

2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT



FOSTERING RESILIENCE, HOPE
& CONNECTIONS TO REDUCE
THE RISK OF SUICIDE

irisfoundation.org.au

Executive Summary




Iris Foundation

Our vision is to prevent suicide.

Our core framework embodies the protective pillars of Resilience, Hope & Connections.

Our focus is on the power of prevention strategies that help people handle stress better, react less intensely to life's ups and downs, and provide them with tools and insights to harness their own personal strengths.

Our activities include resilience-based training, programs and workshops, specialised projects and partnerships that strengthen social connection and provide community engagement and support.



*Iris Foundation is dedicated to enhancing every
person's ability to survive and thrive.*

Chairman's Message

As I look back over the past year, I am very proud to report that Iris Foundation has continued to grow in expertise and reach, as it leads the way as a community-based suicide prevention organisation in NSW.

On behalf of the Board, we are pleased to commend this Annual Report to you. This annual report shows that Iris Foundation is living its purpose of strengthening our community and mitigating problems before they escalate, as a primary prevention of suicide strategy.

I want to thank each and every Board member, our amazing staff, ably led by Sue Liptrott, and our generous supporters. Together with you, I know that Iris Foundation will continue to demonstrate the power of hope, connection and resilience to reduce the risk of suicide in our community.

Thank you
Andrew Tuck
Chair, Iris Foundation

OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

Iris Foundation's volunteers are an integral part of the organisation. They have especially allowed us to continue with Iris Foundation's major events, such as Raw Challenge and the Boutique Sista program.

We're truly grateful to our 15 loyal regular volunteers that make our activities and programs a reality. THANK YOU!!!!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Andrew Tuck – Chair
- Carolyn Richardson – Treasurer
- Tarnia Gurney – Secretary
- Dawn Hooper – Co-Founder
- Jean Russell – Director
- Leesa O'Keefe – Director
- Liz Mackdacy – Director
- Ron Thomsen – Director

STAFF

- Sue Liptrott – Executive Officer
- Sharyn Becker – Community Engagement Officer
- Nikki Szabo – Research, Program and Training Manager
- Ali Terry - Facilitator
- Ness Allan - Facilitator
- Deb Peake - Facilitator
- Natalie Smith - Facilitator

The Importance of a Proactive Approach

Our work is focused in the area of primary prevention of suicide, mitigating problems before they escalate. Taking action early can help prevent mental illness and suicidal thoughts before they ever occur.

Prioritising prevention over reaction, we deliver programs, provide training and forge partnerships that address the root causes of suicidal ideation and behaviour, striving to build a resilient community in which people are better equipped to face life's challenges.

FACT: It is estimated that 1 in 7 Australian children experience mental illness and approximately 50% of all serious mental distress begins around the age of 14.

This statistic alone makes clear the need to address issues early, not wait for symptoms and problems to arise in early adulthood. Preadolescence is a vital stage for children in the formation of identity, values, ideas on how to view the world around them and attitudes towards other people and themselves. Accordingly, we give particular focus to supporting children 9-12 years of age.

Suicide Statistics

- Suicide was the leading cause of death among people aged 15–44 in 2021 (ABS 2022).
- For each death by suicide, research studies estimate that up to 135 other persons are adversely affected through the grief, loss and trauma that these sudden and tragic deaths invoke (Cerel et al, 2019).
- 1 in 2 young people are impacted by suicide by the time they turn 25. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows that around 9 lives are lost per day to suicide (statistics are based on 2020 data which was released by the ABS on 29 September 2021).
- Every year it is estimated that over 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt – this translates to more than 180 every day. (Slade et al, 2009)

The experience of suicide and its impacts are felt by many people in many ways and we acknowledge everyone who has been impacted by suicide.

Iris Foundation Activities

2023 Snapshot

RESILIENCE PROGRAMS IN SCHOOL

Term 4 - **120** students

Term 1 - **48** students

Term 2 - **100** students

Term 3 - **60** students

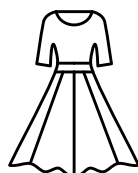
13 schools

232 hours face-to-face learning

Suburbs - Ettalong, Kanwal, Wyoming, Kariong, Narara, Northlakes, Tuggerawong, Wyong, Erina, Berkeley Vale, The Entrance, Wyee, Lake Munmorah.

BECAUSE WE CARE BOUTIQUE

150+ styling sessions



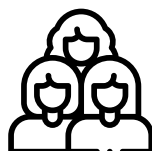
Supporting Women's Justice Network, job search agencies, Legal Aid, Catholic Care, Benevolent Society, Orange Sky Laundry, Uniting, Whole Warrior Solutions and others.

COMMUNITY & BUSINESS WOMEN'S NETWORK

15 events

892 attendees

570+ membership



Supporting International Women's Day, Women in Business workshops, NSW Women's Health Week and Small Business Month.

RESILIENCE FIRST AID

3 certified trainers

3 certified coaches

128 Resilience First Aid responders certified



Training individuals, community organisations and businesses on the Central Coast and online from Coffs Harbour to South West Sydney.

Resilience Programs, Workshops and Training

Cool Connections in School

9-12 years of age



Cool Connections is an 8 week wellbeing program for students in Years 5 and 6 that helps participants develop their personal strengths and better manage their mental health. It has been rigorously assessed and accredited by Suicide Prevention Australia.

The Cool Connections program has given some of our most vulnerable students strategies and tools to self-regulate, problem solve and set goals for their own achievement.. Most importantly, the facilitators have given our students the confidence to do this through establishing a safe environment for the students to learn grow and share within.

Lake Munmorah PS 2022

Connections 2x2 Workshop

9-14 years of age



The 2x2 Workshops explore and teach students a range of strategies that can be applied in moments of hardship and normalise emotions that can be difficult at a young age. 2 sessions of 2 hours duration held over consecutive weeks. The workshops include an engaging mix of creative projects and group discussion.

This is a truly special program and worth its weight in gold.

Anika O'Brien, Wyee Public School

Y Connections

12-14 years of age



Developed for young people in years 7 and 8 and is designed to build self-esteem and resilience through a range of creative, hands-on activities and workshop content that introduces essential life management skills.

Students learnt new ways to manage anxiety, stress and other emotions.

100% students responded yes

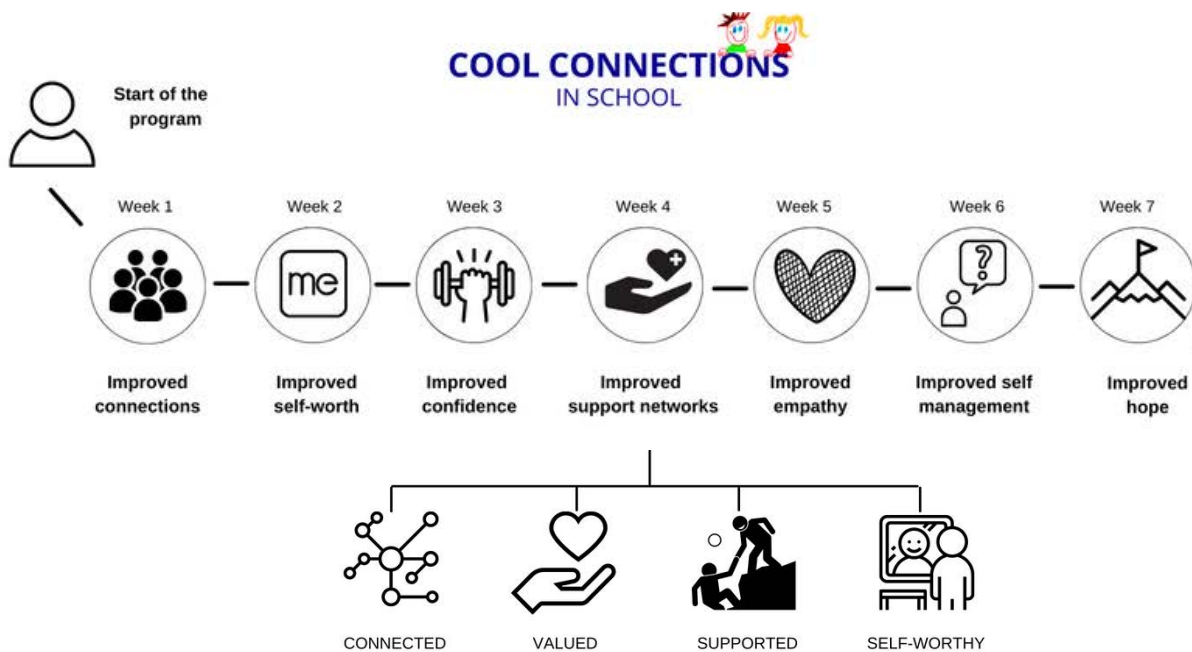
Students felt more confident in their ability to cope when they are feeling anxious or stressed.

100% students responded yes

Students are more confident to discuss negative thoughts and access support.

100% students responded yes

Resilience Programs, Workshops and Training



From the Students

What does Cool Connections mean to you?
Comments: means making me feel proud and happy about myself

Anything else?
Well I would really really love to do it next term as its helped me lots. Also the Cool connection teachers are really kind and caring.

What is something that you have learnt that you will take with you after the program and share with others?
Comments: that kindness matters the most

Anything else?
thank you

What is something that you have learnt that you will take with you after the program and share with others?
Comments: everything is going to be okay

What is something that you have learnt that you will take with you after the program and share with others?
Comments: how to be a better friend

What is something that you have learnt that you will take with you after the program and share with others?
Comments: To tell someone if you are worried



In the past 5 years Iris Foundation has delivered

- **84** Cool Connections in School programs
- **45** Connections 2x2 Workshops
- to over **2000** students

2022 - 2023 Milestones



September 2022

Accreditation

Resilience First Aid awarded full accreditation against the Suicide Prevention Australia Standards, first edition.



June 2023

Social Impact Grant

ASVB Grant awarded to measure and articulate the social and economic value of our Cool Connections in School program.

ASVB - Social Impact study showed a net benefit to the community of \$1898 per participant.



July 2022

Approved for Funding - SWSPHN

Mental Health Recovery Grant

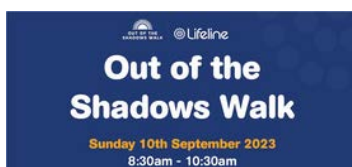
Resilience First Aid supported by funding from the Australian Government through South Western Sydney PHN.



June 2023

Newly released training - RFAST

Resilience First Aid Starter Training - 2 hour workshop delivered face-to-face or online.



September 2023

World Suicide Prevention Day 10th September

Inaugural Out of the Shadows Walk at The Entrance. Coordinated by Lifeline Central Coast in partnership with Iris Foundation's Tree of Dreams campaign.

Resilience Programs, Workshops and Training

RFA - Resilience First Aid

2 day mental health certification delivered face-to-face or online. RFA is a high-impact course that teaches strength-based skills to support resilience in others alongside the latest neuroscience of preventative mental health.



RFAST - Resilience First Aid Starter Training *(Newly released June 2023).*

2 hour workshop delivered face-to-face or online.

RFAST offers valuable insights and tools to:

- Understand mental health management strategies
- Gain awareness of psychosocial hazards and their impacts
- Appreciate the value of supporting resilience in others
- Recognise when someone needs resilience support
- Identify strengths and create a resilience action plan



Mental Health First Aid

2 day mental health certification delivered face-to-face. MHFA teaches how to provide initial support to adults who are developing a mental illness or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Connected Resilience



Self-Assessment

The PR6 Resilience Assessment is a 3-minute online questionnaire that measures relative strengths across the six domains of resilience.



Driven Resilience App

Mental health coaching, resilience training and neuroscience learning all in one convenient app.



Only 1 in 10 people have resilience that's strong enough to protect against mental illness.
(National Resilience Index 2022)

Our Specialised Projects

Because We Care Boutique

Because We Care Boutique is a referral-only service supporting any woman overcoming adversity.

The Boutique is run by dedicated stylist volunteers assisting women with suitable attire for requirements such as:
Re-entering the Workforce -
Homelessness - Work Experience -
Court Appearances - Important Appointments



Community & Business Women's Network

CBWN is built upon the idea that bringing women together creates opportunities for growth, resilience and inspiration at business, community and personal levels.

Through a mix of networking events, business showcases and professional development opportunities, CBWN has expanded rapidly and is open to all women who want to network, make friends, learn, share ideas and support local business.



Tree of Dreams

Tree of Dreams is an annual campaign to raise awareness of suicide prevention. The project works towards heightening awareness of the impact of suicide, and increasing conversations about preventing suicide.



World Suicide Prevention Day
10th September
Inaugural Out of the Shadows Walk



Supporting Local Initiatives

Iris Foundation supports many promising and relevant local grassroots initiatives that align with our mission and values through the collaborative relationship of auspicings.

Debbie Gaunt Foundation



Dedicated to funding works that aim to illuminate and better understand the mental health impacts of perimenopause.

Men Care Too



A support organisation for men in unpaid, informal caring roles. Connecting isolated men through regular BBQs, walking groups and online connections.

UrVoice Australia



Speak Out @ School is an all-in-one student welfare system for use for parents, students, teachers, and the school wellbeing team. Giving students tools to speak out.

BECAUSE WE CARE BOUTIQUE

The Boutique offers a safe and supportive space where women can find one-on-one attention and respect. Our focus is on the whole person and we understand that overcoming adversity requires more than just a new outfit. A Boutique experience may also include attending small group workshops that support clients to feel prepared, confident and in control. Our aim is to give women some space to breathe and that, in turn, creates positive ripple effects in families, businesses and the broader community.



Volunteer stylists have assisted over 150 women of all ages with suitable attire and accessories for important interviews and meetings. This year we were blessed with 17 magic makers: Hilary, June, Vicki, Kathy, Christine, Sue, Suzanne, Paula, Amanda, Christopher, Kim, Sarah-Kate, Vickie, Terese, Peter, Robin and Lynne.

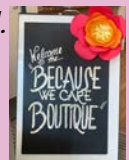
We are so very grateful!



Referrals have been received from many local organisations such as:

Supporting Women's Justice Network, job search agencies, Berkeley Vale Neighbourhood Centre, Legal Aid, Nurtured Village, Catholic Care, Benevolent Society, Orange Sky Laundry, Faith In Action Ministries, Uniting, Whole Warrior Solutions, Hope Family Cottage, CCGT, Happiness Habits, Health NSW, Father Riley Youth Off The Streets.

*"I have never felt so important, this was the most amazing experience I have ever had.
Amanda was so warm and kind and she made me feel a million dollars.
I am so appreciative for all that you have done for me today "
Thank you :) xox Aimee September 2023*



The support we give these women is only made possible by the donations we receive, the generosity of our community and the amazing people that give their time - creating pathways of support, growth and connections.



We welcome Vibrant Concepts, Sam and Jordi, as new Boutique Ambassadors



Weekly Coffee & Connect morning teas sponsored by Stone Real Estate, Wyong Rugby League Club Group and Nestle help to keep community connections and support the Boutique.

Our CBWN members have been very supportive hosting fundraiser events including luncheons, high tea, birthday thrift night, dinners, events, workshops, movie nights and many more.

Because We Care Community Collaboration and Support

BWCB relies heavily on donations from the community. We thank all those who contribute quality clothing and accessories to our Boutique to ensure that these women leave feeling supported and confident and proud in how they look.



Boutique Sistas - and Boutique Blokes

We have many supporters who choose to support financially through the Boutique Sista Sponsor program. Each sponsorship gifts a woman less fortunate in our community, a personalised styling session with a complete outfit. This support helps these women achieve the best possible outcomes for their growth to financial independence.



Community Collaboration

Case Highlight - Novaskill - Xcelr8 for Girls Programs - Year 11 students from across the Coast. Novaskill engaged BWCB to provide a one day session on practical tips for dressing professionally along with activities aimed to foster self-discovery and self-worth. A pop up Boutique was brought to the day for hands on styling for each participant, with appropriate attire for interviews. This industry Pathways Project provided students with the tools & skills to progress across 8 different industry pathways.

Pictured is



COMMUNITY & BUSINESS WOMEN'S NETWORK

Community and Business Women's Network (CBWN) was founded in 2018 with a straightforward purpose – to connect women on the Central Coast. The greatest indicator that CBWN is growing and effective is the ever consistent growth of our members.



575th
CBWN member
welcomed
in September
2023

15 events held in 2023

892 attendees. Includes participation in:

- International Women's Day
- NSW Government Small business Month
- NSW Women's Health Week



"The fact that you may begin the meeting as strangers but you end up having a whole range of other friends. If you want to meet and engage with people who have a passion for their community, a passion for their vision, then you should come here."
- Fran Cummings

500th CBWN
Member



Sharyn Becker, our amazing creator and co-ordinator of CBWN and Because We Care Boutique.

Sharyn is well recognised as a passionate supporter of our community and not only brings her wealth of experience to these projects, but also her joy and love for helping others. Thank you for all you do.

Major Events and Fundraisers

Wyong Race Club Ladies Day

Another great Ladies Race Day at Wyong Race Club with the sun shining. We are well looked after and thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and all who attended, raised over \$9,000.



Raw Challenge Fundraiser

Once again our wonderful volunteers were there to support the Raw Challenge bi-annual event. This has become a mainstay on our fundraising calendar and is a great support to our ongoing operations. We provide 35 volunteers on the day and are so grateful for the fun they bring to the day and their unwavering support.



Bling It Up Gala Dinner

Our Inaugural "Bling It Up" Gala Charity Dinner was held on Saturday February 25th at Ettalong Diggers and raised over \$11,500 for the Because We Care Boutique. An amazing result from a very generous crowd, a lot of fun, and we will be back again next year.



Christmas in July



A fabulous Christmas in July event held at Ettalong Bowling Club, raised over \$5000 for the Because We Care Boutique. Kindly hosted by volunteer Vicki de Carle. Although it was a cold winter's night, there was so much community warmth in the room and great christmas cheer.



THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING SUPPORTERS

IRIS FOUNDATION

Corporate Supporters

Wideline

WebAdjusted

ODA Advisory

Major Supporters

Fortunity

Sharp DS Central Coast

Star FM

BBX

Your Guide Central Coast

Wyong Community Bank

- branch of Bendigo Bank

Essence Images

Event Cinemas Tuggerah

Wyong Race Club

Major Connections

Program / Workshop Funders

Doyalson-Wyee RSL Club

Wyong Rugby League Club

Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery

Initiative - Regional NSW Grant

South West Sydney PHN

Commonwealth Bank Flood Grant

Iris Foundation Ambassadors

\$1,000+

Values Connection

Northlakes Toukley Rotary

Peachies Hair Studio Budgewoi

Erina Ice Arena

BECAUSE WE CARE BOUTIQUE

Major Supporter

Stone Real Estate Berkeley Vale

Thrive Broking

Refreshing Pool Services

Your Guide Central Coast

Emma McBride MP

David Meehan MP

Boutique Ambassadors

Vibrant Concepts -Sam & Jordi

\$1,000+

Mingara Recreation Club

Ourimbah RSL

Bateau Bay Bowling Club

Ettalong Diggers

Ettalong Bowling Club

Wyong Rugby League Club Group

East Gosford Centennial Lions Club

Terrigal Lions Club

Missy Fundraiser

Sea Gypsy Adventures

Bilson Law

Westfield Tuggerah