

Culturally tailored training for suicide prevention program

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Credit: University of Queensland

The implementation of an Indigenous-led suicide intervention program will begin in Queensland's rural and remote communities in July.

Researchers from The University of Queensland have consulted extensively with Indigenous communities to develop relevant and sustainable [training](#) programs for 'gatekeepers'.

UQ Rural Clinical School's Director of Indigenous Health and project leader Dr Maree Toombs said culturally tailored Indigenous gatekeeper training is needed to address the increasing rates of [suicide](#) among Indigenous people living in rural and remote areas.

"For frontline intervention to be effective, our gatekeepers need to be able to identify suicide risks and start early intervention strategies," Dr Toombs said.

"These are often remote communities so they have to be self-sufficient, and programs with high levels of community involvement are the most effective.

"Using the local language or jargon can go a long

way towards breaking down some of the barriers which prevent people from getting help."

The project's community consultation phase involved more than 90 individuals from 28 community organisations in Southern Queensland.

"We found that existing suicide prevention programs were time-intensive, included content that was not relevant to Indigenous people, and were not sustainable," Dr Toombs said.

"We heard that many people were unaware of the services that were available, meaning they did not know where to turn for help.

"Gaps in services meant police were often called when matters came to a head, adding to the trauma and meaning suicidal [people](#) were less likely to be open to assistance."

Dr Toombs said, because becoming a gatekeeper could be confronting, it was important they receive practical training with examples relevant to their communities.

"Gatekeepers will also be connected with peer support and responders through training networks, and a mobile phone application that is currently being developed," Dr Toombs said.

The community consultation report has been published in *BMC Psychiatry*.

More information: Bushra Nasir et al. An Australian Indigenous community-led suicide intervention skills training program: community consultation findings, *BMC Psychiatry* (2017). [DOI: 10.1186/s12888-017-1380-5](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-017-1380-5)

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