



# POSTVENTION AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BEREAVED BY SUICIDE

## LAUNCH OF POSTVENTION AUSTRALIA

MONDAY, 24TH JUNE 2013

AT

NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

HOSTED BY

THE HON KEVIN HUMPHRIES MP  
NSW MINISTER FOR HEALTH

*supported by*





**Professor Diego de Leo**, is Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention at Griffith University, Brisbane, which was designated as the National Centre of Excellence in Suicide Prevention in November 2008. At Griffith he also directs the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention, and the Life Promotion Clinic, a research facility that represents the only outpatient

service in Australia dealing exclusively with suicidal clients. Since 2001, he is the director of the Master Courses in Suicidology. Professor de Leo is Past President of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and co-founder and Past President of the International Academy for Suicide Research (IASR) of which he also co-founded the journal Archives of Suicide Research. Prof. De Leo has been the initiator of the World Suicide Prevention Day (2003). Member of the Editorial boards for several internationally renowned journals, he is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal CRISIS. Professor de Leo has published extensively with circa 300 peer-reviewed journal articles, 150 book chapters, 35 volumes, and over 200 conference presentations. Winner of several national and international awards, in 2007 he was given the title of Doctor of Science by Griffith University for his work on Suicide and Psychogeriatrics. On 26 January 2013 he received the title of Officer of the Order of Australia. His current research topics are diverse, and include definitional issues and data quality in suicide statistics, suicide in the mentally well, suicidal behavior across different cultures, and bereavement from suicide and other traumatic deaths.



**Diana Sands, PhD**, is Director of the Centre for Intense Grief, Sydney, and has for more than two decades worked as an educator, researcher, and clinician. Diana has provided counselling following sudden, violent and traumatic death, and in particular individual, couple and family counselling and group programs, for those who have lost a loved one through suicide. International leaders in the field of loss, grief and bereavement have commented that Diana has functioned as a clarion

voice in Australia, calling for attention for the need for services, education and increased awareness of the problematic and stigmatized form of bereavement following suicide. Her counselling and group programs draw on a range of theoretical perspectives including narrative and family systems theory and incorporate expressive artwork. Diana has presented seminars and workshops in Australia and Internationally drawing on her clinical experience, research and contemporary meaning based "Walking in the Shoes Model of Suicide Bereavement". She is the recipient of a Vice Chancellor Post Graduate Research Grant and Australian Government Research Scholarship. Diana is involved in various community projects that increase understanding about loss and grief and is the Honorary Advisor to the Wings of Hope Charity for those bereaved by suicide. Diana is an invited guest and candidate member of the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement and has served on the NSW Executive Committee, National Association Loss and Grief, and as the NSW Representative for Suicide Prevention Australia. She has published a number of peer reviewed academic articles and book chapters and is the author of a book and DVD resource, "Red Chocolate Elephants: For Children Bereaved by Suicide".



**Richard Sands**, is a co-founder and Chief Financial Officer of Clinical Genomics Pty Limited, an Australian biotech specialising in molecular diagnostics for the early detection of Colorectal Cancer. Mr. Sands is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and a Member of Chartered Secretaries Australia. Initially a Chartered Accountant with Wayland and Wayland, Mr. Sands subsequently held the position of Company Secretary and Corporate Lending Manager

with Lloyds Bank Plc's Australian subsidiary Lloyds International Limited. For the last two decades Mr Sands has been a Principal at Karridale Pty Limited a corporate advisory firm. Mr. Sands holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of New South Wales.



**Alan Staines OAM OF (Envoy)**, is Director of the Salvation Army Suicide Prevention Bereavement Support Services and has been a driving force behind the establishment of the Salvation Army's suicide bereavement services. Alan was responsible for the formation of Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) in 1991 and was the National Secretary for SPA for 18 years. He has assumed a wide range of additional responsibilities over the years, including organising

SPA and Hope for Life conferences. Alan has been actively involved in suicide prevention programs for more than three decades. He played a key role in establishing the Salvo Care Line (1983), the National Youth Foundation (1991), Suicide Prevention Australia and the Salvation Army OASIS Youth Care Centre in Surry Hills (1992). Alan was responsible for convening the Inaugural Australian Postvention Conference in 2007 and subsequent Australian Postvention Conference in 2009 and 2012 for the bereaved by suicide. He was responsible for developing the Lifekeeper Memory Quilt initiative. Five (5) State Lifekeeper Memory Quilts were launched in their respective States in 2012. Alan is a member of the American Association of Suicidology (AAS), the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP). In recognition of his valuable and tireless efforts in youth suicide prevention, Alan received the Order of the Australia (OAM) in 2003 and Life Membership of SPA in 2004. In 2007, Alan received the Salvation Army's Order of the Founder (OF), the highest Salvation Army honour for distinguished service.



**Professor Graham Martin OAM**, is Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at The University of Queensland, and Clinical Director, Royal Children's Hospital Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS). He is currently a member of the Lifeline Research Advisory Board, chairs the Research Advisory Committee for RUOK?, is on the Boards of Mates in Construction, the Inspire Foundation, the Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research (UQ) and

PsychWire. Graham is director of the Centre for Suicide Prevention Studies in Young People (UQ). Graham has been dedicated to suicide prevention since 1987, a member of the National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy and Evaluation Working Group (1994-99), writing team for the Australian Suicide Prevention Strategy (2000 and 2007), and National Advisory Council for Suicide Prevention (2003-8). Graham was SPA chairman from 1995-2001, convening 6 national suicide prevention conferences, and leading the team developing the first Media and Suicide Resource Kit ('Achieving the Balance', 1998). He was awarded Life Membership in 2004, and the SPA 'Lifetime Contribution to Suicide Prevention Research' award in 2008.



**Judith Murray, BA(HonsI) DipEd BEdSt PhD MAPS BNurs RN** currently holds two part-time positions in the fields of counselling/counselling psychology and nursing. She is an Associate Professor in Counselling Psychology at The University of Queensland, a joint appointment with the School of Psychology and the School of Social Work and Human Services. She also holds a position as a registered nurse in Haematology and Oncology at The Princess Alexandra Hospital,

Brisbane, Queensland. Judith has worked consistently to further the use of a concept of loss within the health, welfare and education sectors. She has been involved strongly in the support of early intervention for loss and the development of community resources and professionals in many disciplines who care for others in situations of loss. She is a Board member of ALWS and a member of the Psychosocial Community of Practice of the ACT Alliance, being an international collaboration of over 100 aide organizations globally.



# POSTVENTION AUSTRALIA



**Sheila Clark**, has been engaged in suicide postvention since the mid-1980s. She has worked with the Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc. in Adelaide, since its inception in 1986, through providing professional help and assisting at support meetings. Her book *After Suicide: Help for the Bereaved* (1995) was written in collaboration with the Group. In 2003-4 she researched the needs and supports for people bereaved through suicide in Adelaide for the

South Australian Department of Human Services. Sheila has presented at a number of postvention conferences and workshops including the Bereavement module of national education initiative Keep Yourself Alive. Advocacy has included providing a postvention forum at the national conferences of Suicide Prevention Australia in 1997-2002, as chair of its Bereavement Group. Additionally, Sheila has contributed to a number of State and national planning committees devoted to supporting the suicide bereaved, including the National Bereavement Reference Group (National Suicide Prevention Strategy) 2005-6. Sheila was a recipient of the 2001 Faberow award from the International Association for Suicide Prevention for 'services to suicide postvention and those bereaved through suicide'.



**Dr Noritta Morseu-Diop**, is an Indigenous Australian woman originally from Tamwoy Mission, Thursday Island in North Queensland. Her ancestral heritage extends from mainland Australia to the Kulkalgal Nation to the Erubam Le and Ugaram Le and to the Dauareb Clan of the Meriam Nation. She graduated from the School of Social Work and Social Policy in 1992 at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia Campus. Since that time Noritta has worked extensively in the

grassroots Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and within non-Indigenous communities throughout the state of Queensland. The areas of her work include: grief & loss, bereavement counselling and support, criminal justice, prison rehabilitation, mental health, community development, cross-cultural education, social work and welfare education and training, drug and alcohol counselling, Indigenous health and social justice advocacy. Noritta was awarded a PhD in Criminal Justice and Social Work at the University of Queensland in the School of Social Work and Human Services, St. Lucia Campus on the 22nd of July, 2010. She is a recipient of the UQ 2010 Dean's Commendation for Outstanding Research and Higher Degree PhD thesis and is a 2011 Winston Churchill Fellow. In 2013, Noritta received a Centre for Research Excellence Post-doctoral Fellowship; she is currently working as a Senior Research Officer in the School of Medicine, University of Queensland.



**Gary Parsisson**, CEO (Ex Officio Member), lost his son Joshua to suicide in 2000 and as such has a strong understanding of the issues surrounding bereavement by suicide. Gary's has a long career history in the Banking and Financial Service industry in a variety of senior executive roles as well as consulting. Gary has agreed to take on the role as Chief Executive Officer and will bring to the role years of volunteering experience across various sectors in the community

as well as his fundraising experience gained in his current position in the Salvation Army.



**Cindy Mills**, lost her 17 year old daughter Victoria to suicide in 2006. Completely unexpected, Victoria's death sparked a torrent of questions, sending Cindy on a landslide of guilt, self-blame, anger, confusion and profound grief that made her also feel vulnerable to suicide. Soon after the tragedy she received intensive counselling and participated in a suicide support group run by Dr Diana Sands and the Salvation Army, which she attributes to her strong recovery. Since that time

she has worked with the Salvation Army to promote their suicide related services, in particular bereavement services. These include the Hope for Life Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Support service, the Question Persuade and Refer initiative for suicide prevention and the National Lifekeeper Memory Quilt. Cindy is a founding member of Wings of Hope, a harm prevention charity established in 2007 that provides education, resources and support events for people bereaved by suicide. Cindy has frequently spoken in the media of the critical need for services and support to be readily available for all Australians who lose a loved one to suicide, enabling them to work through the complexities of their tragedy and begin to heal in a supportive, compassionate environment free from boundaries, taboo and stigma. Cindy has given evidence at the 2009 Australian Senate Inquiry into Suicide and her bereavement story was featured in the 2012 National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Six years after her tragic loss, Cindy continues to draw on the strengths and strategies that she acquired from her bereavement support. They ensure that the memories of Victoria capture the essence of her entire magnificent existence, rather than focusing on one tragic day. Cindy recognises that regardless of how strong your recovery, vulnerability is nevertheless often not far from the surface. It is Cindy's sincere hope that bereavement services are available to every Australian not only initially, but well into their unique bereavement and recovery journey.



**Estelle Dragan**, is the mother of Charmaine Dragan who tragically took her life in November 2007. Estelle is a member of the Australian Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention in Western Australia and has spent a great deal of time trying to bring about awareness and understanding of suicide, talking to schools and other community bodies. Since her daughter's passing she has been committed to stamping out the stigma associated with mental illness and making all people

realise that mental health and well being is just as important as physical health and well being. To quote Estelle, "One never recovers from such a trauma and each loved one deals with grief and loss in their own individual way...There are too many Charmaine's in this world who leave us far too soon and with many unanswered questions... It has been my quest over the past five years to learn more about mental health and well being and make a difference! It is not good enough to say a person has committed suicide and just close the door... They must not die in vain or be thought of as less than any other human being... The stigma of bereavement by suicide must be eliminated and care and compassion be the replacement... Through Postvention Australia, we can support research and enlightenment, assist families and even survivors of attempted suicide by offering care, understanding, compassion and providing opportunities for collaboration and co-ordination of service... If we are to really make a difference in reducing suicide and eliminating stigma we must work together and include those bereaved by suicide by listening with understanding and compassion, assist them in their time of need and learning from these experiences. No more must we close the door and leave well alone!"



## **ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS**

### **LAUNCH OF POSTVENTION AUSTRALIA**

Monday, 24th June 2013, 11.30 am

NSW Parliament House, Strangers Function Room  
Macquarie Street, Sydney

MC	John Cleary – Opening Remarks
WELCOME	Professor Diego De Leo AO, DSc, MD, PhD, FRANZCP Professor of Psychiatry - Griffith University
INTRODUCTION OF	Postvention Australia Board Members (Chairperson Prof Diego De Leo)
“MY STORY”	Estelle Dragun
GREETINGS	Hon Kevin Humphries MP, NSW Minister for Health
ADDRESS	Alan Staines OAM OF (Envoy) Looking Back – Looking Forward Our Vision - to establish a network that provides holistic, physical, emotional and spiritual support, comfort and understanding for the health and wellbeing of every person bereaved by suicide.

### **OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF POSTVENTION AUSTRALIA**

ADDRESS	Professor Ian Webster AO, Emeritus Professor of Community Medicine and Public Health, UNSW and Chair, Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council
“MY STORY”	Cindy Mills
REFLECTION	4 Candle Ritual - conducted by Gary Parsisson (CEO)
THE BLESSING	Major Paul Moulds
THANK YOU	Dr Sheila Clark

REFRESHMENTS



# REFLECTION

## FOUR CANDLES RITUAL

**The first candle** represents our grief.  
The pain of losing you is intense.  
It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.

**This second candle** represents our courage.  
To confront our sorrow,  
To comfort each other,  
To change our lives.

**This third candle** we light in your memory.  
For the times we laughed,  
The times we cried,  
The caring and joy you gave us.

**This fourth candle** we light for our love.  
We light this candle so that your light will always shine.  
As we share this day of remembrance  
with our family and friends,  
we cherish the special place in our hearts  
that will always be reserved for you.  
We thank you for the gift  
your living brought to each of us.  
We love you.  
We remember you.

## BLESSING

May you find serenity and tranquillity in a world  
you may not always understand.

May the pain you have known and the chaos  
and turmoil you may have experienced,  
give you strength to walk through life facing each  
new situation with courage and optimism.

May you always know that there are those whose love  
and understanding will always be there,  
even when you feel most alone.

May a kind word, a reassuring touch and a warm smile be  
yours every day of your life and may you give these gifts as  
well as receive them.

May you feel some healing in your brokenness  
and be able to see light in your darkness.

May you piece your lives together  
and find meaning in your living.

And now let us go into the world,  
Glad that we have loved,  
Free to weep for the one we have lost,  
Free to hold each other in our human frailty,  
Empowered to live life to the full.

## BLESSING - Paul Moulds (Major)

God of Life,

We are grateful for this moment of gathering,  
For this new day, this new opportunity, this new organisation.  
We give thanks for this coming together, to pool intellect,  
resources, and will,  
So that others might find support in their days of pain and  
relief in their often long, lonely journeys.

We remember those on this journey today.  
Those who carry heavy burdens,  
whose joy has been robbed,  
whose lives have no music,  
whose hearts are lonely,  
And whose souls have lost their courage and way.

We come together because of them,  
So that together we may find new ways of renewing hope,  
of healing brokenness,  
of restoring community,  
of rebuilding faith, and rediscovering meaning.

Grant this new organisation courage, creativity, strength and  
perseverance in their labours.

So help us all to give, to live, and to remember we are never  
alone.

Amen

## FOR OUR GATHERING

Spirit of Life,

There are days when our burdens  
weigh heavily on our shoulders;

When the road seems endless and too rough;

The skies grey and threatening;

When our lives have no music in them,  
our hearts are sore and lonely

And our souls have lost their courage and purpose.

May we find the strength and understanding  
we need to live each day.

May we be patient with ourselves and one another;

May we know that love endures through eternity.



*Professor Ian Webster*

The Third Australian Postvention Conference was held at the Scientia Building, UNSW, 28th-30th June 2012. 250 delegates attended the conference entitled “Hope, Meaning and Direction” Australian Perspectives. International experts, key Australian figures, professionals working in the field, as well as people bereaved by suicide participated at the conference.

A message of support was received from the Federal Health Minister for Health, the Hon Tanya Plibersek. Professor Ian Webster, Chair of the Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council, opened the conference. Professor Webster in his address spoke about the Commonwealth Government’s commitment and support made to reform mental health and the progress that had been made in postvention.

The three-day conference involved pre-conference workshops, followed by plenary presentations and elective sessions. The plenary sessions were chaired by the eminent Professor Graham Martin.

The final day was especially focused on those bereaved by suicide and included a moving Healing and Remembrance Ceremony and the emotional unveiling of Lifekeeper Memory Quilts – hand-stitched quilts with pictures of those lost to suicide across Australia, made in honour of their lives.

The plenary speakers included four visiting experts from the USA: Professor Madelyn Gould, a professor in psychiatry and epidemiology, and deputy director of Research training in Child Psychiatry at Columbia University; Jerry Reed, vice-president and director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Injury, Violence and Suicide; John Jordon, a psychologist specialising in work with survivors of suicide and other traumatic losses, and the professional advisor to the Survivor Council of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; and Michelle Linn-Gust, international author and president of the American Association of Suicidology.



*Expert panel shares insights in an open discussion on the future direction for postvention.*



*Bereaved families view the five lifekeeper memory quilts.*



*Conference chair Prof Graham Martin*



*US expert John Jordon*



*US expert Jerry Reed*

# 3RD AUSTRALIAN POSTVENTION CONFERENCE – 2012

Australian plenary speakers included Professor Ian Webster; Professor Graham Martin, director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at The University of Queensland, and clinical director at the Royal Children's Hospital Child and Youth Mental Health Service; Jill Fisher, national coordinator for the StandBy Response Service; Dr Diana Sands, director of the Bereaved by Suicide Centre for Intense Grief; Barbara Hocking, executive director of SANE Australia; and Tom Brideson, the NSW coordinator of the Aboriginal Mental health Workforce Program.

The conference brought together family and friends who have been bereaved by suicide; the indigenous, teachers, young people, mental health professionals, general practitioners and medical personnel, clergy, emergency services, researchers, service providers and funeral service personnel.

The conference was all about bringing awareness and support to the bereaved. A bereaved person shared their story at the beginning of each plenary to link their lived experience with the theoretical aspects of the conference under the heading "My Story" A Lived Experience.

Session 7 – Future Direction for Postvention in Australia – was facilitated by Professor Graham Martin. Delegates gathered together for the session to discuss what was needed to achieve better recognition and support for the bereaved by suicide. It was during the session it was unanimously agreed by bereaved delegates present that a national association for the bereaved by suicide be established.

The "Hope Meaning and Direction Conference" provided a wonderful opportunity for delegates throughout Australia and New Zealand to network and share together their experience and knowledge.

The conference was an enormous success. Many letters were received from the bereaved and service providers expressing their appreciation.

The conference was organised by The Salvation Army's Suicide Prevention – Bereavement Support Services (Hope for Life), with the support of the Federal Government's Department of Health and Ageing.

The following committee members were instrumental in organising the conference program and the Healing and Remembrance Ceremony:-

## CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Envoy Alan Staines (Chair), OAM of Salvation Army  
Ms Jill Fisher, Standby – United Synergies  
Ms Leonore Hanssens, Promote Life NT  
Dr Diana Sands, Bereaved by Suicide Centre for Intense Grief  
Ms Lousie Flynn, Jesuit Social Services  
Mr Tony Gee, Compassionate Friends  
Mr Tony Cassidy, Wesley Mission  
Mr Alan Woodward, Lifeline Foundation  
Ms Stephanie Wilks, Salvation Army Hope for Life  
Ms Wilma Gallet, Salvation Army Hope for Life

## PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR THE HEALING AND REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

Dr Diana Sands  
Ms Louise Flynn  
Ms Jill Chapman  
Envoy Alan Staines  
Ms Sally-Anne Peters  
Ms Ceiny Maybury  
Ms Janine Schramm  
Ms Barbara Carter  
Ms Leigh White  
Ms Jane Wilson  
Ms Emma Tseris  
Ms Emily Simpson



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 4TH AUSTRALIAN POSTVENTION CONFERENCE

The 4th Australian Postvention Conference will be held at the John Niland Scientia Building at the University of NSW. It will be convened / organised by Postvention Australia. One of the highlights of the conference will again be the Healing and Remembrance Ceremony for the bereaved by suicide. International and Australian plenary speakers are being invited to participate at the conference which is being held at the UNSW, Sydney commencing Thursday, 5th June to Saturday 7th June 2014. Bereaved by suicide members will be offered special reduced conference registration fees. For further information and expressions of interest, contact National Secretary Alan Staines: Mob: 0412 164 575, Email: [alanstaines@optusnet.com.au](mailto:alanstaines@optusnet.com.au), Post Office: PO Box 2606, Carlingford NSW 2118.

### NATIONAL OFFICE

Postvention Australia's National office is located at King Street Wharf, 35 Lime Street, Sydney, New South Wales and will be operational late July - August. In the meantime any person bereaved by suicide requiring information about the National Association for the Bereaved by Suicide should call Alan Staines - The National Secretary of Postvention Australia on: 0412 164 575.

### WEBSITE

Postvention Australia's website is presently under construction. This website is being designed to raise the knowledge and competence of the general public and to provide the following:-

- specific information/resources for the bereaved by suicide
- information/resources for organisations/people who provide services for the bereaved by suicide
- promote conferences and events and in particular provide information about Postvention Australia's biannual bereaved by suicide conference
- links to other relevant websites and helpful resources.

### NEWSLETTER

A quarterly publication of the Postvention Australia Newsletter will be presented online.

### MEMBERSHIP

There are four classes of membership to Postvention Australia:-

Honorary Life Member

Individual Member      \$44.00 yearly subscription

Organisation Member    \$110.00 yearly subscription

Bereaved Member

Bereaved members are offered free membership to the National Association. Bereaved members have the right to attend meetings of members and have special reduced prices provided for attendance at the Postvention Conference. A newsletter will be forwarded out to members.

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Application for membership to Postvention Australia can be obtained from National Secretary Alan Staines – [alanstaines@optusnet.com.au](mailto:alanstaines@optusnet.com.au) or mail to Postvention Australia, PO Box 2606, Carlingford NSW 2118 or phone 0412 164 575.

### DONATIONS

Please support us to ensure that Postvention Australia is able to make a real difference in the lives of those bereaved by suicide. Donations can be forwarded to the National Secretary, Alan Staines and in future via our website.