

Walking Together: The Story of Lifeline Through Country, Crisis, and Connection

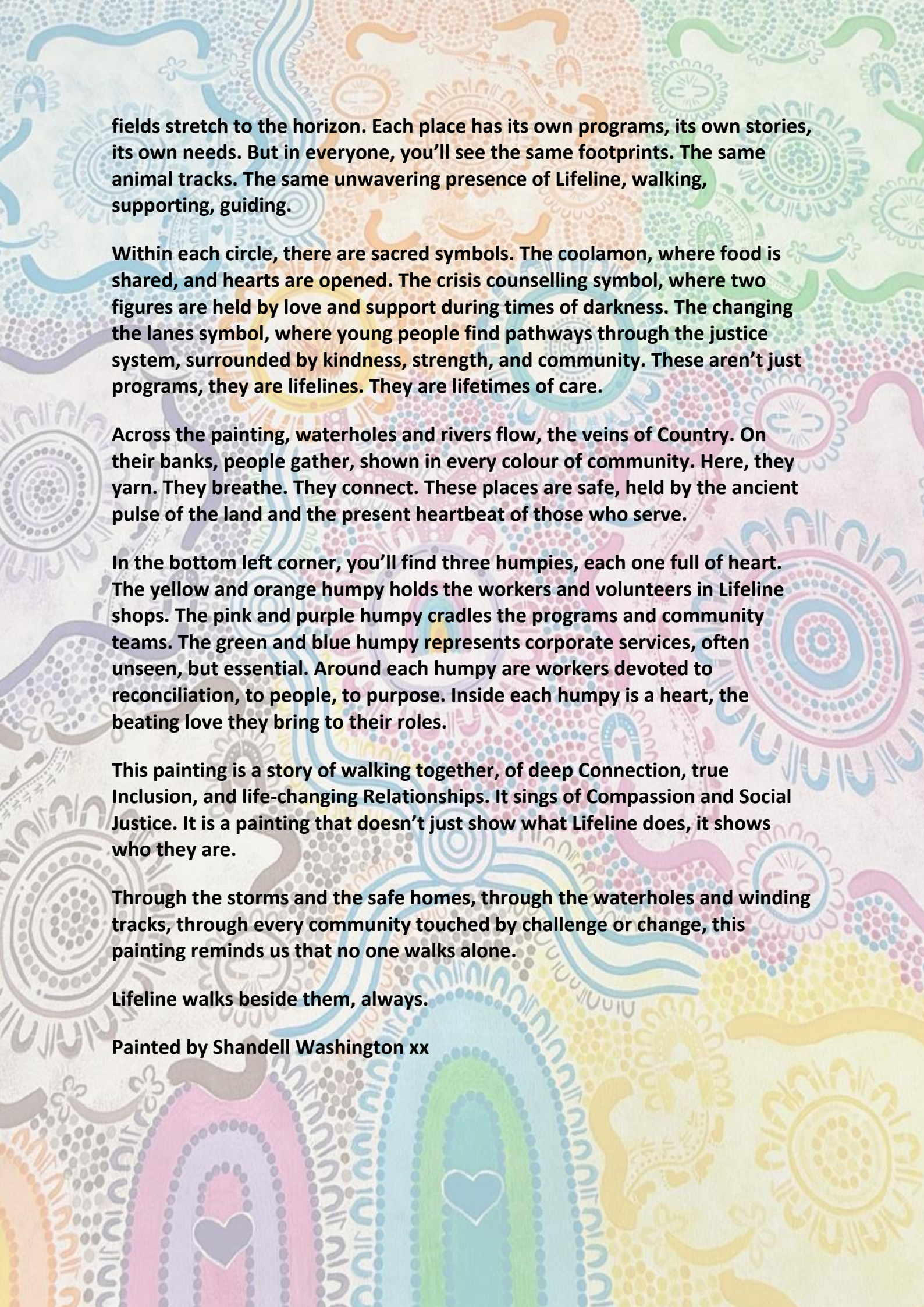
This painting is not just a visual artwork, it is a living story, a map of compassion, connection, and commitment. It tells the journey of Lifeline and their dedication to walking alongside every person, every family, every community member across this vast and beautiful country. It speaks in colour and symbol, in track and totem, in fire and water. It speaks in the language of love.

At the very heart of the painting is community, the centre circle of each community, alive with colour and life, represents the collective spirit of women, men, and children. Their stories, their struggles, their healing. Radiating from this core are footprints and animal tracks, symbolising the journey we all take together. The footprints of Lifeline workers walk beside the animal tracks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, a powerful expression of cultural respect, of deep listening, and of travelling together through life, guided by spirit and Country.

This painting tells the truth of hard times. The yellow circle of fire and the blue circle of flooding represent crisis, the moments that shake lives and leave families searching for safety. These are surrounded by community, because crisis never touches just one person. It ripples. But from those circles of challenge, there is a path, a sacred journey, leading down to a safe place, a home wrapped in a rainbow. This is the healing Lifeline promises, to walk alongside every person through the storm until they find safety, stability, and strength once more.

Tiny white dots trace the journey home, each one a symbol of the gentle guidance Lifeline offers. And beyond the path, more workers stand ready to wrap around each family, every individual, with unwavering support. This is what community looks like. This is what reconciliation feels like.

The different colours across the canvas represent the diversity of this beautiful region: the Fairy Floss pink and blue of Toowoomba, reflecting its breathtaking sunrises; rich greens for Dalby, inspired by the lush Bunya Mountains; vibrant orange for Roma, echoing its striking sunsets; deep blues for Charleville, capturing the vastness of its night sky; soft purples for Cunnamulla, where wildflowers bloom; earthy browns for St George, shaped by the flow of the river; and bright yellow for Warwick, where sunflower



fields stretch to the horizon. Each place has its own programs, its own stories, its own needs. But in everyone, you'll see the same footprints. The same animal tracks. The same unwavering presence of Lifeline, walking, supporting, guiding.

Within each circle, there are sacred symbols. The coolamon, where food is shared, and hearts are opened. The crisis counselling symbol, where two figures are held by love and support during times of darkness. The changing the lanes symbol, where young people find pathways through the justice system, surrounded by kindness, strength, and community. These aren't just programs, they are lifelines. They are lifetimes of care.

Across the painting, waterholes and rivers flow, the veins of Country. On their banks, people gather, shown in every colour of community. Here, they yarn. They breathe. They connect. These places are safe, held by the ancient pulse of the land and the present heartbeat of those who serve.

In the bottom left corner, you'll find three humpies, each one full of heart. The yellow and orange humpy holds the workers and volunteers in Lifeline shops. The pink and purple humpy cradles the programs and community teams. The green and blue humpy represents corporate services, often unseen, but essential. Around each humpy are workers devoted to reconciliation, to people, to purpose. Inside each humpy is a heart, the beating love they bring to their roles.

This painting is a story of walking together, of deep Connection, true Inclusion, and life-changing Relationships. It sings of Compassion and Social Justice. It is a painting that doesn't just show what Lifeline does, it shows who they are.

Through the storms and the safe homes, through the waterholes and winding tracks, through every community touched by challenge or change, this painting reminds us that no one walks alone.

Lifeline walks beside them, always.

Painted by Shandell Washington xx