

Healing essential to protect Australia's Indigenous children

The Healing Foundation welcomes the Commonwealth's ongoing commitment to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children and specifically the inclusion of a commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Between 1910 and the 1970s up to one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from their families and communities. These children who are the Stolen Generations were often subjected to abuse, exploitation and racism on top of the grief and suffering caused by separation from their families, communities, identity and culture. The Australian Bureau of Statistics National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social survey 2008 estimated that 10,500 children were removed up until 1972.

The levels of intergenerational trauma that our communities and families are dealing with are significant. The 1997 Bringing Them Home report calls for a substantial investment in healing for communities, families and children.

"It is important to understand the impact of intergenerational trauma on our communities and to create the environment for positive change" said Mr Richard Weston, CEO of the Healing Foundation.

"The Healing Foundation is leading these responses in intergenerational trauma work and community healing strategies and we encourage the inclusion of these responses as the next three year action plan develops. Healing must be included in policy and program responses to break the cycle of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the child protection system" Mr Weston said.

There have been over 37 inquiries into child protection in the last decade and these funds would be better invested in supporting our families and communities to rebuild and reconnect.

The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation with a focus on building culturally strong, community led healing solutions. More information is available at www.healingfoundation.org.au

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