



Lifeline Media Kit

2008

Connect with someone who cares

Lifeline in Brief

For 45 years Lifeline has provided access to mental health support services that connect people with care. Lifeline delivers a range of national services that promote emotional wellbeing, encourage help seeking, and address suicide prevention and awareness.

Lifeline's 24 hour telephone counselling service – 13 11 14 – was launched by the late Rev. Dr. Sir Alan Walker in 1963, and today continues to operate nationally and provide emotional support to anyone in their time of need.

Lifeline also offers access to a range of programs specific to the needs of local communities. These programs are delivered by a network of Lifeline Centres operating from more than 60 locations Australia wide, with a presence in every state and territory.

Each year Lifeline receives over one million contacts from people connecting to care and support by phone, web or face-to-face. The Lifeline 24 hour telephone counselling line continues to answer over 1200 calls every day. Lifeline's services overcome time and distance by providing care at any time day or night, across both rural and metropolitan Australia.

Lifeline is also committed to suicide prevention and encouraging help seeking behaviours. Services that support suicide safe communities include LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention and Skills Training (ASIST), suicide bereavement support programs, and campaigns run in collaboration with corporate partners, which create awareness about suicide and encourage those at risk to seek help.

Other national services include the Lifeline Information Service, which develops and distributes a range of self-help resources and mental health information, and the Lifeline Service Finder – an online searchable database of mental health services.

This work is all made possible by the 11,000 dedicated volunteers who donate their time and skills to support others. Around half of these volunteers work as trained telephone counsellors, while the others assist with the fundraising, retail and administrative activities that keep Lifeline sustainable.

The generosity of individuals, groups and organisations that support Lifeline make this essential and life saving work possible. Lifeline relies on community support to help fund vital services and to ensure that it can continue connecting people with care into the future.

Lifeline's Living History

Lifeline was founded in 1963 by the late Reverend Dr. Sir Alan Walker after a call from a distressed man who three days later took his own life. Determined not to let loneliness, isolation or anxiety be the cause of other deaths, Sir Alan launched a crisis line which initially operated out of the Methodist Central Mission in Sydney.

Lifeline Sydney was two years in planning and preparation, with 150 people attending a nine month training course to work at the Centre. A century old, dilapidated building owned by the Mission, on the fringes of downtown Sydney was renovated for the purposes of this new support centre. A staff of fulltime employees was appointed to direct the work of the 'telephone counsellors'. The Director General of Post and Telephone Services authorized that this counselling service should be listed on the Emergency Page of the Telephone Directory and the phones were installed.

March 1963 saw the opening of the first official Lifeline Centre. The initiative was well received with over 100 calls for help being answered in the first day. The first call came one minute after the lines were opened and the phones have never stopped ringing.

In 1994 Lifeline transitioned the 24 hour telephone counselling line to a single national priority 13 number (13 11 14). In 2007 Lifeline introduced national call flow to the 14 hour telephone counselling service. This allowed Lifeline to begin flowing calls nationally over a wide area network, to be answered by the next available telephone counsellor anywhere in the country.

Lifeline continues to investigate new mediums for the delivery of accessible support services to those in need.

Lifeline has also established an international presence through its affiliation with LifeLine International, which has Centres in 19 countries. Lifeline is also a member of Volunteer Emotional Support Helplines (VESH) network, which provides services in 61 countries around the world.

Lifeline's Locations



Lifeline Centre List

ACT

Lifeline Canberra

NSW

Broken Hill
Central Coast (NSW)
Central West
Harbour to Hawkesbury
Macarthur
Mid Coast (NSW)
Mountains to Murray
Newcastle & Hunter
North Coast (NSW)
Northern Beaches
Northern Rivers
North West (NSW)
South Coast (NSW)
Sydney & Sutherland

Western Sydney

NT

Central Australia
Top End

QLD

Brisbane
Cairns Region
Central Queensland
Coral Coast Capricorn
Darling Downs and South West Queensland
Fraser District
Gold Coast
Greater Sunshine Coast Region
Ipswich & West Moreton
Mackay-Whitsunday
North Queensland

SA

Adelaide
Country to Coast

TAS

Hobart
North West Tasmania

VIC

Ballarat
Central Victoria & Mallee
Geelong Barwon Region
Gippsland Inc
Melbourne
South Western Victoria

WA

Western Australia

National & State Offices

Lifeline Australia
Lifeline Community Care Queensland
Lifeline NSW

Lifeline Fast Facts

- Lifeline receives over one million contacts each year from help-seekers, via mediums such as telephone, web and face-to-face.
- Lifeline's 24 hour telephone counselling line offers a confidential, non-judgemental service offered by trained telephone counsellors.
- Somewhere in Australia there is a new call to Lifeline every minute
- People who call Lifeline's 24 hour telephone counselling line call for a range of reasons including (but not limited to; family and relationship concerns, mental health issues, suicide prevention support, matters relating to abuse and violence, support and information about drug and alcohol use and loneliness. Lifeline receives more than 30 calls a day from people at high risk of suicide.
- Lifeline is involved in all aspects of suicide prevention across a spectrum of care including early intervention, continuing care and postvention bereavement support.
- Lifeline access to a range of services such as suicide prevention support, self help resources and mental health information, as well as a variety of programs specific to the needs of local communities.
- Lifeline relies on funding from the community through donations, fundraising and corporate partnerships.
- Approx 80% of Centre operating costs are funded by revenue raised from Lifeline's retail, book fairs and fundraising activities.
- Lifeline receives some government funding at both the national and state level, which goes towards specific programs and services.
- Lifeline has over 260 retail outlets around the country which sell a variety of clothes, furniture and bric-a-brac. Some Lifeline Centres have a number of stores but not all Lifeline Centres have retail outlets.
- Lifeline operates a free call donation line 1800 800 768, however people can donate securely via the national website www.lifeline.org.au
- Lifeline is always in need of volunteers to work as telephone counsellors, in retail operations or to assist with fundraising efforts.
- Lifeline has over 11,000 dedicated volunteers who donate their time and skills to the organisation and to assist others. Around half of these volunteers work as Volunteer Telephone Counsellors.
- Lifeline has introduced a new National fundraising campaign in 2008 – Stress Down on 24/7. The campaign culminates on 27 July and encourages Australians to participate in stress reducing activities in return for a financial donation to Lifeline: www.stressdown.org.au

Current Services:

National Services and Services run by Lifeline Australia:

Lifeline 24 Hour Telephone Counselling – 13 11 14

Lifeline Information Service – Your mental health and self help resource

Applied Suicide Intervention and Skills Training (LivingWorks)

Lifeline Centres provide a range of mental health support services to their local community.

Some of the services offered by Lifeline Centres include:

- Face-to-face counselling
- Financial counselling
- Gambling counselling
- Mental health support services
- Suicide prevention and bereavement services
- Youth services
- Disability services
- Welfare programs
- Rural outreach
- Migrant support services
- Family and mediation services
- Counselling services for children
- School based education programs
- Information education and support groups
- Aged care visitation; and
- Indigenous support services

For more information about Lifeline's service – visit the Lifeline national website at

www.lifeline.org.au

Staff Profiles

Dawn O'Neil



CEO Lifeline Australia

Dawn O'Neil has been the CEO of Lifeline Australia since 2000, and has led the organisation during a period of major governance and service reform.

Dawn combines high-level management, training and counselling qualifications with a passion for suicide prevention and the promotion of emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

Under Dawn's leadership, Lifeline Australia has significantly increased its resources and capacity enabling it to enter into new areas of community service, including the provision of mental health information, bereavement counselling, suicide prevention and family violence elimination programs.

Lifeline is now a vital part of Australia's web of public and not-for-profit health and welfare bodies, and, according to Newspoll, is one of Australia's most recognised and trusted volunteer service organisations.

Whilst modernizing and growing, Lifeline has remained true to its original conception as extraordinary social phenomenon driven by the belief that every life is worth saving.

Dawn O'Neil is also the Deputy Chair of the Mental Health Council of Australia, a board member of the Commonwealth-appointed National Advisor Council for Suicide Prevention, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and was voted as a finalist of the Equity Trust CEO of the Year awards in 2005 and 2006. Dawn was also recently appointed a member of the National Advisory Council on Mental Health, formed in June 2008.

Tony Eviston



Board Chair Lifeline Australia

Tony joined the Board of Lifeline Australia in January 2001. Before becoming a board member of Lifeline Australia Tony had spent 14 years at a small regional lifeline centre

He has been a Board Member of Lifeline Australia seven years, spending four of those years as Vice President before becoming Board Chair. Tony was a Board Member at Lifeline Central West for over 10 years in addition to being a Board Member at ERAC Inc following a period of administration.

He brings a great deal of practical knowledge and experience to Lifeline. This includes 10 years of retail management experience and 14 years as financial institutional management with the Catholic Development Fund, where he is currently manager.

Dedicating his life to helping people, Tony's repertoire includes working with a long list of not-for-profit institutes including the Josephite Foundation, No Interest Loan Scheme, Bathurst Justice Group, Pax Christi Australia, Bathurst World AIDS Day committee and performing Community building activities in Central NSW. In addition to this he is Manager for the Catholic Development Fund Diocese of Bathurst, a position he has held for 17 years.

With a thorough understanding of not-for-profit organisations and their management and governance Tony continues to show dedication and competence in his role as Lifeline Board Chair.

Media Enquiries

Anyone interested in making a media enquiry should contact:

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