

Launch of “Suicide Story”

OVER a hundred people turned up to the official launch in Alice Springs at the Andy McNeil Room on Wednesday, 3 March to find out about *Suicide Story*. In development for two years, the resource is an Indigenous specific training program to help create suicide safer families and communities. It was developed with Aboriginal people who were willing to stand up strong on this issue and talk about a problem that has been impacting on their families in Central Australia since the 1980s.



Above: Guest speaker, Dept Health & Families: Mental Health Program Director, Bronwyn Hendry, at the launch



Above: About a hundred people attended the launch



Life Promotions Manager & inspiring coordinator behind the *Suicide Story* project, Laurencia Grant, providing a background of the project to audience members at the launch

Suicide is not easy for anyone to talk about because it is still surrounded by shame, stigma, and misunderstandings. But it is a relatively new problem for Aboriginal people and there are other cultural beliefs that can also get in the way of talking about this problem. We hope that *Suicide Story* can help to break some of this silence and give Aboriginal people hope that some suicides can be prevented.

Suicide Story is a DVD made up of short films that feature the voices of Indigenous people from Alice Springs, Santa Teresa, Yuendumu, Tennant Creek and East Arnhem. Animation, art work and music combined with these voices focuses on nine issues relevant to suicide, and the DVD will accompany a full 3-day program.

A short sample of this training DVD was produced to promote *Suicide Story* which was screened at the launch and everyone present received a copy to take back to their organisations. This helped all those present to see that some Aboriginal people are willing to talk up strong on suicide because they have lost too many family members this way. They talked about the importance of working together to help improve the understanding among their people and the need to learn skills that will help families to stop deaths by suicide—that we can't avoid this problem any more and that it won't go away unless we all work together and understand that this is a community issue. ✘



Right: Valda Shannon travelled from Tennant Creek to attend and speak at the launch



Above: Charlie Hodgson receiving his Certificate of Appreciation for his significant involvement in the project



Above: Raymond Campbell, Rangji, George Peckham, Donna Fraser, Lenny Hillman and Charlie Hodgson at the launch

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the development of *Suicide Story*. For further information on the 'story behind the Story' see page 38.



A good mix of representatives attended from Alice Springs, Santa Teresa, Tennant Creek and Yuendumu



Above: Brian & Claudia presenting Chris Wallace with a Certificate of Appreciation for his contribution to Suicide Story



Above: Tahnia Edwards (MHACA Committee Member) with Chairperson of NACCHO (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation), Dr Mick Adams



Above: Good friends Rudy Sanft & Val Dearman catching up at the launch

**Colleagues
& friends
celebrating
the launch of
Suicide Story
on 3 March**



Above: Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Mental Health Program: Dept of Health & Families, Sarah O'Regan, with Member for Greatorex Matt Conlan MLA



Above left: Smiles of relief from Laurencia that years of hard work have finally come to fruition & Above right: LPP staff Jay Green and Brian Kennedy joining in the celebrations



Above: Claudia with guest speaker Dept Health & Families: Mental Health Program Director, Bronwyn Hendry

Below: Dr Marcus Tabart (CAMHS) and Rob Loane (Lifeline) at the launch



Above: Megg Kelham with MHACA Committee members, Maya Cifali and Trish van Dijk toasting to the launch

