

LCEF / SISTER2sister Update on COVID-19

18 March 2020

The impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has been felt worldwide. There is nothing more important to us than the health and safety of the young women we support, our volunteers and our staff across both the SISTER2sister program and our No Limits 4 Girls program, especially during challenging times.

We recognise that many people in our community are feeling concerned about Coronavirus. These thoughts and feelings are normal and understandable. This is a crucial time to support young people in our community and be mindful of the effect that recent events may have on their mental health.

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to affect families, communities and countries around the world, we are adapting our ways of working so we can continue to deliver our programs and support to marginalised girls in Australia while being mindful of the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone we work with.

To this end, we are fortunate to be in a position to continue to provide support remotely. Our team is already implementing our working from home strategy so that we can continue to actively support young women on a day-to-day basis.

With respect to our specific programs:

SISTER2sister

- We will be pausing the start of our SISTER2sister program until the 1st of June, or with the advice of health officials, until we feel it is suitable to resume.
- In the meantime, we are hard at work developing a range of online services that will let us continue to deliver key aspects of our SISTER2sister program, including mentor training. Our focus will be to ensure that any online training model is capable of delivering our training to the high standards we deliver face to face. We are also exploring options around online delivery of program content, so that – if we are unable to commence the SISTER2sister program as hoped – we are still able to deliver our life changing program to young women who need our support.
- With guidance from schools and youth services, we will continue our recruitment and meetings with Little Sister mentees as long as it is suitable and our staff feel confident and safe doing so, and will utilise online platforms where necessary to keep connected to young people needing support.

No Limits 4 Girls

- We will also be pausing the delivery of our No Limits 4 Girls School Program until it is suitable to be running face to face sessions in a school setting. We acknowledge that schools will remain open for the time being, but will limit our interactions in schools until at least term 2.

Fundraising

- A further area of focus for the Foundation is the impact that COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, on LCEF's fundraising position. We will be pausing all event-based fundraising activity in line with government guidelines on public activity, which will have a potentially significant impact on our fundraising strategy for FY20. We will be working through a refreshed strategy in the coming weeks, and would welcome donations and sponsorship commitments to help us continue our work.

One of the things that is front of mind for all of us at LCEF is the importance of staying connected and supported in uncertain times. Our vulnerable youth may feel particularly impacted by current events, and it is our hope that we're able to continue to play a critical role in supporting these young people.

We continue to be guided by the notifications and restrictions advised by the Department of Education, the Department of Health and the schools and community organisations that we work with. We have reiterated that guidance below, as an important reminder to all.

However, just as we take physical precautions around things like hand hygiene and social distancing, we would strongly encourage all of our supporters to take similar care of their mental health and wellbeing at this time. Please stay connected with friends and family, prioritise healthy habits and continue to engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. If you need further support, please reach out for the right level or type of support for you. And keep in mind that the type of support you may need can change as time passes.

In accordance with the latest Department of Health advice, we:

- encourage all LCEF staff and volunteers to practice good hygiene (such as frequent hand washing, coughing or sneezing into your elbow, and avoiding shaking hands);
- encourage all LCEF staff and volunteers to monitor for symptoms such as fever, coughing, shortness of breath or tiredness and:
 - o If you are unwell or concerned that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), you should self-isolate
 - o If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), you must self-isolate for 14 days from the date of your last contact with the confirmed case;
 - o If you have recently returned from an overseas trip, you must self-isolate for 14

days from the day of your departure from that country. You should arrange to see your doctor for urgent assessment. You should telephone the health clinic or hospital before you arrive and tell them your travel history or that you have been in contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. You must remain isolated either in your home, hotel or a health care setting until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

We appreciate your patience and your generous support during this time. Please take care of yourselves and one another.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please email us at enquiries@lifechangingexperiences.org.