

Stolen Generations need access to group healing: report

Group healing opportunities must be made available to Stolen Generations members to help them recover from trauma, according to a report to be released today.

The Healing Foundation report analyses 31 projects involving more than 3,676 Stolen Generations members and contains evidence about what works in healing Stolen Generations.

“The western model of one on one counselling doesn’t suit all Stolen Generations members, especially if they were removed to institutions,” Healing Foundation Chair Professor Steve Larkin said.

“Because Stolen Generations members were removed from their families, identities, lands, languages and cultures, they have unique healing needs.

“Many Stolen Generations members find that coming together with other survivors, sharing stories and accessing group or ‘collective’ healing opportunities is what helps them to heal.”

Collective healing activities include healing camps, yarning circles, trips on country and family reunions.

Across the 31 projects four elements were found to be essential in creating a healing environment for Stolen Generations. These are:

- Coming together with other survivors and sharing stories of pain, hope and renewal
- Reconnecting with and strengthening culture and cultural identity
- Access to trauma informed services and responses
- Being able to develop and lead their own healing solutions

According to Aunty Lorraine Peeters who was forcibly removed to the Cootamundra Girls’ Home as a child and is now a member of the Healing Foundation’s Stolen Generations Reference Committee, spending time with the girls she grew up with is integral to her ongoing healing journey.

“You don’t have to tell or explain your story to anybody, we just know what each other’s gone through,” Aunty Lorraine said.

“It’s so important to be together, to have that counselling with each other.”

Professor Larkin said the specific healing needs of Stolen Generations members must be taken into account by everyone involved in their healing.

“We urge policy makers and service providers to take up the findings of this report and ensure our Stolen Generations have access to healing opportunities that work for them,” Professor Larkin said.

The report, *Healing for Our Stolen Generations: Sharing Our Stories*, is being released two days out from the eighth anniversary of the national Apology to the Stolen Generations this Saturday.

Embargoed copies of the report and its executive summary are available.

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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