



MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 0600 AEST Thursday 22 July 2021

ASK YOUR MOB, YOUR WAY, R U OK?

R U OK? today launched “**I ask my mob, in my way, are you OK?**”, to support ‘Stronger Together’ a targeted suicide prevention campaign for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The suite of resources for “**I ask my mob, in my way, are you OK?**” includes culturally appropriate content led by community voices with guidance from the R U OK? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group and in collaboration with the Brisbane Indigenous Media Association.

The campaign encourages people to engage and offer support to their family, friends and colleagues who may be struggling with life. The resources feature engaging and authentic stories that promote a sense of connection, hope and identity.

*“The Stronger Together campaign reinforces the power of yarning and **“I ask my mob, in my way, are you OK?”** is about showing the many ways we can ask, listen, encourage, and check in with our mob,”* said Mr Satour. *“The most important thing for mob to remember is that you don’t have to be an expert, you just have to be yourself and ask, in your own way, so you look after your mob.*

“The resources give us the opportunity to get conversations started with individuals, organisations, and communities across Australia,” says Satour. *“The stories released today show there are so many ways we can, and already do, have R U OK? conversations.”*

The resources will help people feel more confident in having an R U OK? conversation and will serve as a platform to the development of additional tools for communities.

“We’ll also be bringing communities together to translate these resources because we know language is central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures,” said Mr Satour. *“Culture is also fundamental for our overall social and emotional wellbeing.”*

Reducing deaths by suicide and suicidal behaviour among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is an issue of major concern for many communities and a public health priority.¹

“These numbers represent our loved ones; relatives, friends, elders and extended community members who are all affected by the tragedy of these deaths,” said Mr Satour.

¹ [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2021](#)



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

Dr Vanessa Lee-Ah Mat (BTD, MPH, PhD) is the Chair of the R U, OK? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, who provide professional counsel and voices of lived experience to guide the campaign.

“Nationally, Indigenous people die from suicide at twice the rate of non-Indigenous people. We know that starting conversations early can stop little problems growing into big ones. We need our mob to ask the question, their way.” says Dr Lee-Ah Mat.

“When we launched Stronger Together in 2019 it got conversations started. These new stories from our community will help to keep the conversation going,” said Dr Lee. *“Together we can empower our friends, family members, and the wider community to look out for each other as well as provide guidance on what to do if someone answers ‘no, I’m not OK’.”*

Video resources showcase the many ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ask, “are you OK?”. The focus is on individuals talking about their life experience to encourage more conversations to support those who might be doing it tough.

Kevin Yow Yeh is a Wakka Wakka and South Sea Islander man who has lent his voice to **“I ask my mob, in my way, are you OK?”**. After growing up on Butchulla Country, Kevin has been living in Meanjin for the past 16 years.

“When I know a friend or a family member is going through some hard time, I reach out by saying, “You right or what?” That allows them to answer yes or no, but also open about what’s going on in their life,” says Mr Yow Yeh.

“I often like to text or call and for my inner circle of friends, who I feel comfortable with and who feel comfortable with me, I like to reach out face to face.”

The FREE Stronger Together community resources are available on the R U OK? website: ruok.org.au/strongertogether

If you or someone you know needs support, go to: ruok.org.au/findhelp

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Full media kit available at: <https://www.ruok.org.au/media-kit> **Password:** RUOKmedia

For further information and interview requests please contact:

- Marguerite Barbara, p: 0417 692 832 e: media@margueritebarbarapr.com



Available for interview:

- **Steve Satour**
 - Steven Satour is a Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Pertame man from Central Australia.
 - Steven holds over 15 years' experience in marketing, event, and project management with extensive experience working within the education, not-for-profit, tourism, employment, and small business sectors. He has an accomplished track record in working with Indigenous artists and groups to achieve results that positively impact First Australians' social and economic welfare. Steven believes that by celebrating and embracing Indigenous cultures, we bring all Australians together.
 - Steven has previously co-chaired the City of Sydney Aboriginal Advisory Committee and is proud to be on the National NAIDOC Committee and non-executive director Sydney World Pride.
 - Steven is currently the Stronger Together Campaign Manager at R U OK?

- **Dr Vanessa Lee-Ah Mat (BTD, MPH, PhD)**
Previously known as Dr Vanessa Lee
 - Dr Vanessa Lee-Ah Mat is from the Yupungathi and Meriam people in Cape York and the Torres Strait.
 - Is a senior researcher in social epidemiology within the Faculty of Medicine and Health, at the University of Sydney, published poet and social activist.
 - Dr Lee-Ah Mat was the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vice President of the National Public Health Association of Australia contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and social justice issues in public health policy.
 - In her capacity as a director for Suicide Prevention Australia, Dr Lee-Ah Mat is engaged in national and international policy development and evaluation.
 - As the previous chair of the Public Health Indigenous Leadership Education Network, Dr Lee-Ah Mat was pivotal in leading change in the Master of Public Health Curricula to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (cultural) content to reduce racism and discrimination in health service delivery.
 - Dr Lee-Ah Mat is the co-chair for ILGA Oceania region where she leads to achieve human rights and social change for LGBTQIA+ people across 12 countries in the Pacific.
 - Dr Lee-Ah Mat is a founding member of the Indigenous Data Sovereignty Network, 'Maiam Nayri Wingara' whose intent is to engage in Indigenous Data Sovereignty and to advocate for rights (informed by UNDRIP) using data to inform development.

- **Kevin Yow Yeh**
 - Kevin Yow Yeh has been living in Meanjin for the past 16 years after growing up on Butchulla Country.



- Kevin is a qualified Social Worker and has recently managed a bail and order program, supporting young people with their Youth Justice orders.
- Kevin is now at the Queensland University of Technology, researching how to best provide support to First Nations peoples experiencing racism.
- In addition to research, Kevin also teaches Indigenous knowledge across a variety of health disciplines.

About R U OK?

- R U OK? is a harm prevention charity that aims to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with friends, family and colleagues who might be struggling with life.
- R U OK?Day is an annual national day of action; held on the second Thursday of September (9 September 2021) and a reminder that every day is a day to start a conversation.
- R U OK?Day was founded in 2009 by adman Gavin Larkin who tragically lost his father to suicide in 1995. Larkin (who died of Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2011) wanted to spare other families the grief his family endured.
- A spark of an idea has since become a national movement aimed at encouraging everyone to genuinely ask the question and have a meaningful conversation with anyone in their world who might be struggling.
- Conversation tips and crisis support contacts can be found at www.ruok.org.au