



# THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MENTAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



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# Presentation Outline

- **Centre activities around adverse climatic conditions in rural and remote Queensland**
- **Centre initiatives relating to Indigenous communities**





Centre for  
Rural & Remote  
Mental Health  
QUEENSLAND

# Project Locations



# Our partners

- **Participants – advisory role to Board and Centre**
  1. **Royal Flying Doctor Service (Qld Division)**
  2. **Wuchopperen Health Service**
  3. **University of Queensland**
  4. **Griffith University**
  5. **James Cook University**
  6. **University of Southern Queensland**
  7. **Queensland University of Technology**
  8. **Queensland Health**
  9. **AgForce Queensland**





# Five core areas

- 1. Whole person, whole community wellbeing**
- 2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**
- 3. New Australians**
- 4. Climate change and mental health**
- 5. Master networking**



# Rationale – Rural and Remote Communities

- **Rate of suicide among farm workers more than double the general population - around 1,000 each year**
  - 20 deaths a week
- **Increasing incidence of suicide linked to economic and social stresses related to drought, floods and natural disasters**



# Gaps in Evidence

- **Few studies specific to drought and mental health**
- **No quantitative studies specific aspects of drought and mental health**
  - Hard to distinguish between factors such as financial, environmental, cultural etc.
- **No studies of Indigenous, young people etc**



# Response to Environmental Adversity

- Mapping Report – Mental Health and Drought in Rural and Remote Queensland
- Queensland Mental Health Advisory Group on Environmental Adversity





# Response to Rural Environmental Adversity (cont)

**Role of CRRMHQ – strategic, leadership,  
facilitating, new initiatives and  
interventions, evaluation and research**

**Role of MH Advisory Group on  
Environmental Adversity – linking,  
coordinating, communication, sharing  
of information, engagement with local  
organisations, service providers,  
communities**



# Interventions and Research

- Building leadership and mental health awareness in rural women and youth (DAFF funded)
- Mobile One Stop Service bus – promotion and improving access to services
- Raising awareness through information sharing and improving links
- Evaluation and research



# Rationale – Indigenous Communities

- **Climate change predictions indicate remote and coastal Indigenous communities are disproportionately vulnerable**
  - Low-lying islands – inundation
  - Inland – drought, floods, fires and dust storms



# Response

- **Roundtable sponsored by ARN on Human Health and CRRMHQ**
- **Outcomes: Through engagement with Indigenous communities, organisations and individuals:**
  - Identify opportunities to improve connection to country
  - Foster evaluation of new initiatives and interventions
  - Forge strategic alliances with stakeholders

# Interventions - Research

**With the general aim of supporting  
Indigenous Australians to improve their  
social, emotional and spiritual  
wellbeing and connection to country**

- Evaluate current livelihood initiatives which contribute to SESWB**
- Develop projects that focus on opportunities emerging from the changing climate**
- Strengthen and build new relationships**
- build the evidence base**





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**Website:** [www.crrmhd.com.au](http://www.crrmhd.com.au)



We welcome opportunities to collaborate