

Indigenous Suicide Prevention Consultations: Key Themes

This interactive map provides a unique conceptualisation of the extensive consultations around suicide prevention with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The map links to a total of 38 reports that are each related to a separate consultation process in 69 sites.

This map is a critical resource that provides immediate access to the range of community issues and needs, whilst also acknowledging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have expressed, many times, what they require in terms of suicide prevention.

The consultations on the map span six years from 2009 to 2015 and involve **1,823 participants**. The map shows where and how many consultations have taken place. It highlights that in some places there have been several consultations and in other places far less. It can also be utilised in conjunction with the ATSIPEP spatial analysis maps (see website address) to identify the level of consultation in areas where there are high numbers of suicide

Participant numbers at each site and overall numbers for each consultation process are captured in a static graph at the bottom of the map. The number of consultations at each site show the extent to which a consultation process has been focused in a particular area. The Elder's report included 29 participant voices across 16 sites. In contrast, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy consultation forums and the National Empowerment Project, were both large-scale national consultation initiatives with 519 participants across 14 sites, and 457 participants across 11 sites respectively.

Unique Features:

- A central repository providing immediate access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views, need and priorities for addressing suicide.
- Provides universal access to numerous community reports to advocate for and support the needs and priorities of Indigenous communities around suicide.
- Allows for wide dissemination of and access to important messages and unique insights about suicide and prevention from Indigenous communities.

Featured reports include:

The Third Conversation, The Blank Page Summit, The Elder's Report, Hear Our Voices, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy consultation forums, the National Empowerment Project, Children's Rights Report, The Life Promotion Project Report, Taking Action to Tackle Suicide, Conversations Matter, and the Wesley LifeForce report.

All of these reports reinforce the devastating impacts of colonisation for Indigenous peoples. The reports highlight the intergenerational impact of dispossession, child removal and racism, grief and loss as well as the ongoing social and economic inequalities many



Indigenous people experience. Across the reports, these factors are identified as underpinning the range of negative issues and stressors that are themselves linked to suicide and self-harm. Key themes and indicators across all of the consultations include harmful levels of alcohol and drug misuse; high levels of psychological distress and poor mental health; family and relationship breakdown; racism and discrimination.

Six major themes featured in the majority of documents encapsulate what is essential in any suicide prevention program, service and initiative for Indigenous people. These are the protective factors and focus on:

- the centrality of culture and cultural components,
- the need to engage the community and ensure community ownership,
- the importance of a strengths-based approach,
- respecting the connections between individuals, family/kinship networks and community,
- promoting recovery and healing from stress, trauma and grief associated with the present and past,
- empowering people to regain a sense of control and mastery over their lives and their futures.

Other consistent themes include the need for programs and services that promote:

- connection to country
- a holistic approach
- the participation of Elders and employment of local people
- the inclusion of peer support, youth workers and mentors for children and young people
- the importance of Indigenous leadership
- local level solutions and strategies
- Indigenous rights and self-determination including constitutional recognition
- the need to address racism and discrimination as a social determinant of health

The important record of Indigenous voices on suicide are captured together in this unique resource. The scope of the consultations provide a comprehensive resource of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views, need and priorities for addressing suicide. It is the aim that any initiative, funding or policy targeting Indigenous suicide prevention in Australia is strengthened by the contributions and perspectives contained in this map.