responsibly when they care, and support what they create.

BOI Belief 3.

Building and nourishing relationships is at the core of building of healthy and inclusive communities.

BOI Belief 4.

Communities have never been built by dwelling on their deficiencies, needs and problems. Communities respond creatively when the focus is on resources, capacities, strengths and aspirations.

BOI Belief 5.

The strength of a community is directly proportional to the level that the diversity of its residents/members desire, and are able to contribute their abilities and assets to the well being of their community. Every single person has capacities, abilities, gifts and ideas, and living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed, gifts given and ideas shared.

BOI Belief 6.

In every community something works. Instead of asking 'What's wrong, and how to fix it', ask- 'What's worked, and how do we get more of it?' It generates energy and creativity.

BOI Belief 7.

Creating positive change begins simply with conversation. It is the way that human beings have always thought together, and initiated action.

BOI Belief 8.

Positive community change is more about having fresh eyes, rather than implementing new developments.

BOI Belief 9.

The starting point for change is always mindset and positive attitudes.

BOI Belief 10.

The continual development of a diverse group of local leaders / community builders willing to give of their time, gifts and resources is an essential feature of a healthy community.