PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON

SAD MESSAGE: Soraya Saraswati will tackle the Larapinta trek for suicide prevention Australia.

Mum's trek fundraiser to help prevent suicide

By KATHY SUNDSTROM

SORAYA Saraswati thought she knew grief after watching her first husband "drink himself to death" and then her brother kill himself.

But nothing could compare with the harrowing trauma after her nearly 18-year-old son also took his own life seven years ago

Both her brother, Gill Gardiner, and son, Prem, died on the same day two years apart.

It was September 10, World Suicide Prevention Day.

"Neither was aware of that," she said.

Ms Saraswati spent several years "going through grief", now she is in a place where she is ready to make a difference.

SHINING THROUGH

Sunshine Coast community event with music and culture.
WHEN: April 9, from 6.30pm to 9pm
WHERE: Palmwoods Memorial Hall
WHAT: an evening of food and music for the Larapinta Trail trek to raise funds for Suicide Prevention Australia
CONTACT: Soraya, 0400 520 624 or visit sorayasaraswati.com/events

"I'm in a great place in my life," she said.

"I have three other sons and a wonderful husband. While there will always be a sad part in my heart for my son and brother, life is good. I am not a victim."

She has completed the Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Speakers Bureau program and is open to speak on the subject.

And she is also preparing to walk the 150km Larapinta Trail from Alice Springs for the Suicide Prevention Association and raise funds every step along the way.

"With over seven people dying by suicide every day in Australia, it is a national tragedy," she said.

"More people die of suicide than on Australian roads. This is clearly an important subject.

"Education and research as well as action all play a role in saving lives."

The funds she raises will be used for the association to fund indigenous people to attend the National Suicide Prevention Conference in Canberra in August.

Ms Saraswati needs help to make the trek a success.

She has organised a Shining Through Event on April 9 at Palmwoods Memorial Hall.

"More people die of suicide than on Australian roads. This is clearly an important subject.

– SORAYA SARASWAT

Her husband, Terry Oldfield, brother of renowned English musician Mike Oldfield, will perform songs and instrumental music at the event.

The event will include an SPA representative, local supper and raffle.

"We need to have our voices heard and to brainstorm ways to reduce the suicide rate. I want to put my ha up for that," Ms Saraswa said.

Anyone needing help someone to talk to can c tact Lifeline on 131 114 Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 an emergency dial 000

IN BRIEF

Wellington hits b

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