



MEDIA RELEASE
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UNIQUE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HELPLINE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN SYDNEY

- *More than 2,500 calls in October, which is an increase of 500 on the previous month*
- *The service has answered over 1,000 calls this month and is on track for its biggest month*
- *There are 44 Crisis Supporters, operating in Cairns, Wollongong, Nowra and Perth.*

This morning, Federal Member for Indigenous Affairs, the Honourable Linda Burney MP, was joined by Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the Hon Emma McBride MP to officially launch Australia's first - and only - national Indigenous-led crisis hotline, 13YARN.

The ceremony was held in the Yallamundi Rooms at The Sydney Opera House and featured MC John Paul Janke overseeing a smoking ceremony and cultural dance, as well as a musical performance from leading Indigenous artist Marcus Corowa.

Funded by the Australian Government (through the Department of Health), the purpose-built, 24/7 national telephone helpline was codesigned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is run with the support of Lifeline.

More than 2,500 calls to 13YARN were answered in October 2022, which is an increase of 500 on the previous month. In the first 10 days of November, the service answered over 1,000 calls and is on track for its biggest month to date.

“The more we have gone out into the community, the more trust we have been able to build – by showing mob that we are listening to their needs and yarning about the ways in which we can help them when they are feeling overwhelmed or doing it tough.”

“On average, our First Nations Crisis Supporters are helping keep over 100 people safe a day – and this call volume is growing week on week.”

“We believe there is always hope at the end of a yarn. We know how to listen without judgement or shame, and we believe in the power of storytelling to heal.”

Mrs Anderson said that the service filled a gap that had existed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for too long.

“This one-of-a-kind service has been designed from day one to be culturally appropriate and is there to make sure any mob who are having difficulty coping have their own place where they can connect and get help from a trained Crisis Supporter who understands what they might be experiencing,” Mrs Anderson said.



“There are so many cultural and historical factors which have contributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ understanding and experience of mental wellbeing and suicide - and 13 YARN is all about reflecting these to help mob.”

There are currently 44 crisis supporters operating in Cairns, Townsville, Bundaberg, Ipswich, Dubbo, Bathurst, Orange, Wollongong, Nowra and Perth.

Anyone can access the line by calling 13 YARN [13 92 76] around the clock, where they will be assisted for their immediate situation and, if necessary, referred to culturally appropriate programs and services to make sure there is ongoing support.

Funding for an independent evaluation of the impact of 13YARN has been included to ensure the service stays on track and remains fit for purpose.

If you, or someone you know are feeling worried or no good, we encourage you to connect with 13 YARN [13 92 76] and talk with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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