



MEDIA RELEASE
THURSDAY 16 MAY 2024

13YARN MARKS 50,000 CALLS SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Since 13YARN was established in March 2022, the Indigenous-led national crisis support service has supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members across a milestone 50,000 calls.

Service demand increased by nearly 50% in the first two years of operation: from around 17,000 calls in 2022 to 25,000 calls in 2023.

National Program Manager Marjorie Anderson says the service's rapid growth has been responsive to the urgent need for culturally safe and confidential crisis support.

"Over the last two years, the demand for help is far beyond what we ever expected and continues to grow. We have seen 27 days with more than twice, and sometimes nearly three times the average number of calls from help seekers."

"Many of these peaks coincide with sorry business, deaths in community and challenging moments in community life. We also support people in distress around the New Year period, Survival Day and through political and news moments such as the Voice Referendum in which calls were up by 40%."

In 2022, 16% of callers cited racism as the reason for their distress, rising to 19% in 2023. This statistic continues to rise, and currently sits at 26% in the calendar year to date.

"Amid news reporting of the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap report we saw around 43% of calls related to racism, and again, the release of Closing the Gap data saw 47% of calls connected to racism. These two days represent the single highest figures to date," added Mrs. Anderson.

"Unfortunately, one of the most significant drivers for people seeking help has been racism in the aftermath of the Referendum. It is sad this is the experience of our people, but we are pleased 13YARN can offer safe, confidential and culturally appropriate support."

Lifeline's 13 11 14 crisis helpline refers around 60% of help seekers to other programs and services, bridging the gap between clinical and non-clinical support. In 13YARN's case, there are not always equivalent culturally safe services to refer people on to, especially in remote locations.

"If we are to truly close the gap, more homegrown culturally safe services in regional and remote locations, designed and run by local Aboriginal people, are critically needed."

MEDIA CONTACT: 0408 407 376 (calls, no texts) | media@13yarn.org.au

NB: The 13YARN 24-hour telephone crisis line 13 92 76 is pronounced 'Thirteen YARN.'



“As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led, designed and run service, 13YARN promotes trust among help seekers who know they will be yarning with someone who understands them.”

“There is always hope at the end of a yarn. Our teams listen without judgement. The conversation is confidential, and we are a safe space for people to yarn about worries, needs and concerns.”

13YARN is an Australian Government funded initiative codesigned and developed by Lifeline Australia and Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia along with leading Aboriginal mental health professionals and lived experience and community groups.

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

ABOUT 13YARN

- [13YARN](http://www.13yarn.org.au) [Thirteen YARN] is the first national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. We offer a confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter who can provide crisis support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 13YARN empowers our community with the opportunity to yarn without judgement and provide a culturally safe space to speak about their needs, worries or concerns.

ENDS

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