

**ROSES IN THE OCEAN LIVED EXPERIENCE INAUGURAL SUMMIT
BRISBANE 21-22 AUGUST 2018 AND BEYOND**



This document forms a very brief summary from those who were variously funded to attend the Conference, having undergone training through Roses in the Ocean and Coordinaire preceding the event. First and foremost, we wish to thank Roses, Black Dog and Coordinaire for their support in making this happen for us. Below are dot-point issues we took away from our experience and is by no means exhaustive. The talking points were largely put together based on comments made during and after the Summit by the 'Gang of Four' who attended. Issues are arranged in no particular order but rather serve to document the event in a global sense. Some discussion is included that is forward looking as well.

Talking points for report on Roses in the Ocean LE Summit:

1. Illawarra Shoalhaven is doing a great job!

We are the only LifeSpan site that has LE representation embedded in all aspects of the project, including the working parties.

We are one of the only PHNs with a Peer Coordinator

It is widely acknowledged that a key point of difference in our region is having an exceptional Peer Co-ordinator in Tim Heffernan.

2. Not all LE is created equal

It's apparent in working collaboratively with other LE people that there's a tendency for bereaved participants to dominate discussion and not seek the wisdom of people with direct LE. This is a challenge we need to confront in order to develop a more effective LE workforce.

This raises a related issue: It was clear from the pool of LE participants that we need to do more to engage people with direct LE whose voices are less likely to be heard because of their ongoing mental health struggles and lack of social connection.

3. The contested relationship between the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention spaces

This was a key hot topic - many people had very invested views.

There are a number of relevant issues here, including:

the potential problems in the development of a professional LE Suicide Prevention Peer workforce completely divorced from the Mental Health Peer workforce;

the potential problems of people bereaved by suicide becoming part of an LE workforce, particularly as this relates to working with people whose suicidal 'crisis' is bound up with mental health issues

4. The development of a professional LE Suicide Prevention workforce

This was considered the most important first step, alongside creating a national LE association

There was overwhelming support for establishing a Certificate IV in Suicide Prevention Peer Work, but a low level of awareness of the fact that there was already a Cert IV in Mental Health Peer Work and an already established LE workforce.

5. Acting now

There was a sense that the LE participants thought the primary focus going forward should be on professionalising the LE workforce and less on what action we can take now by drawing on our LE at the local level.

Carrie and Lane from Roses in the Ocean had a chat about trialling a project in Wollongong that she'd like to share with the group.

6. Full circle

Though many workshops were held in areas such as artificial intelligence for technology platforms, etc, the take home message really ended where we began, consistent with our experiences with the main agencies involved and that was that our stories belong to us and it is our choice where to place boundaries on what we do and don't feel needs to be disclosed depending on the context.

7. The future

Having now received considerable training from the agencies involved we respectfully ask where to next? We can either leave all this as a personal experience or do something more constructive with the considerable investment in the 'Group of Four'. Moving forward we respectfully seek consideration for a seeding grant to be able to provide a community-based service to the many affected by suicidality and self-harm, from peers to peers, to further refine points of difference in the field of lived experience based on our collective and various experiences in the field and in the literature so as to arrive at a program that will build on the work of Coordinaire once funding ends for the program so that all this investment is paid forward to an ongoing effort to provide a unique service to residents of the Illawarra. Perhaps this will be best achieved under the supervision of an agency such as the PHN or similar health focused agency so as to provide, supervise and support ongoing mentoring, resources and innovation.

8. Finally we again wish to thank staff of Roses in the Ocean, Black Dog and Coordinaire. This engagement has led to the development of four people who can apply their lived experience and learnings in a meaningful and discernable way and that has to be a good thing. Though there are merely four of us we hold vast professional and personal capacity to achieve lasting public good in this area. We especially would like to extend our appreciation to Tim Heffernan for his specific input to ensure our voices and needs have been heard and attended to.

Sincerely

Anne, Bruce, Carrie and Mark

