



# Our Healing Our Way

Newsletter of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation

July 2016

## SAVE THE DATE ... THURSDAY 4 AUGUST

### Our Future Our Way Talking Intergenerational Trauma Webinar #TalkTrauma

The Healing Foundation will host a public forum and webinar on Indigenous intergenerational trauma on 4 August 2016. Coinciding with National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day, the event will look at what intergenerational trauma is, the factors that contribute to it and how it can be prevented.

A diverse group of speakers will offer personal insight on the issue. Come and join us by being part of the live audience. If you are unable to be there in person, you can join the conversation by watching online and tweeting your questions to our panel using the hashtag #TalkTrauma.

When: Thursday 4 August 2016

Time: 10:00am – 11:30am

Where: 50MC Theatre, 50 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra

To register your interest (to attend or watch online) please email [community@healingfoundation.org.au](mailto:community@healingfoundation.org.au)

## Meeting the needs of our young people

Representatives from the Healing Foundation recently attended the Australian Childhood Conference on Trauma in Melbourne. The conference featured international and national researchers and practitioners who spoke about the impacts of trauma and ways to create healing.

Over four days the team had the opportunity to listen to many leading thought creators on how trauma is held in the body, how it impacts on thinking and the ways to create change.

A highlight of the conference was the master class by Professor Michael Yellow Bird. Professor Yellow Bird is an esteemed American Aboriginal social worker and Alkira tribal Elder.

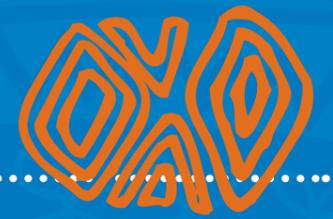
His master class demonstrated:

- How the traditional cultural healing practice of mindfulness can be used in a contemporary way to heal the mind and the spirit
- That the key to healing trauma within our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is located within our cultural knowledge and healing practices, including ceremonies and connection to country
- The need to understand and undertake decolonisation processes for communities that support their reconnection to a cultural worldview and elevate Indigenous knowledge
- How Indigenous knowledge – developed over thousands of years – was trauma informed and is effective in assisting Aboriginal communities heal their minds and spirits.

RIGHT: Professor Michael Yellow Bird with Healing Foundation staff - Childhood Trauma Conference 2016



## CEO'S message



### Welcome to the July edition of *Our Healing Our Way*.

I hope you had a great NAIDOC. It's a time to celebrate our culture and identity and embrace our past as we look to the future and think about what lies ahead for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

At the end of June we launched the *Torres Strait and Kaurareg Aboriginal People's Healing Strategy* on Thursday Island: the Healing Foundation's and we believe Australia's first ever healing strategy. It is the result of four years of consultations with Kaurareg Aboriginal people and Torres Strait islanders from across the region.

The Healing Foundation is proud to partner with Torres Strait communities to address issues like child and community safety and women in leadership. We will also work closely with governments at the local, state and federal levels to ensure the strategy's recommendations are realised.

We will be hosting a webinar about intergenerational trauma to coincide with Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day on 4 August. The passing down of trauma from one generation to the next is a huge issue for our mob and the panel will discuss what we can do to change this. I hope to see you there – in person or online! You'll find more details about the webinar in the newsletter.

In this edition you'll also find stories about:

- A recent healing retreat for SA Stolen Generations members
- A new film sharing the stories of Cherbourg's Domo Girls ... and much more.



Richard Weston  
CEO

# Australia's first healing strategy launched on Thursday Island

## Late last month the Healing Foundation joined with Torres Strait leaders to launch the country's first ever community healing strategy.

The *Torres Strait and Kaurareg Aboriginal People's Healing Strategy* was developed by the Healing Foundation in partnership with local healing leadership. More than 600 people from across the Torres Strait contributed to its development.

The strategy maps community needs and healing aspirations against existing work in the Torres Strait. It also identifies key gaps and proposes practical solutions to address them at the local, state and federal government levels.

*"We urge governments at the local, state and federal levels to acknowledge the strength of this wisdom by supporting and implementing this strategy," Ms Wilson said.*

### Recommendations include:

- Support for a women's healing strategy to strengthen women's leadership in the region
- Preventative and restorative men's healing programs to help men address their issues in culturally sensitive ways
- Healing programs and services for 13 - 26 year olds who have experienced violence or abuse and are dealing with the impacts of trauma
- The development of community healing teams to support and drive healing at a local level.

Healing Foundation Deputy Chair Leann Wilson, who spoke at the launch, said the strategy's recommendations represent the voice and knowledge of the community.

## One Weekend, Many Stories - SA Stolen Generations healing retreat

South Australian Stolen Generations members from the greater Adelaide region came together in June for a weekend of pampering, relaxation and shared healing experiences.

The collective healing event was jointly organised by Relationships Australia, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia and the Healing Foundation.

Men's and women's yarning circles facilitated by local cultural Elders supported group healing through the sharing of stories in a safe space.

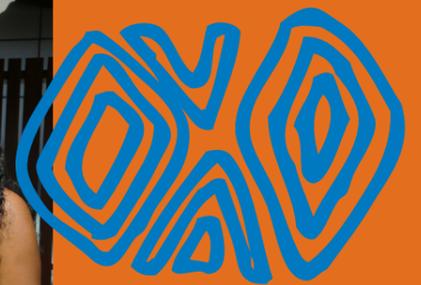
Other activities included visiting significant local sites with Aboriginal Elders to share in the local culture, massages, hairdressing, beading and jewellery making, and Ngangkari traditional healing sessions.

Information sessions about the new South Australian Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme, legal rights and available supports, and the Healing Foundation were also held.

*"Healing for our mob is about keeping connections strong," said the Healing Foundation's Lou Turner, who supported the event.*

*"The connections we make with each other and the sharing of stories highlight a collective resilience."*

*"Collective healing events like this one help to strengthen our identity and enrich our connection with culture and are integral to the healing journeys of our communities."*



ABOVE: The Zenadth Kes Youth Cultural Dance Troupe performing at the launch

RIGHT L to R: Healing Foundation Deputy Chair Leann Wilson, Luisa O'Connor, Healing Foundation CEO Richard Weston and Torres Shire Council Mayor Vonda Malone

# New film shares the stories of the Domo Girls

In NAIDOC Week the Cherbourg Historical Precinct Group launched a powerful film *The Domo Girls* – honouring the women who grew up in the Barambah/Cherbourg Girls' Dormitory. The launch was held at the Ration Shed Museum in Cherbourg.

The project, supported by the Healing Foundation, involved interviewing 18 former Domo Girls, bringing them to Cherbourg for a workshop with other women, a procession through the streets of Cherbourg and a commemorative ceremony on the site of the old dormitory.

Chairperson of the Ration Shed Museum and co-producer of the film Aunty Sandra Morgan said returning to Cherbourg and telling their stories had a significant impact on participants.

*"By acknowledging the time, place and people who figured in their young lives in the dormitory system under the Aboriginal Protection Act the women gained a greater awareness of the social and cultural forces that governed their lives and cut them off from family and mob in those years," Aunty Sandra said.*

*"For a number of people who no longer live in Cherbourg returning to the place of prior hurt, damage or disconnection from their families and mobs was a significant emotional moment," Aunty Sandra said.*

*"For some people – including a few women who had previously refused to return – this was an important step in facing up to the past and reaffirming their identities as Cherbourg Aboriginal women.*

*"The damage caused to people's lives by the dormitories is undeniable however the women in our project also spoke of the power of love and family bonds created between the girls as inmates of the dormitory.*

*"To change the future one has to face up to and understand the past, feel the pain and go beyond it to real healing."*

*"Interventions like this project and reconnection to culture and community are necessary for long term healing to take place," Aunty Sandra said.*

**The DVD will be distributed widely throughout Australia.**



Photos courtesy of southburnett.com.au

# Marumali program featured on healing portal

## The Marumali healing program, run by Aunty Lorraine Peeters and her daughter Shaan Hamann, is the latest project to be featured on the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet healing portal.

The Marumali program enables Indigenous people affected by past removal policies to identify and understand their trauma, the stages of healing from trauma and the types of support they may need on their 'healing journey'.



The program also aims to improve service delivery by providing training to Indigenous and non-Indigenous service providers on how to best support people affected by the Stolen Generations policies, including intergenerational trauma.

Established in 2000, Marumali is derived from Aunty Lorraine's experience of past removal practices and trauma recovery which has resonated with Indigenous people and communities around Australia.

The program is delivered in a culturally safe and appropriate manner by Aunty Lorraine and her daughter Shaan. They use their personal experiences of trauma to build supportive relationships with participants as they work through the program's emotionally difficult content.

The program only goes where it has been invited by the local community, and works closely with a local person to build relationships and research the local history and community in order to tailor the program as much as possible.

It focuses on improving people's ability to cope by helping them move from experiencing a triggering event, to understanding it and moving forward with their lives based on a renewed sense of identity.



ABOVE: Aunty Lorraine Peeters and Shaan Hamann with participants and staff from Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place

## Opportunity to have your program featured

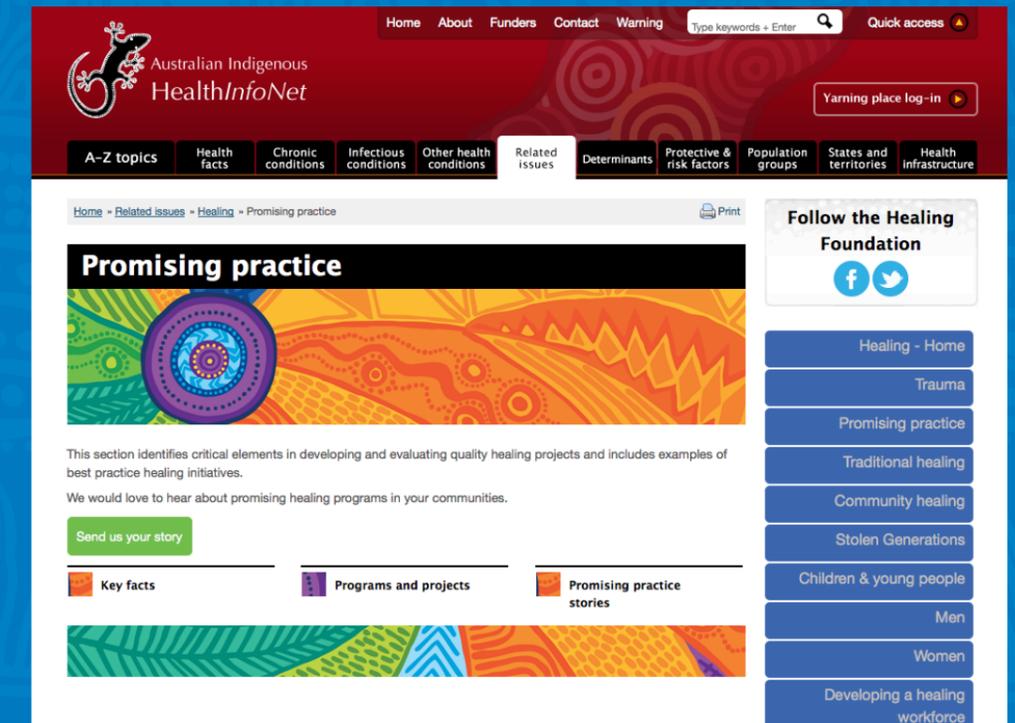
Are you involved with a local healing program that is delivering positive results? Perhaps there is a program in your community that deserves to be recognised? If so we would love to hear from you.

Your program could be the next to feature on the front page of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet healing portal.

Simply tell us how the program meets the following criteria:

1. Builds understanding of the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma and grief
2. Developed by and run in partnership with the local community
3. Combines Indigenous healing with Western methodologies
4. Builds individual, family and community capacity to manage trauma
5. Has a developed theory and evidence base and incorporates strong evaluation frameworks.

You can either submit your responses via the "Promising practice" section of the healing portal or send a short video describing how the program meets these criteria to [community@healingfoundation.org.au](mailto:community@healingfoundation.org.au)



Have you visited the healing portal yet? You can check it out at [www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/related-issues/healing](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/related-issues/healing)



Summarises the outcomes of a national workshop on collective healing for Stolen Generations members and their descendants. [VIEW IT HERE](#)



A community healing strategy developed by the Healing Foundation in partnership with Kaurareg Aboriginal people and Torres Strait islanders. [VIEW IT HERE](#)



A new resource to promote the healing portal: a partnership between the Healing Foundation and Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet.

## No More Silence: It's Never Too Late to Start Healing

WATCH NOW



It's never too late to start healing



If you are a man who has been sexually abused, we want to say to you...

No More Silence

A powerful new video resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men who were sexually abused as children [www.livingwell.org.au/get-support/aboriginal-support-sexual-abuse/](http://www.livingwell.org.au/get-support/aboriginal-support-sexual-abuse/)