



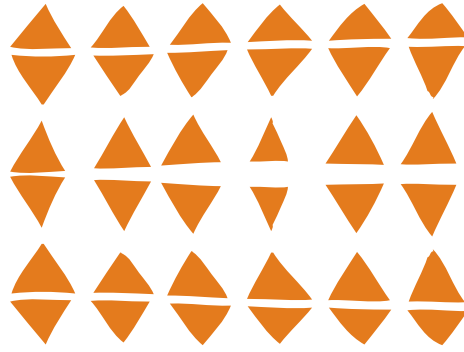
HealingFoundation

Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People

**TORRES STRAIT  
AND KAURAREG  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**

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**Healing Strategy**



# TORRES STRAIT AND KAURAREG ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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## Healing Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

Through extensive community consultation, including two community healing forums, the people of the Torres Strait have identified healing priorities to address the trauma and disharmony affecting their communities.

The healing priorities aim to promote child safety and wellbeing, increase community safety, enable spiritual healing and self-determination and build men's and women's leadership capacity by harnessing the strength of culture and ancient wisdom.

This document provides a framework for governments at all levels to incorporate these healing priorities into service delivery, in partnership with local communities.

### OBJECTIVE

To integrate the healing priorities identified in the Kaurareg and Torres Strait Islands Healing Gathering reports into federal and state government interegrated service delivery planning frameworks.



Closing the Gap Building Blocks and Indigenous Advancement Strategy Linkages		Healthy Homes, Early Childhood, Safe Communities and Leadership and Governance and Children and Schooling, Safety and Wellbeing and Remote Area Strategies
KEY AREA FOR HEALING		CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING
What is Happening	What is Not Happening (GAPS) PROBLEM / ISSUES = Disharmony and Imbalance	What Needs to Happen SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS = Harmony and Balance
<p>1. Child Safety Services established Community of Practice and Child Protection Practice groups, involving training in relation to child protection intervention, with partners including Complex Case Advice and Practice Support (CCAPS), Cape York North and Torres Strait Islands Child Safety Service Centre (CYNTSICSSC) and Mura Kosker Sorority, Safe Pathways and Port Kennedy Association (NGOs on Thursday Island).</p> <p>2. Partners in Recovery work with people with a disability but also organise sport and recreational activities for children and young people.</p> <p>3. Mura Kosker are funded to provide family support services primarily targeted at families before they are in the child protection system. They have a part time Family Support worker on St Paul/Warraber and Saibai.</p> <p>4. Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Health Services provide primary clinical care, health education and community development.</p> <p>5. The Healing Foundation is currently developing healing models for children and young people that will be supported by training</p> <p>6. Port Kennedy association provide family support programs, including for families who are a part of the child protection system as well as programs for children such as playgroups, vacation care and after school care</p> <p>7. Kazi Meta Student Hostel provides safe and secure accommodation for students aged 11 - 18 years.</p> <p>8. There are community events for children, such as cultural festivals, sporting events, the Tombstone Unveiling and dancing and drumming classes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early intervention support for children and young people and their families on each Island is limited – resources limit the ability to provide equity of services to all islands.</li> <li>• A strategy to support and encourage community members to report perpetrators of abuse who are influential in the community</li> <li>• Traditional family support networks are not being supported. A breakdown in community life and a lack of focus on roles and responsibilities are seen to be creating isolation and a lack of participation by community in issues that affect them.</li> <li>• Children’s Healing Programs are limited and crisis driven rather than proactive. While there are programs for 0 – 13 year olds there is little for the 13 – 26 age group that have been traumatised as a consequence of abuse.</li> <li>• Further information is needed on what counseling/ healing is available</li> <li>• Mura Koskar is unable to cover Dauan and Stephen Islands.</li> <li>• Despite previous consultation dating back to 2001 there is still a need for a youth space to provide recreational activities and safe community interaction.</li> </ul>	<p>a) Create safe spaces for our children to talk and seek help.</p> <p>b) Provide healing services for children who have experienced violence, abuse and are dealing with trauma.</p> <p>c) Provide mentoring programs for young people culturally founded in TAGAI College learning principles: <b>Language, People, Culture and Place.</b></p> <p>d) Provide programs to support culturally strong parenting.</p> <p>e) Strengthen community responses to child safety through education - overcome silence, shame and fear.</p> <p>f) Implement comprehensive training around Torres Strait culture and ensure development of Cultural Care Pans that are Island specific to ensure children’s safety and maintain their connection with culture and community.</p> <p>g) Create a central agency on Thursday Island, to also serve outer islands, which deals directly with abuse against children, women and families and enables people to report cases of abuse and have support systems and processes in place to effectively deal with victims and perpetrators.</p>



## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Review existing programs and support services provided to victims and perpetrators of abuse, and consider the establishment of a central agency which enables cases to be reported and more effective critical responses.
2. Integrate a healing focus into the TAGAI College's approach to learning and culture.
3. Consider an option to develop a Police Citizens Youth Club on (Waiben) Thursday Island.
4. Monitor the development and future progress of the "*Place of Belonging for Youth*" on (Nurupai) Horn Island and, dependent on success, consider development of similar projects for youth on outer island communities.
5. Support the development of community led healing teams to pilot on selected communities and, dependent on success, consider development of similar teams on other islands. Support healing teams to co-design methodologies with community members, rather than services and government departments, to ensure healing processes fit community needs and ensure greater participation and response to wellbeing needs.
6. Develop and fund local training and development plans to ensure healing teams, in collaboration with community, achieve their goals and objectives.
7. Support the development of island-specific cultural care plans which ensure children's safety and maintain their connection with culture and community.
8. Develop an evaluation strategy which focuses on outcomes and ensures ongoing learning and refinement of design and processes can occur in the pilot stage.
9. Support and fund ongoing research to build the Torres Strait Island region's knowledge-base and capacity to respond to trauma.





Closing the Gap Building Blocks and Indigenous Advancement Strategy Linkages		Healthy Homes, Safe Communities and Leadership and Governance + Safety and Wellbeing and Remote Area Strategies
KEY AREA FOR HEALING		COMMUNITY SAFETY
What is Happening	What is Not Happening (GAPS) PROBLEM / ISSUES = Disharmony and Imbalance	What Needs to Happen SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS = Harmony and Balance
<p>1. Lena Passi supports women escaping violence and homelessness with accommodation and counseling and trialed a healing program for women and men to help perpetrators address behaviour.</p> <p>2. The Port Kennedy Association’s Family Program Coordinator supports community safety by working with families to deal with issues including financial management, employment and overcrowded housing.</p> <p>3. Port Kennedy Social Services is working on the development of a social services hub model.</p> <p>4. The Torres Shire Youth Council comprises members aged 12 - 18 years who represent the interests of young people of the Torres Shire at all levels. The Council has identified a number of priority concerns including alcohol, drug and substance abuse, lack of facilities, teenage pregnancy and Juvenile Justice issues.</p> <p>5. Mura Kosker provides domestic violence counseling as well as access to Headspace’s free phone counseling service for young people. They also have part time workers in Yam and St Paul communities to support the Torres Strait Healthy Aging Program.</p> <p>6. The Community Justice Group supports a mentoring program with Elders through the court and community.</p> <p>7. An Offender Support Program (OSP) model has been developed by Offender Reintegration and Rehabilitation Services (ORRS) but will require funding.</p> <p>8. Kuki Patrol, an Indigenous security patrol is proposed to be operational by the end of 2015 but will require operational funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no services for men and women on the outer islands.</li> <li>• Collaboration between support services is sometimes limited.</li> <li>• Culturally insensitive communication by some services creates tension</li> <li>• Limited resourcing means services tend to be reactive and crisis driven rather than proactive.</li> <li>• Limited focus on community development - focus is more on service delivery.</li> <li>• Limited understanding of approaches to promote mental health and wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>Men have little opportunity for healing – services are either focused on supporting domestic violence and family violence perpetrators or mental health – there are limited opportunities for proactive rather than reactive responses – things that have occurred are sporadic and not ongoing.</p>	<p>a) Build community capacity for crisis responses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- child abuse and neglect</li> <li>- family violence</li> <li>- mental health incidents</li> <li>- suicide</li> </ul> <p>b) Establish safe spaces where communities are encouraged to talk about their healing needs and share their stories.</p> <p>c) Develop Community Safety Plans on each island.</p> <p>d) Integrate our cultural knowledge systems to overcome community conflict and foster coordinated, effective community responses.</p> <p>e) Establish men’s healing programs that are preventative and restorative in assisting men to address and care for their issues in a culturally sensitive means.</p>



## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Support additional funding to look at the development of healing programs and services for 13 – 26 year old people who have experienced violence, abuse and are dealing with trauma.
2. Refer to and integrate *Options for Consideration* as detailed above under Child Safety.
3. Support the establishment of safe spaces, island-by-island, where communities are encouraged to talk about their healing needs and share their stories as outlined in the development of community healing teams.
4. Consider development and ongoing availability of healing programs for Men, Women, Children and Families in outer island communities which build on strength of culture. Possible men's and women's healing forums to initiate change from a grassroots basis.
5. Consider developing a partnership with the Healing Foundation to pilot similar Healing Forums to that which was conducted for the Kaurareg People, on selected outer islands (i.e. Badu and Mabuiag Islands).





Closing the Gap Building Blocks and Indigenous Advancement Strategy Linkages		Healthy Homes, Safe Communities and Leadership and Governance + Safety and Wellbeing and Remote Area Strategies	
KEY AREA FOR HEALING		SPIRITUAL HEALING	
What is Happening	What is Not Happening (GAPS) PROBLEM / ISSUES = Disharmony and Imbalance	What Needs to Happen SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS = Harmony and Balance	
<p>1. AfterCare’s Social and Emotional Wellbeing Support program offers structured groups and activities that provide social connection, recreation and new skills. Group activities include cultural practices such as traditional healing and reconnection with the land, a grief and loss support group and family and carers support</p> <p>2. Elders provide cultural counseling for children and young people in the criminal justice system through the Community Justice Group.</p> <p>3. Torres Strait Islander Consultancy (TSIC) and New Life Perspectives (NLP) have submitted a proposal to Far North Queensland Partners in Recovery (FNQPIR) to conduct a two day ‘Inside/Outside’ training Social and Emotional Wellbeing workshop exploring mental health and culture. It aims to build the capacity of community members and service providers around culture and social and emotional wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some service providers lack understanding about Torres Strait cultural and healing practices.</li> </ul>	<p>a) Reinstatement cultural values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider a churches congress to discuss tension between traditional ways &amp; Christianity</li> <li>Seek a healing process to address the impact of missionaries on cultural knowledge</li> </ul> <p>b) Implement education promoting understanding of the spiritual and healing practices of the Torres Strait to strengthen the cultural competence of government and non-government services.</p>	

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Refer to and integrate previous *Options for Consideration*.
2. Work in collaboration with Healing Foundation and key government agencies to develop and pilot Healing Forums similar to the Kaurareg Healing Forum and have this rolled out to outer island communities
3. Woken Pipel Healing Taskforce to work in collaboration with the Healing Foundation to bring together the Archbishops from the Anglican and Catholic churches to participate in a community-led Healing Forum and Ceremony



Closing the Gap Building Blocks and Indigenous Advancement Strategy Linkages		Healthy Homes, Safe Communities and Leadership and Governance + Safety and Wellbeing and Remote Area Strategies	
KEY AREA FOR HEALING		SELF DETERMINATION	
What is Happening	What is Not Happening (GAPS) PROBLEM / ISSUES = Disharmony and Imbalance	What Needs to Happen SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS = Harmony and Balance	
<p>1. Healing Foundation committed to supporting Woken Pipel Healing Taskforce to guide community led development of Healing strategy.</p> <p>2. Men sheds are exploring a partnership with My Pathway to expand the Men shed program to Torres Strait including 'My Place' men's respite facility and mentoring/guiding.</p> <p>3. The Community Justice Group provides recommendations to judiciary for criminal court matters as well as supporting early intervention and rehabilitation programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-determination is seen to be hindered by lack of self-esteem, lack of family support, poor parenting skills, poor strategic planning, changes in government policy and downsizing.</li> <li>• There is a perceived lack of accountability to the Torres Strait by government. Consultation with community, particularly young people, is not adequate.</li> </ul>	<p>a) Seek funding to create, develop and support leadership so that community members have the skills to create and drive their own solutions - 'our people, our choice, our future'.</p> <p>b) Establish processes to ensure meaningful, culturally driven engagement of community in all aspects of government service provision and genuine accountability by government to the Torres Strait community</p>	

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Refer to and integrate previous *Options for Consideration* to capitalise on the strengths and further build the capacity of communities to become self determining in the areas of culture, healing and abuse.
2. Consider the development and funding of Men's Sheds in outer island communities.







Closing the Gap Building Blocks and Indigenous Advancement Strategy Linkages		Healthy Homes, Safe Communities and Leadership and Governance + Safety and Wellbeing and Remote Area Strategies
KEY AREA FOR HEALING		LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
What is Happening	What is Not Happening (GAPS) PROBLEM / ISSUES = Disharmony and Imbalance	What Needs to Happen SOLUTIONS / ACTIONS = Harmony and Balance
<p>1. DATSIP and Oxfam have undertaken women’s leadership development for the workforce, government and Torres Strait community.</p> <p>2. Mura Kosker conducts women’s political leadership development</p> <p>3. The Torres Shire Youth Council offers leadership development for 12 to 18 year old young people and provides the opportunity for young people to run for Junior Mayor, Deputy Junior Mayor and Secretary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an absence of women in positions of authority in the Torres Strait. Women are not able to effectively navigate the issues that are impacting on them and the impact of this on their spirits.</li> <li>• A breakdown in community life and a lack of focus on roles and responsibilities was seen to be creating isolation and a lack of participation by community in issues that affect them.</li> </ul>	<p>a) Establishment of knowledge circles to inform and support our representatives and leaders and create more equity in leadership.</p> <p>b) Establish a healing development team, with representatives from all tiers of government, non-government and community to guide the development of a Men’s Healing Strategy to support men to relocate their cultural authority.</p> <p>c) Develop a Women’s Leadership Healing Strategy to increase the participation of women in community leadership and governance.</p>

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. All councils to integrate healing strategies, as part of core business (i.e. *Community Safety, Culture and Capability, Children, Young People and Schooling*) within the Integrated Service Delivery Action Plans and other local government planning frameworks and processes.
2. Taskforce to investigate the suitability/feasibility of Community-led Healing Teams to link government service provider programs and services and support consistent healing activities at the local level.
3. Develop a Torres Strait Island Region Women’s Leadership Strategy to ensure that local women have access to regular leadership development programs and opportunities.
4. Refer to previous *Options for Consideration*, relevant to the development of Healing Teams.



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