

# National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health

Together we are strong

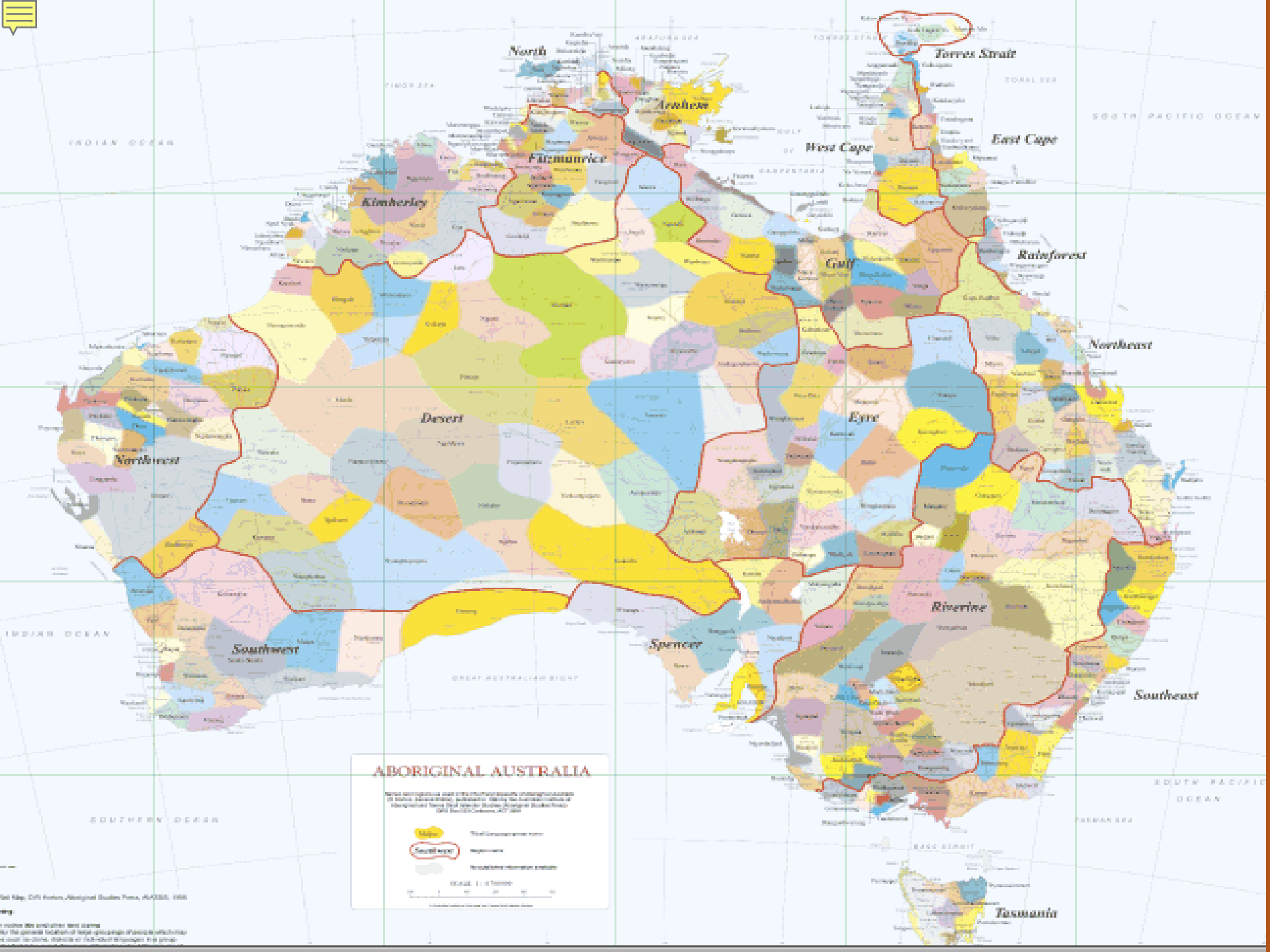
NSW Nurses and Midwives  
Association

September 2016 Sydney



“The Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration and the Importance of  
Indigenous Leadership in the Mental Health System”

Tom Brideson



**ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA**

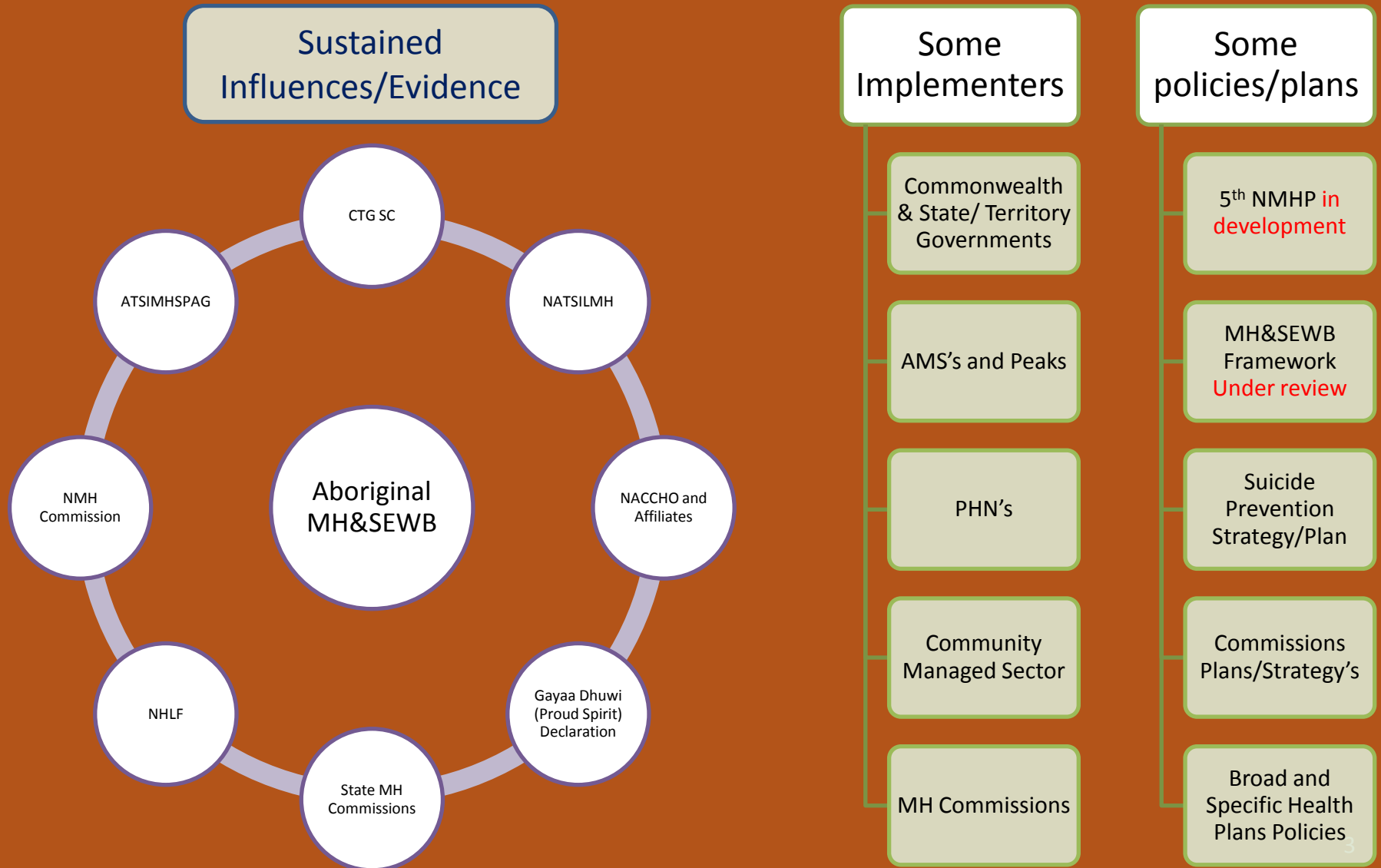
Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are shown in this map. The names of these languages are shown in the legend. The names of the languages are shown in the legend. The names of the languages are shown in the legend.

- Traditional language area
- Language
- Traditional language area

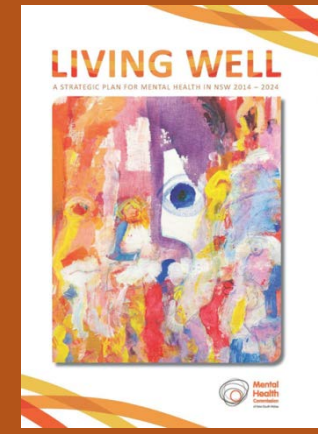
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# Getting Aboriginal MH&SEWB into focus

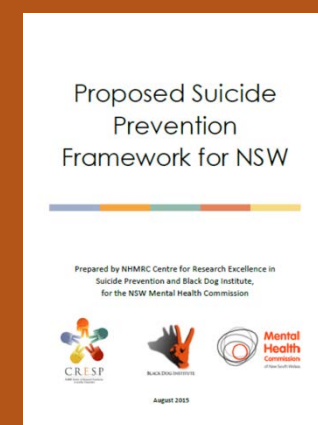
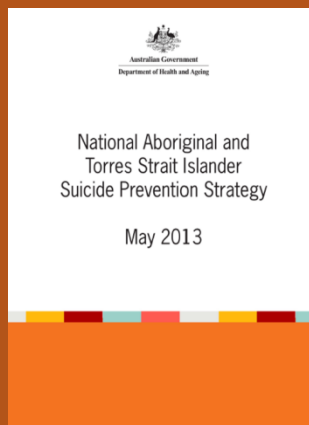
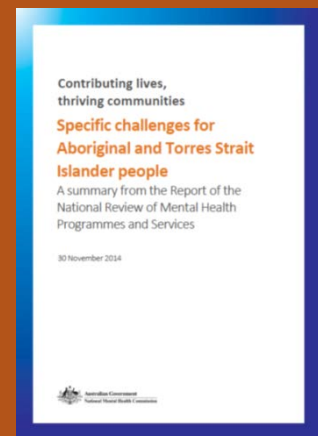
## The complexity at a glance



## Recent NSW Policy Environment



## Recent Commonwealth Policy Environment

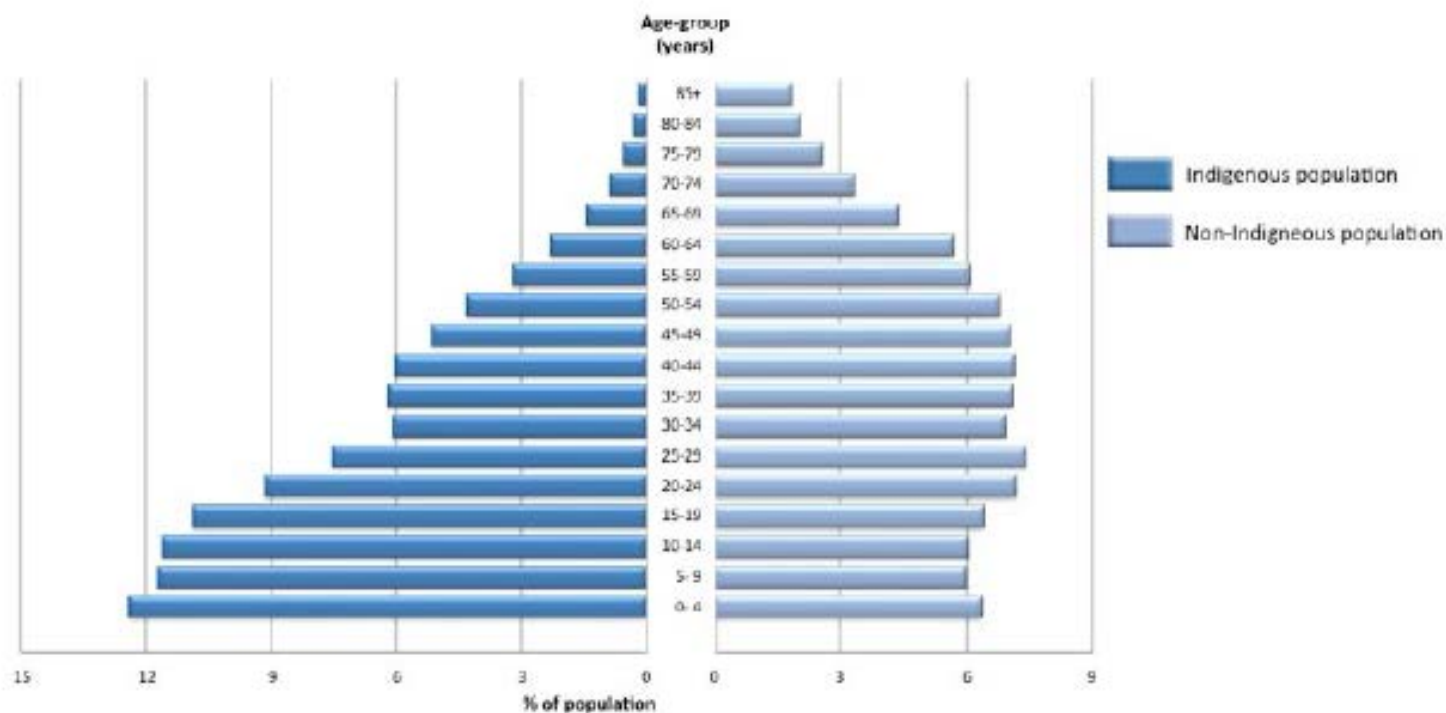


# What is known

- Psychological Distress
  - 2012 – 2013 high to very high levels reported, almost three times the non-Indigenous rate (ABS 2013)
- Mental Health Problems
  - Hospitalisation between 2008 – 2010 was 2.2 times the rate for males and 1.5 for females (AIHW 2013)
  - Rates of psychiatric disability were double that of non-Indigenous people (AIHW 2014)
- Suicide
  - Twice the rate of non-Indigenous people (ABS 2012)

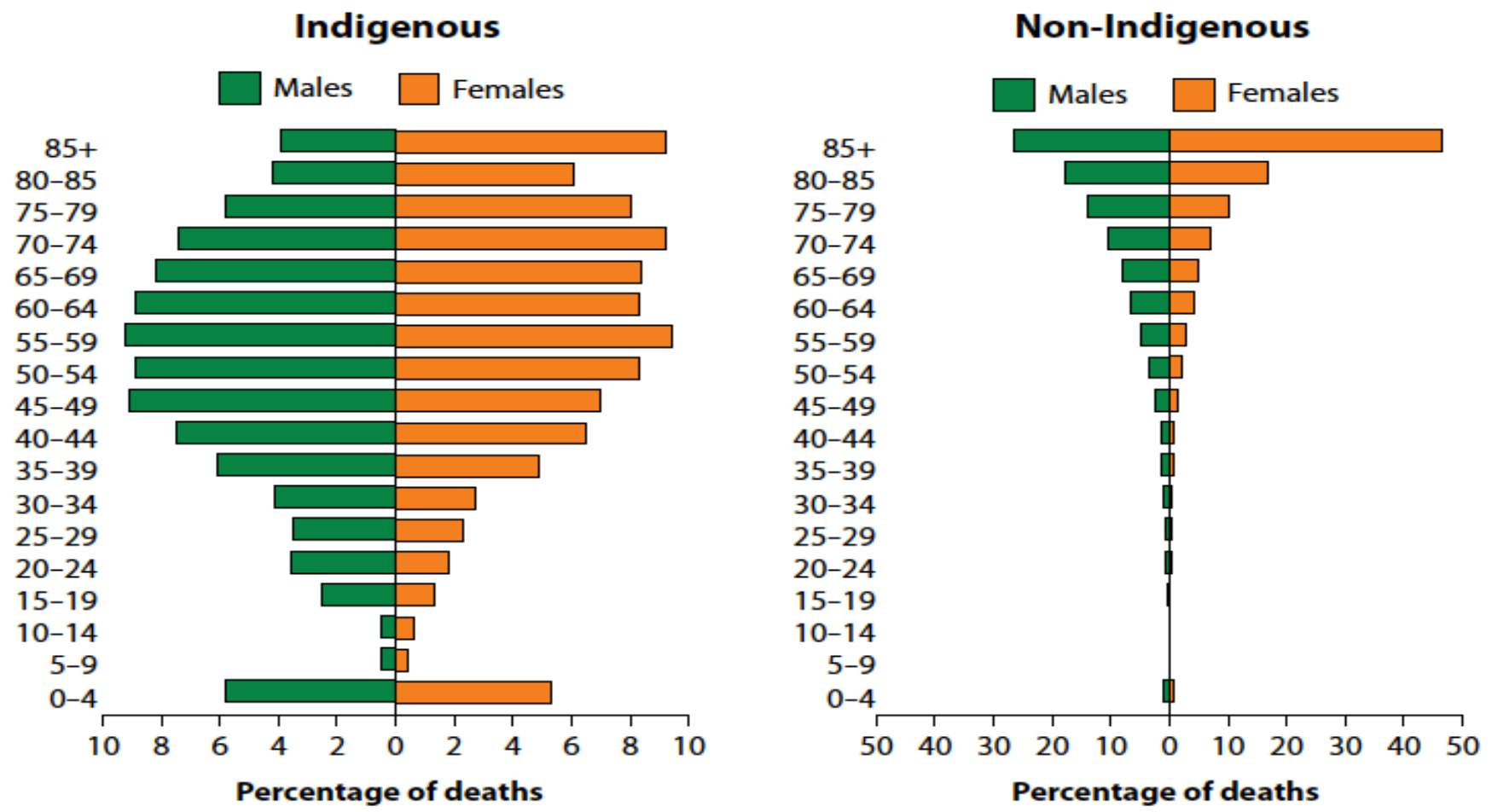
# Population Distribution by Age

Figure 1. Population pyramid of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous populations, 30 June 2011



Source: ABS, 2012 [40]

**Figure 7.17**

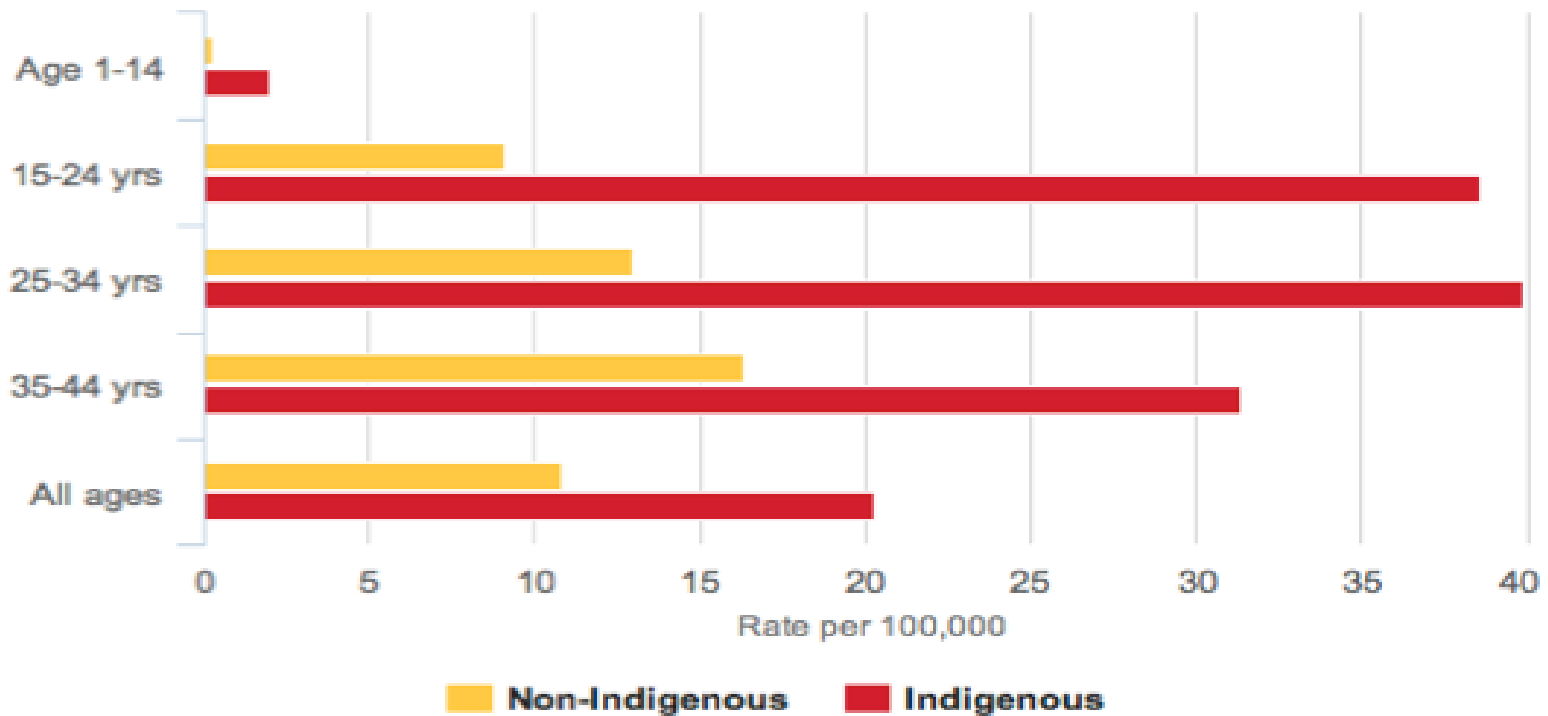


Note: Indigenous data for Vic, Tas and ACT were of insufficient quality for the reporting period.

**Age distribution of proportion of deaths, by age and Indigenous status, NSW, Qld, SA, WA and NT, 2007-2011**

## Rate per 100,000

Select from the legend below to compare Indigenous and non-Indigenous suicide rates.



Graphic: Inga Ting | Source: ABS 2015



# Origins and Support

National Mental Health  
Commission

Mental Health Commission  
of New South Wales

Queensland Mental Health  
Commission

Western Australian Mental  
Health Commission



# Vision of the Wharerātā Group

“ the negative effects of colonisation on mental health are reversed, and Indigenous peoples have renewed pride in their culture and their ability to succeed in wider society, and have visibility as contributing members in their countries.”

# NATSILMH members

- Professor Pat Dudgeon - Commissioner, National Mental Health Commission; and Co-chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Advisory Group (ATSIMHSPAG). WA
- Mr Tom Brideson, Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, Community Advisory Council; ATSIMHSPAG member. NSW
- Ms Sandy Gillies, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council. QLD
- Professor Tom Calma AO, Co-chair of the ATSIMHSPAG, National Coordinator Tackling Indigenous Smoking, Chancellor of the University of Canberra, Co-chair of Reconciliation Australia and an Ambassador for Suicide Prevention Australia. ACT
- Dr Robyn Shields, Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, Deputy Mental Health Commissioner. NSW
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

# NATSILMH Members continued

- Professor Gracelyn Smallwood, Queensland Mental Health Commission's Mental Health and Drug Advisory Council QLD
- Ms Vicki Hovane, Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Reducing Violence Against Women WA
- Ms Adele Cox, Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council
- Mr Richard Weston, CEO of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation ACT
- Mr Cliff Collard, Western Australian Government Mental Health Commission WA

# Process of Adapting the Wharerātā Declaration

- Development of a discussion paper and early draft (Feb 2015)
- Circulation among the mental health commissions
- Submission process – key stakeholders (incl NHLF membership)
- Workshop hosted by the Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Feedback from the Wharerātā Group

# Name and Meaning Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit)

The process of community ownership of *Gayaa Dhuwi* (Proud Spirit)

- Pat Delaney (nee Swan)
- Ways Forward Report, 1995
- Dharriwaa Elders Group to honour the late Mr George Rose OAM
- Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay Languages

# Theme 1

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and healing should be recognised across all parts of the Australian mental health system, and in some circumstances support specialised areas of practice.



# Theme 2

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and healing combined with clinical perspectives will make the greatest contribution to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of mental health and suicide prevention outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





# Theme 3

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values-based social and emotional wellbeing and mental health outcome measures in combination with clinical outcome measures should guide the assessment of mental health and suicide prevention services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



# Theme 4

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presence and leadership is required across all parts of the Australian mental health system for it to adapt to, and to be accountable to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the achievement of the highest attainable standard of mental health and suicide prevention outcomes.



# Theme 5

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders should be supported and valued to be visible and influential across all parts of the Australian mental health system.



# Calls to Action 1 and 2

- For all Australian governments in a bipartisan approach, and in particular their health and mental health departments, to formally adopt and commit to supporting the *Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration* by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2016.
- For all Australian governments, and in particular their health and mental health departments, to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in mental health and related areas to develop an implementation component of the *Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration* by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2017.

## Calls to Action 3 and 4

- For all mental health professionals and professional associations, and educational institutions and standard-setting bodies that work in mental health (and also those in areas related to mental health, particularly suicide prevention) to formally adopt and commit to supporting the *Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration* by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2016
- For all mental health professional associations, educational institutions and standard-setting bodies that work in mental health (and also those in areas related to mental health, particularly suicide prevention) to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in mental health and related areas to develop an implementation component of the *Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration* by the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2017.

# Call to Action - Key elements of implementation components

- Building access to cultural healers and cultural healing
- Supporting the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values-based social and emotional wellbeing and mental health outcome measures
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are trained, employed, empowered and valued to work (and, where appropriate, lead) across all parts of the Australian mental health system
- Developing, and resourcing the implementation of, policies to ensure the Australian mental health system supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to practice culturally informed concepts of leadership

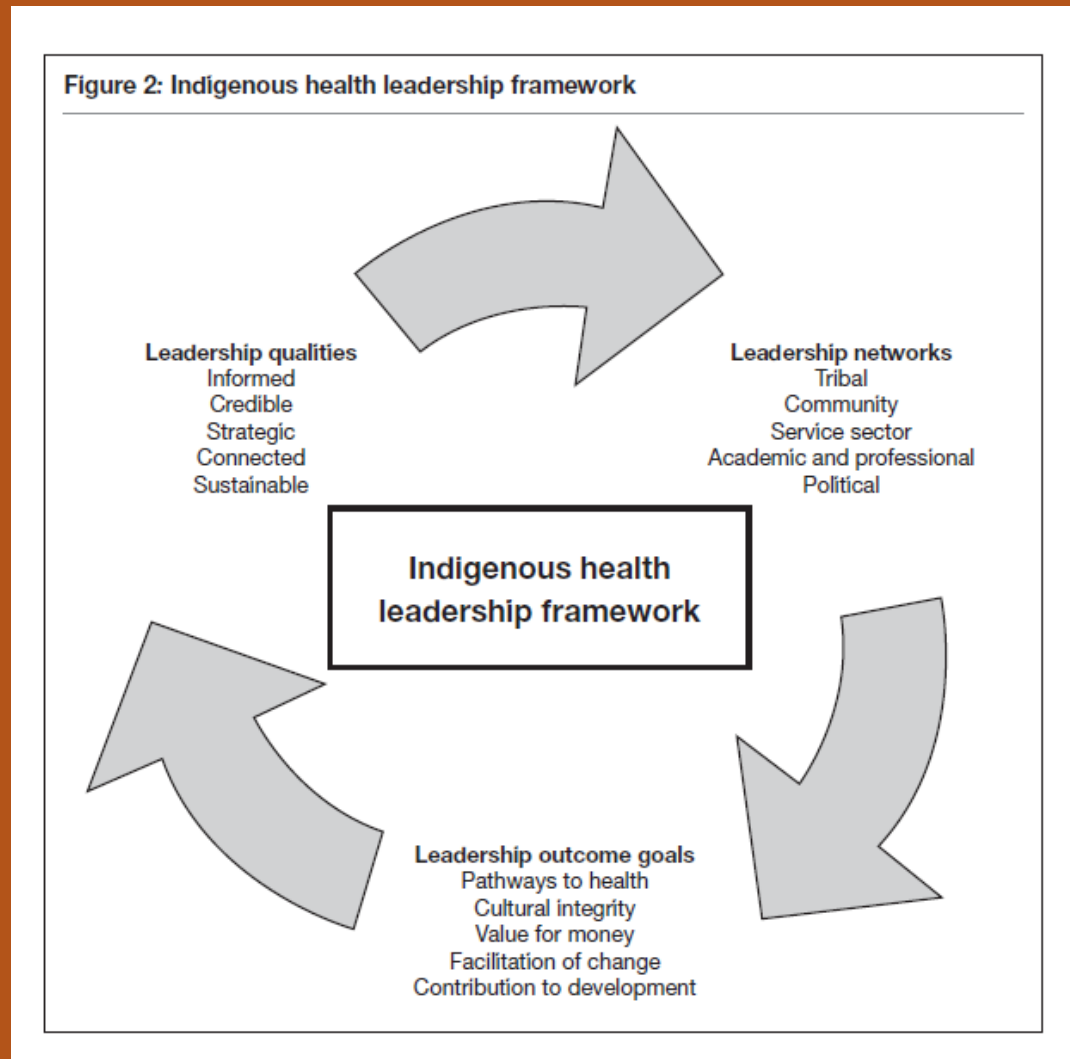
# Pledge support

Pledging your organisation's or personal support for the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration is a first step in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in appropriate parts of the mental health system to improve our mental health and reduce suicide.

Follow the links on the main page of our website:

[www.natsilmh.org.au](http://www.natsilmh.org.au)

# A Framework of Indigenous Health Leadership



Wharerata Declaration



# Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration Summary

- Support from Aboriginal people
- High level and organisational support
- Articulated need, Aboriginal people central
- Themes with descriptions
- Responsibilities identified
- Best of both worlds approach
- Aboriginal people visible and valued
- Challenging to the status quo

# 'Free' On-line or Hard Copy Textbook 31 Chapters

## **Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice - 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

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**Australian Government  
Department of the  
Prime Minister and Cabinet**



# Acronym's used

Abbreviation	Meaning	Relevance
CTG SC	Close the Gap Steering Committee	National initiative
NATSILMH	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health	MH Commission's
ATSIMHSPAG	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group	Ministerial Committee
NMH Commission	National Mental Health Commission	National Initiative
NHLF	National Health Leadership Forum	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak Organisations
NACCHO	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation	Aboriginal Medical Services
PHN's	Primary Health Networks (31)	National Initiative
MH&SEWB	Mental Health & Social and Emotional Wellbeing	Broader than Mental Health
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	National Initiative
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	National Initiative

# National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health

Together we are strong

# Thank you



[www.natsilmh.org.au](http://www.natsilmh.org.au)