

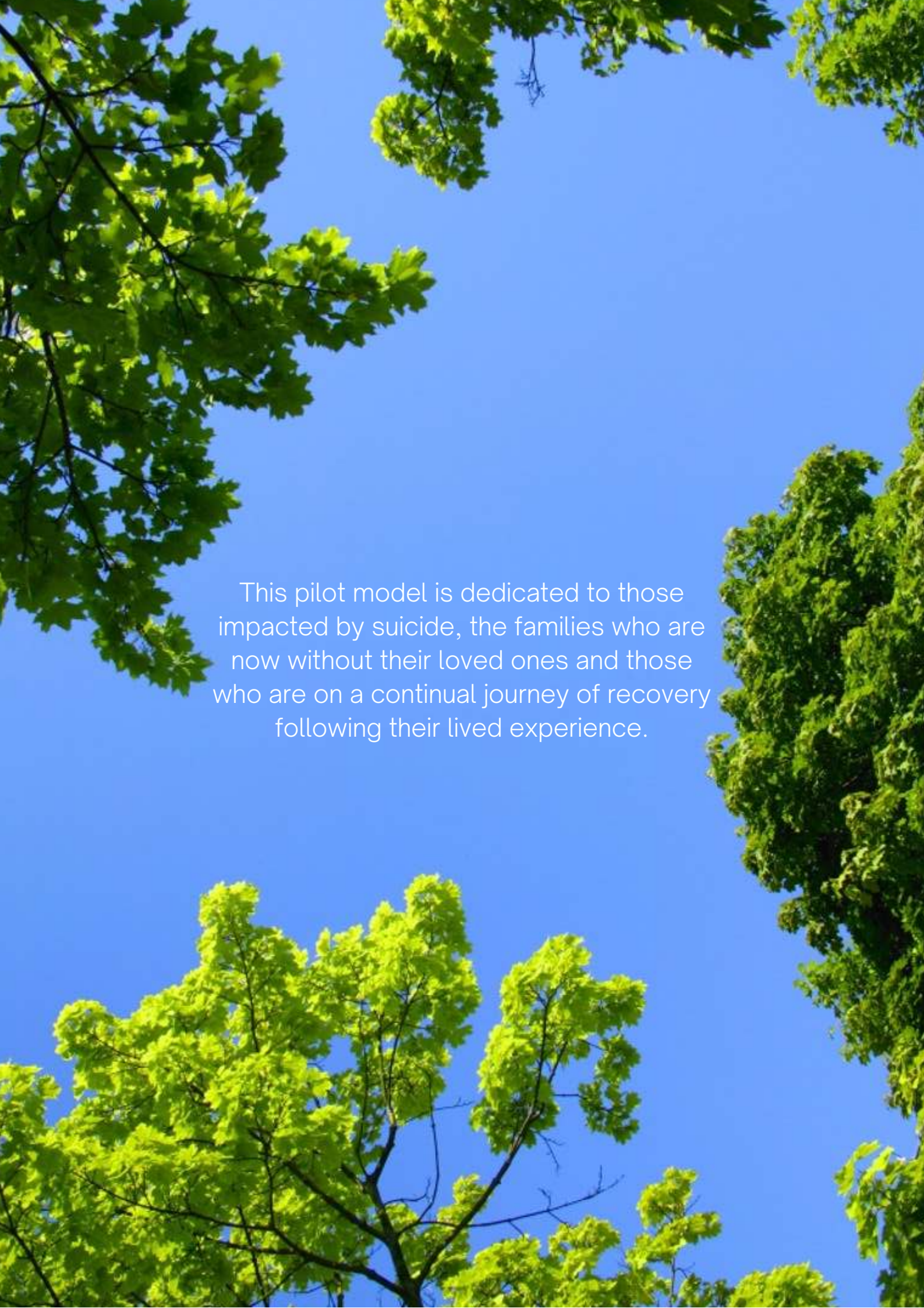
MACKAY, ISAAC AND
WHITSUNDAY

pathways CONNECT

**The Greater Whitsunday
Council of Mayors
Suicide Prevention Taskforce
Pilot Model**



Greater
Whitsunday
Communities

A low-angle photograph looking up at a clear, bright blue sky. The sky is framed by the edges of several trees with vibrant green, maple-like leaves. The leaves are in sharp focus, showing their intricate vein patterns. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

This pilot model is dedicated to those impacted by suicide, the families who are now without their loved ones and those who are on a continual journey of recovery following their lived experience.



Acknowledgements

The Greater Whitsunday Council of Mayors Suicide Prevention Taskforce respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land right across the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday region. We respect their continued cultural and spiritual connection to country, waters, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore. We are committed to making a valued contribution to the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also acknowledge the world is continuously changing and challenges facing our society will be more deeply felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Embedding a cultural lens must be a priority in any strategy that is created and implemented.

A special and warm thanks to the people of First Nations background, Lived Experience, Culturally and Linguistically Diversity, LGBTQIA+, Community Members, Industry Representatives and passionate Service Providers – Government and non-government bodies who contributed, shared, collaborated and co-designed with us and continually provided fresh insights into the work as we were developing and manifesting this model for the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Region.

This pilot model has been developed by Greater Whitsunday Communities on behalf of the Greater Whitsunday Council of Mayors Suicide Prevention Taskforce in collaboration with the funding body Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN), Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday, Suicide Prevention Community Action Planning Group, and the Mackay Hospital and Health Service.

MACKAY, ISAAC AND
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pathways CONNECT

Pathway Connect is for individuals who are not currently in crisis but:



Want support but don't know where to start...

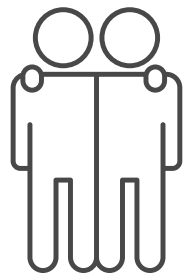


Want to talk with someone they can relate to...



Feel lost, hopeless and have thoughts about suicide

Pathways Connect is a free service and no referral is required.



An innovative and personalised way to connect to the RIGHT option, at the RIGHT time.

Our principles



Value Lived Experience

Pathways Connect recognises the value of the experiences of people with a lived experience of suicide - the model was co-designed with people with lived experience. As experts from the grassroots level, their experiences are at the centre of designing support structures through to governance policies. Integrating a peer workforce into the model can also empower and provide purpose and meaning to the lives of people with a lived experience.



Feedback Informed

The Pathways Connect model promoted, encouraged and utilises feedback on various levels. On the ground, operational support is informed by feedback from community, individuals and services, which guides both Peer Connector relationships and strategic service delivery. This multilayered feedback informed approach is underpinned by a continuous co-design process which acts to support change in community according to need.



Recovery Orientated

Aligning closely with valuing lived experience is a recovery orientated approach to care and support. This approach emphasises the individual's personal journey through empowering them to lead and supporting their independence, self-esteem and overall wellness. The model incorporates this approach on all levels and helps to challenge stigma and support change in communities. Furthermore, it allows a degree of risk tolerance to encourage people's choices, balanced with meeting duty-of-care obligations.



Trauma informed

Trauma informed care as a foundational principle in mental health and suicide prevention, places value on the statement that "healing happens in the relationship". Also crucial to effective trauma informed care and support is sharing the power, which is promoted and encouraged through the peer workforce and relatable experience concept that acknowledges, respects and understands the prevalence and impacts of trauma. Pathways Connect is built on this concept of connection on all levels. In addition, it supports people in their natural community environment, empowers their identity, uses appropriate language and ensures that individuals do not have to retell their story.



Culturally Safe

The development of Pathways Connect is built on ancient models of holistic healing, foregrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wisdom and leadership concepts as Australia's First Nations people. This model is underpinned by the recognition that being culturally aware or having cultural humility is a lifelong process. Culturally safe support will be delivered in an environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, wherever possible. Furthermore, it will continue to build and deliver a curiosity lens through narrative/storytelling/sharing approaches.

Our values



Purpose

Helping people who are feeling lost, to find purpose, within their own life, network and community.



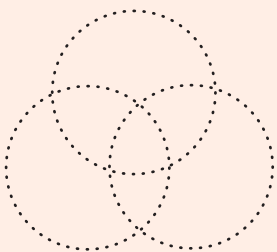
Compassion

Creating positive compassionate experiences through, using empathy-based engagement and listening.



Empowerment

Promoting self-development and determination, insight and awareness, help people address the oppressive factors which prevent them from thriving.



CONNECTION

Connection to yourself, connection to your community & connection to your services.

Connection is the overarching value, underpinning the way people experience support. Connection enabled through compassionate empathy, recognising and empowering purpose to enhance quality of life in order to prevent deaths by suicide.

When to request a peer connector ?

Are you or someone you know having a hard time? Don't wait for things to get worse.

Do you or someone you know require an emergency response because of a crisis?

NO

Provide information to help match you to a peer connector

Is there an appropriate/preferred peer connector available at this time?

YES

NO

Explore other peer connector options

Schedule an appointment when preferred/appropriate peer connector is available

Call MH on 1300 64 22 555.

How would the person prefer to connect with their peer?

- Face to face
- Virtual face to face
- Phone call
- Online chat

YES

Recommend attendance at an emergency dept. OR Call 000 for ambulance.

Can a peer connector, or someone you know support you to attend the emergency department?

YES

NO

Peer connector follow-up within 24-hours after the crisis

How would the person prefer to connect with their peer?

Peer Connector Escalation Pathway

Is the individual in an emergency situation or at imminent risk to themselves or others?

Does the individual you are supporting require a higher level of intervention due to complexity or crisis?

NO

Do you feel you may need guidance, support and or debrief/supervision

NO

Please utilise internal reflective practice tools to support your wellbeing

Consider making an appointment with EAP services'

YES

If urgent, please contact Pathways Connect Oncall to speak with an afterhours Regional Program Coordinator

Contact your Regional Support Coordinator to arrange a supervision or debrief

'Consider making an appointment with EAP services'

Utilise alternative internal supports such as buddy system

Complexity

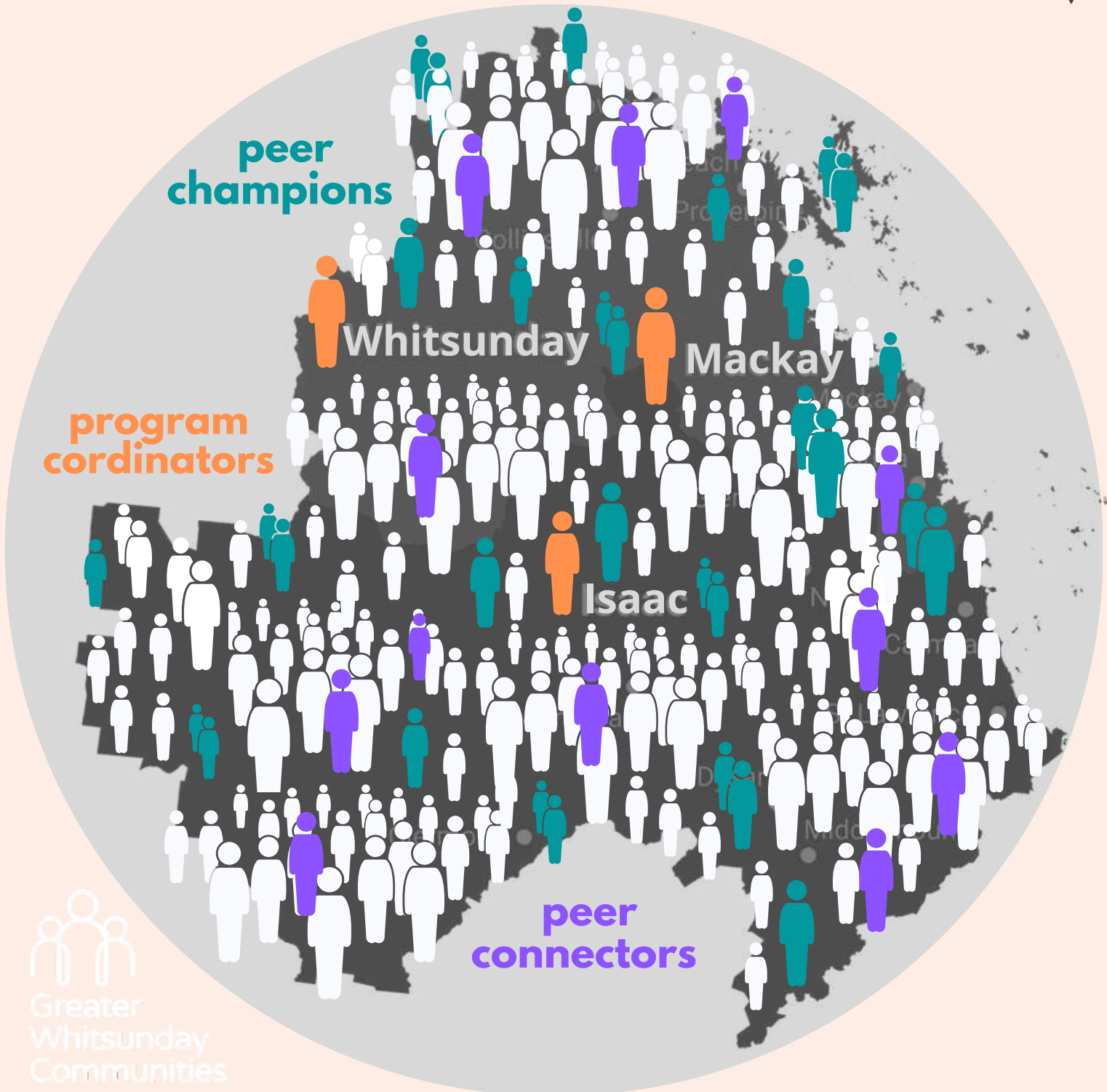
Crisis

Refer to the Acute Care Team on 1300 64 22 555.

Recommend attendance at an emergency dept.
OR
Call 000 for ambulance.

Creating more points of access, across the region

Strengthening and creating of more access points for support within our communities by upskilling local role models, champions and leaders across the three regions.





Suicide is a global public health crisis, with more than 700,000 people dying by suicide each year. For every suicide, there are 20 or more attempts. Each death by suicide is a tragedy that deeply affects families, friends and communities. It is a complex issue that affects the whole community and can be prevented. In Australia, suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 49 years, and Queensland has the second highest standardised rate of deaths by suicide, highlighting the urgent need for change and action at the community level.

At the moment, service mapping is outdated and navigation is difficult, support options are limited, hard to find, concerned with capacity, eligibility, funding, transport and the complexity of the mental health and suicide prevention system grows more worrying everyday. People rarely get the right help, at the right time. Many identify their experience of help seeking to be negative and sometimes causing further trauma and a contributing factor to their crisis/suicidality.

Everyday, people GIVE UP trying to find the right help...

Many smaller communities are supporting each other as best as they can, but without appropriate training and support, it isn't sustainable. Trying to fill the gap, local heroes within their struggling communities want to 'duplicate' themselves just so they can do more to help those in need.

Pathways Connect aims to build on existing current local heroes, 'duplicating them' by training as many people across the region as possible, creating more points of access for face to face, in place support.

Key features



Pathways Connect, is designed as a collective and responsive approach to suicide prevention planning and implementation, while addressing the barrier of distance in the Greater Whitsunday rural and remote communities.

Access points:

Individuals seeking support will have various access points, including phone and online applications, to link with Peer Connectors. These tools will be integrated into a broader system that allows for monitoring and evaluation of the service.

Matching and dispatching system/app:

This peer-to-peer matching and dispatching system that ensures individuals have a positive, seamless experience by being linked with a Peer Connector and will enable a meaningful connection. Individuals seeking support will be matched with a Peer Connector, depending on their personal preference.

Online service directory:

Pathways Connect will coordinate an online directory of services and other community-based support options, which includes the scope of practice of all service providers. This will be consistently maintained so all data is current and relevant to community. This also includes a data collection tool which supports future service provision and planning to identify needs across the region, consistent with what information is useful to the services and planners.

Training:

Training for Peer Connectors and Program Coordinators will support them to use the matching system/app and online directory effectively, building a strong knowledge of regional services and enable them to deliver compassionate support to those in need.

24/7 clinical support:

24/7 clinical support will be used to mitigate escalation pathways and is supported by QLD Health.

Awareness campaign:

For this model to be effective and used by those in need in the community, it must be promoted widely through a variety of channels. In addition, the recruitment of Peer Connectors needs to appeal to a diverse range of people to best meet the needs of the individuals seeking peer connection. A communications campaign is a key component of this community-led model in the Greater Whitsunday region.

How is it early intervention?

Shifting away from reactive crisis response...

promoting good health and wellbeing.



Pathways Connect has been co-designed by community to streamline and embed what we know already works.

People naturally navigate towards talking to people who:

- they feel they can relate to in some way
- view as a 'peer' depending on their situation or context
- are non-judgmental and good at listening
- are easy to talk to
- are available in familiar and comfortable environments
- feel normal and natural to connect with

Pathways Connect has been designed to break down stigma, enhance quality of life and reduce stress before people fall deep into their suicidal thoughts.

The co-design of the model recognised that peoples definition of crisis can vary, and people can often be shifted in an out of crisis. This is often why people can be turned away from acute mental health services not meeting the criteria for that level of intervention but still be unwell enough to take or attempt ending their own life.

Pathways Connect aims to provide support for people at the right time, enabling better pathways which minimise the risk of escalation to suicide. This model holistically addresses a large cohort of the population who may be considered as the missing middle and who have unmet needs.

Collectively as a community, through peer matching, we are able to meet the needs of diverse groups, particularly **those who typically would not normally, ask for help.**

Facilitating positive and compassionate experiences can have several benefits, such as reducing stigma, improving overall health and wellbeing, increasing resilience, and minimising the need for crisis response to manage and prevent suicide attempts and deaths.

Building on what is already existing



NOT a COMPETITION,
but TO COMPLEMENT...

Pathways Connect was co-designed, **not to duplicate** any existing initiatives, supports or services, but rather to **create pathways and connections between them**.

With the aim of enhancing navigation of access to support, Pathways Connect will objectively create seamless collaborative relationships across the sector as an impartial advocate for meeting the needs of the community.

This model recognises there are already many services, initiatives, campaigns, volunteer groups, which are working well - they just require supportive pathways and collaboration. This includes working with online platforms such as My Community Directory already supported by the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) and the three councils, (Mackay Regional Council, Isaac Regional Council and Whitsunday Regional Council).

The Greater Whitsunday Region has many services and support options who are all invested in the co-design of an innovative solution which bridges the gap.

This includes contributing to whole of community, workforce and industry capacity to manage mental health. This model facilitates and strengthens culture, building resilience while simultaneously breaking down stereotypes and stigma.

Pathways Connect will leverage the community-based knowledge to support people back to an improved sense of belonging and purpose.



How is it innovative?



e.i. opportunities to explore and experiment with alternative solutions

Identified in the Greater Whitsunday Council of Mayors Suicide Prevention Taskforce Consultation report were 6 areas of improvement which highlighted significant gaps in the across the mental health care system. These gaps indicate that there is currently no comprehensive solution that addresses all needs, and also, no care model that:

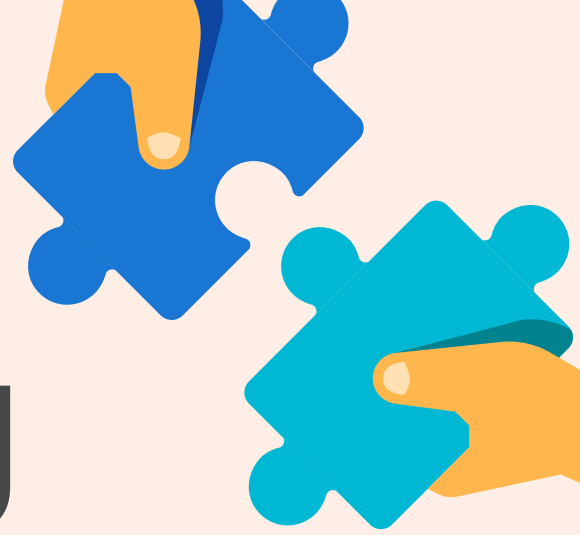
- acts to support all existing services, community-based options, self-help tools, campaigns and initiatives
- creates more access points for support across our footprint
- flexibly meets various personalised needs of each individual
- streamlines navigation processes and cohesive collaboration
- doesn't not require standard referral processes
- breaks down stigma across community and workforces
- enhances community and workforce capacity and capability
- strengthens and supports community and workforce wellbeing

This pilot model addresses various challenges identified during the co-design process, including those raised by regional stakeholders, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQIA+ community and people with lived experience, and reflects a solution which can meet the diverse needs of our region.

Pathways Connect provides a support overlay for service providers who are facing challenges of funding, staff attraction, retention and fatigue and is aligned with global best practice for addressing social issues. After operationalisation, the model will stay consistent with the co-design framework and continue to evolve and adapt innovatively based on the principle of feedback informed.

It is expected that upon completion of a comprehensive evaluation, Pathways Connect can be utilised and extended to other social issues. The technology is also projected to develop, grow and advance to a robust support platform through the support of investment partners.

Peer matching system



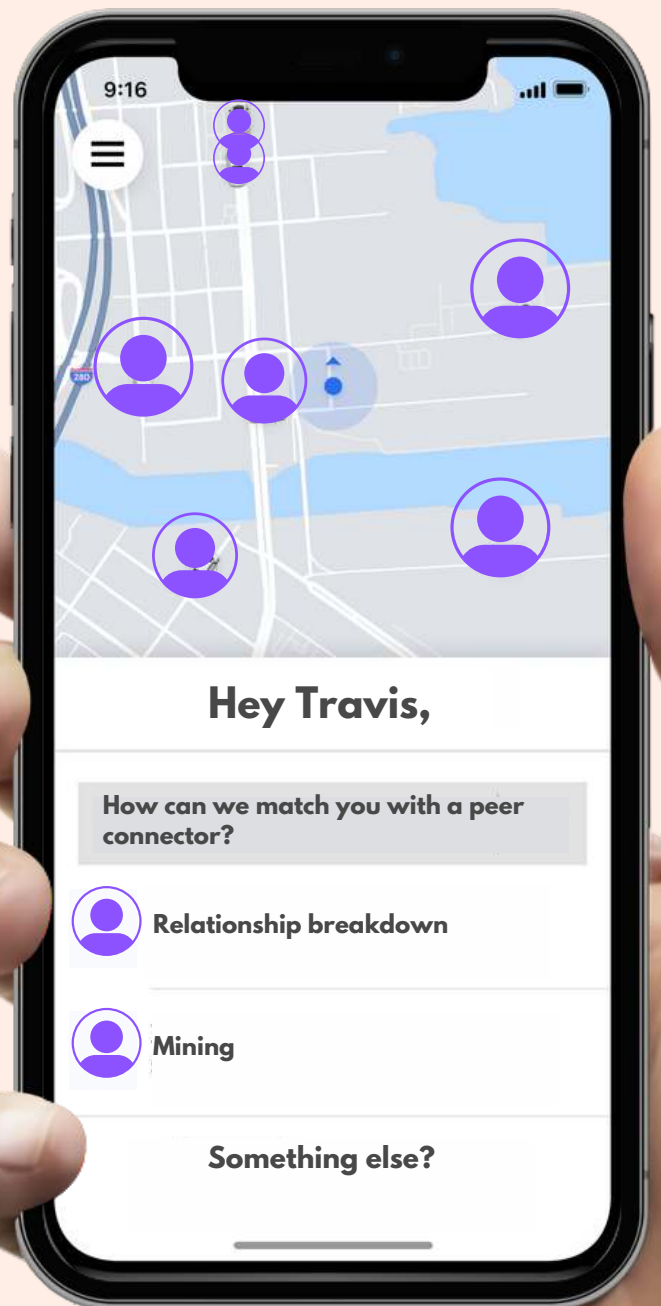
Enabling positive experiences, when it matters most.

The peer-to-peer matching system is based on the assumption of having a wide variety and diverse group of peer connectors all with different experiences, personalities and backgrounds.

The matching system effectively supports a compassionate, positive and familiar experience for people seeking support by creating connections with relatable, like minded people.

Matching is based on personal preferences such as:

- Location
- Gender
- Culture and religion
- Personality
- Personal interests
- Professional experience
- Circumstantial, situational stressors
- Lived experience pertaining to various areas of life including mental health, alcohol/drugs, suicide.



How is it community-based?



Co-design by community, for community.

The delivery of Pathways Connect relies on community champions, leaders, elders and compassionate people who are the glue in their own networks. With the key concerns being navigation and access, utilising community to create access points across the region which don't rely on more traditional support options, offers a solution which strengthens community spirit and capacity to manage the barriers which increase risk of suicide. This way of working also leverages community-based knowledge, which helps assist in navigation of local support options, while building capacity and resilience.

Pathways Connect utilises an 'in-place' approach to support, creating pathways in a familiar, natural environment. Utilising community spaces and accommodating people's preferences within their familiar natural environment can help minimise access barriers and reduce the debilitating anxiety that frequently arises when individuals are required to visit an unfamiliar clinical environment.

The co-design process proved that people who feel a part of their community, have an increased sense of belonging which significantly reduces risk of suicide. Pathways Connect brings all aspects of support together, a wholistic approach that explores community-based support options as well as clinical services.





Peer Connectors

Peer Connector roles are casually paid positions, with the worker trained to provide in-person and/or virtual support, based on the individual's preferred natural and familiar environment, when they need it most and before they fall into crisis. Peer Connectors create trusted access point for individuals, supporting them to find the right support at the right time.

Peer Connectors are responsible for providing quality community-based, early intervention access and navigation of support, in partnership with individuals, families/carers, community, and various other services to create compassionate, positive experiences, enhance quality of life where possible and improve overall health and wellbeing. The role is pivotal in assisting people to participate in their own mental health, wellbeing and recovery through connection, hope and genuine mutuality. The Peer Connector fulfils an important role in reducing the risk of suicide and includes the capability of the worker to share their lived experience of mental health challenges and recovery, to benefit the individual.

Peer Connectors are projected to be located across the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac Region. Working in collaboration with GP's, service providers, clinical mental health services and community-based support options to provide individualised and integrated care, enabling the capacity for people to improve their wellbeing through connection, advocacy, peer support and navigation. They also ensure that the individual experiences continuity of care and builds their capacity to navigate additional assistance and services as needed. However, with travel being a significant barrier for individuals receiving care and support, Peer Connectors may provide transportation where necessary, while still encouraging independency and self-determination.

Peer Champions will complement Pathways Connect and any other existing support services already available within the region.

Peer Champions



This volunteer-based position helps to create a multilayered approach to creating more points of access across the region, particularly targeting support in the workforce.

What does a Peer Champion do and how is it different to a Peer Connector?

Peer Champions are empowered within their networks and community to support others and reach out to ask, "Are you ok?"

Listen and link - the Peer Champion might be the first point of contact within someone's journey to getting the right support. A Peer Champion will listen to a peer's issues and link them with an appropriate Peer Connector an alternative support option or resource.

While maintaining absolute confidentiality and championing Pathways Connect values in action, a Peer Champion helps to ensure people within their networks, workplaces and community are supported to find the right option at the right time.

The Peer Champions are a team of community members from a diverse community areas across the region, including: Various workplaces, sporting clubs, churches, etc.

Peer Champions are:

- Enthusiastic
- Empathetic and Compassionate
- Nurturing
- Interested in the wellbeing themselves and others
- Self-aware of the signs and triggers of stress and wellbeing.

How they are supported by Pathways Connect:

- Peer Champions are provided with appropriate training and ongoing support where required
- Provided with information and tools to support linking peers with appropriate Peer Connectors, resources and services

Peer Champions will complement Pathways Connect and any other existing support services already available within the region.

Training and development



**MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID**



ASIST
Applied Suicide
Intervention Skills Training



safeTALK
Suicide alertness for everyone



**Mental Health
Peer Work**



**Roses in the
Ocean**



**Peer
Support**

recovery, empowerment & development



**Empathy
tools**

Currently, groups and initiatives such as Grapevine Group, Real Mates Talk and others are training community members in various useful programs. The Suicide Prevention Action Planning Group are advocating for all workplaces to have a Mental Health First Aid Officer on site and accessible for all employees, sporting clubs such as the Cutters and running 'Change the Game' initiatives and introducing a 'purple shirt' wellbeing at all events for those players having a rough time. Real Mates Talk are aiming to bring their information about suicide prevention into toolbox talks across various industry workforces.

Regarding training and development, hospitals and health services are implementing peer workforces throughout the country, and organisations like Roses in the Ocean are providing training on how to use personal lived experiences for positive impact.

Pathways Connect acknowledges the value of these programs and certifications in preventing suicide and supports the community by enabling individuals with prior training to serve as Peer Connectors. Additionally, Pathways Connect will seek funding to continue training and developing additional community members to in mental health and wellbeing

Regional Program Coordinators



Supporting the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Region in collaboration, cohesion and leading peer connectors to meaningful and positive outcomes.

Program Coordinators are leaders within the Pathways Connect pilot model. Their role is to facilitate seamless collaboration, promote cohesion across the region, and provide robust leadership to support Peer Connectors in achieving meaningful and positive outcomes.

To ensure that each region has access to quality support within their community, Program Coordinators are located in each local government area. For the Pathways Connect model to achieve agreed-upon outcomes and provide seamless navigation and consistent care, Peer Connectors and Peer Coordinators must understand the scope of practice of regional service providers and facilitate relationships between services.

Program Coordinators are expected to have the following skillset:

- strong leadership and mentoring
- clinical awareness and mental health
- risk management
- supervision and mentoring
- knowledge of and linkages in suicide prevention
- knowledge of the mental health, social and community development sector
- experience in consultation, data analysis and report writing
- effectively working with others to design and manage systems and infrastructure in a complex environment to achieve service delivery and governance outcomes
- High order communication, planning and organisational skills
- Proven ability to build connections, negotiate collaborative agreements and outcomes.
- Proven ability to harness information quickly and recognise and act on opportunities.
- An ability to utilise a range of business software packages that allows effective communication and dissemination of information across the Greater Whitsunday Communities and as required in the project.

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**Greater
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Stronger Together

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