



CHOOSE LIFE SERVICES (CLS) Formerly Parakaleo

Parakaleo Ministries Inc was established approximately 15 years ago and has been incorporated since November 1999. The vision was to support those at risk of suicide and their families. The organisation was volunteer based originally but now has a fulltime CEO, a fulltime programme manager, a part-time Office Manager and 12 paid counselling staff around the state, all of whom have counselling and/or psychology qualifications.

CEO Louise Leslie is a community representative on the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Committee.

CLS has grown to encompass suicide intervention counselling and training, workplace Employee Assistance Programmes, including general counselling, workplace mediation, Critical Incident Management and a range of workplace training packages.

Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides a wide range of support to management and staff to a large number of businesses throughout the state. We believe the EAP to be intrinsically linked to our core vision of suicide prevention, as counselling or training availability within an organisation can offer individuals support and prevent a crisis situation.

Our EAP income supports the free suicide intervention counselling we provide to anyone in the community who asks - someone who is suicidal, someone who is caring for a person who is suicidal or people who have been affected by a suicide. This income also allows the organisation to be available for awareness/training sessions about suicide to community organisations and clubs and to other NGO or support agencies around the state.

A strong focus of our community awareness/education programme is the LivingWorks ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) Workshop. We conduct these workshops annually around the State. This is an internationally recognised 2 day workshop which teaches a simple effective model of first aid which can be used to ensure those at risk can be kept safe until further help is sought.

CHOOSE LIFE SERVICES has a strong Board of Governance in place, with committed professional Board members who all have a very strong social justice/community service record. In February 2009 the Board made a strategic decision to trade as **Choose Life Services (CLS)**, although the incorporated body continues to be Parakaleo Ministries Inc. to ensure we maintain our link to the beginnings of the organisation and to the core mission.

CHOOSE LIFE SERVICES (CLS) is now a well established and respected not-for-profit organisation which in January 2009 was chosen by United Synergies to be the auspice agency for the StandBy project in North/North West Tasmania. StandBy is a support programme for people bereaved by suicide and is being rolled out nationally, funded by the Federal Department of Health and Aging.

The organisation continues to work with other agencies to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our community, and the work done to establish the StandBy programme in the north of the State has enhanced these networks, particularly our relationships with Emergency Services throughout the North and North West.

The organisation is open and very prepared to working in partnership with other community services and is looking forward to establishing firm networks in the southern region of Tasmania.



Annette Rockliff (Office Manager **Choose Life Services**) accepts the Advocate "Building Communities Award" in the CGU North-West Business and Industry Awards - 2011.