

New edition of pioneering mental-health bible released



Judith Lovegrove with the latest edition of *Working Together*.



Lorelle Burton.



Professor Pat Dudgeon

We have just completed the 10th anniversary of celebrating *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice* (2nd edition). It has been referred to as the 'bible' in Indigenous mental health and wellbeing.

The 2014 second edition print of 50,000 copies sold quickly, as did the 50,000 printed for the first edition, and it has now been downloaded close to 20,000 times. Here are some comments from people who have used the book.

"This resource has played an integral role in shaping the landscape of the mental-health workforce, providing essential knowledge and skills with principles and practice guidelines for practitioners, researchers, academics, and mainstream organisations," Judith Lovegrove, social and emotional wellbeing trainer, mental health advocate, clinician and professional supervisor, said.

"This seminal work has had a profound impact on psychology higher education and signifies how we can work collaboratively to ensure culturally safe practice in our profession. It has had such a deep and meaningful contribution to the literature," Lorelle Burton, associate

provost, University of Southern Queensland, said.

In 2014, Professor Helen Milroy and Professor Roz Walker and I worked closely co-editing and writing chapters for the second edition of *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice*.

It was and remains a pioneering text in the field of Indigenous mental health and wellbeing. Originally created as a resource for Aboriginal health workers, allied health professionals, counsellors and clinic staff in Indigenous health and mental health services, it has now very much entered the mainstream. It is used as a teaching resource by staff and students in universities and across all sectors of the health system. The book presents comprehensive information on the history of Indigenous mental health in Australia, issues and influences affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' social and emotional wellbeing, and models of healing, including a variety of Indigenous knowledges.

We did not expect the impact that the book would have. It's been central in decolonising the discourse on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing in Australia and continues to inform policy and practice across many sectors.

Our key aims were to increase the knowledge and skills of the mental health workforce to provide more effective and culturally competent care for Aboriginal people and to address the negative impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal mental health and wellbeing. Also to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners had the opportunity to represent their views. There was no other text like it in Australia at the time.

After publishing, we started hearing that the book was really making a difference in the way practitioners understood the issues for Aboriginal people and that organisations had

implemented new strategies and protocols for working with clients.

We then published the second edition in 2014, and made important revisions to some chapters, including new contributions. There was a strong focus on healing models and programs, and more emphasis on children and young people. It was a labour of love and a lot of hard work to see it through to publication. The incredible reception the book received and its ongoing impact shows just how much it was needed.

Ten years after the second edition, we've been looking back to remember the impact of *Working Together*. As part of the celebrations, we have interviewed some of our fabulous authors (there were 76, most of them Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander), and hosted webinars discussing issues covered in the book, reigniting important conversations.

Our first webinar was in July last year. Roz, Helen and I came together to talk about the journey to publishing and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing has changed over the last decade. We have since hosted two more live events – one on interdisciplinary care and one on social and emotional wellbeing, both featuring co-authors from *Working Together*. Our next webinar has just been released: a conversation between Dr Stacey McMullen, Professor Monica Thielking, Professor Jeneva Ohan, and Belle Selkirk talking about the significance of *Working Together* in psychology higher education.

The reception to our events has been great. For the first three webinars alone, we saw almost 1,700 registrations, and a flurry of questions and feedback. The book has been influential in a variety of fields like psychology, education, social work and medicine, and this was reflected in the diversity of attendees; we had people from government departments, universities, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, with others from the private and not-for-profit

sectors.

Working Together gained attention in many other countries with a colonial history and has been referred to by scholars and practitioners in New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom. This international appeal was reflected in webinar registrations from France, Singapore, Sweden, Ireland, Germany, and the United States.

Throughout the anniversary celebrations, we have been asked many times about a third edition; the demand is clear, and now the second edition is over ten years old it has slipped off some university reading lists. It is time for new comprehensive texts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing that can be used in research, education and clinical and community practice. For me, a third edition is a daunting prospect, but there is a new generation of writers and researchers with a strong sense of history and important ideas for the future. If they were to pick up the baton, we would be there to support and cheer them on.

● You can download the book and find resources from our 10th anniversary celebrations here:
<https://timhwb.org.au/working-together-book/>

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This article is part of a series of *Koori Mail* columns about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention contributed by authors from the CBPATSISP, which was established in 2017 to develop and share evidence about effective suicide prevention approaches for Indigenous people and communities.