

Adele Cox wins LiFE Award for excellence in suicide prevention in Indigenous communities

EMBARGO: 8.30pm AWST / 10.30pm AEST, Wednesday 23 July 2014

Perth, Australia: Bunuba and Gija woman, Adele Cox was tonight recognised with a LiFE Award for excellence in suicide prevention at the 2014 National Suicide Prevention Conference.

Ms Cox, from Western Australia's Kimberley region has worked for more than 15 years to lower the rate of suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Chief Executive Officer of Suicide Prevention Australia, Ms Sue Murray said Ms Cox was highly regarded by policy bodies and in the communities she works with directly.

"Adele's strong community ties influence key decision-makers," Ms Murray said.

"Starting as a Team Leader for the Aboriginal Youth Suicide Research Project, Adele was also involved in the delivery of Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Training in the Kimberley and then eventually throughout Western Australia.

"She has since been appointed as a member of the WA Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention, the Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders in Mental Health," Ms Murray said.

In nominating Ms Cox for a LiFE Award, National Mental Health Commissioner, Chair of Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) and Research Fellow and Associate Professor at the University of Western Australia, Professor Pat Dudgeon, paid tribute to Ms Cox's unique capacity to work at a community level and in complex policy environments.

"Adele has used her influence on important committees to lobby for change and increased resourcing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention," Professor Dudgeon said.

"She has secured government commitments of millions of dollars to suicide prevention, including through the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy."

Associate Professor Roz Walker of the Centre for Research Excellence in Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing at the University of Western Australia worked with Ms Cox on the Kimberley Empowerment Program and the National Empowerment Program.



These initiatives aim to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities to identify local suicide prevention strategies and responses, promote positive social and emotional wellbeing, increase resilience, and empower them to take action to address the negative social determinants that contribute to suicide.

"In all her roles, Adele brings a pervasive sense of compassion and empathy that positively impacts on all those she works with," Associate Professor Walker said.

Co-Director of the Centre for Child Development and Education at the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin, Professor Sven Silburn said Ms Cox's work has enabled significant headway to be made in developing a new community narrative of hope.

"This is vital to restoring the social and emotional wellbeing of communities and preventing further traumatic events resulting from inter-generational trauma, community distress and suicide," Professor Silburn said.

The annual LiFE Awards recognise excellence in suicide prevention across eight different categories including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Business, Communication, Community Engagement, Public Sector, Research, Service Delivery and Leadership.

They were presented as part of the 2014 National Suicide Prevention Conference in Perth. Australia's leading suicide prevention sector event provides a platform for more than 300 delegates to share in the latest research, policy and practice with a focus on delivering better outcomes for vulnerable communities.

If you, or someone you know needs support in a crisis or is thinking about suicide, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14, Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467 or MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78

Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services also provides support to people from ATSI communities. You can find them by visiting: www.sewbmh.org.au

ENDS

Please refer to the Mindframe Media guidelines for tips on how to talk safely and constructively about suicide: <http://www.mindframe-media.info> and <http://www.conversationsmatter.com.au>

About Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA):

SPA is the peak body for the suicide prevention sector in Australia. SPA works collaboratively to develop a community that knows how to ask for help and how to give help. As the lead agency of the National Suicide Prevention Coalition, we build and facilitate partnerships to reduce the stigma around mental illness and suicide, and to assist the healing for people with lived experience of suicide attempts and suicide.