



Our Healing Our Way

Newsletter of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation

March 2016

SPECIAL DOUBLE SPREAD APOLOGY ANNIVERSARY EDITION

HEAL OUR PAST BUILD OUR FUTURE APOLOGY 2016 CELEBRATING OUR HEROES

NSW inquiry into reparations for Stolen Generations members

The Healing Foundation recently told a NSW parliamentary committee inquiring into reparations for the Stolen Generations that the lasting trauma of removal has caused economic, educational and social disadvantage to survivors and their families.

Healing Foundation CEO Richard Weston emphasised the need for any reparations scheme to include the families of Stolen Generations members who have already passed away.

“We have a duty of care to all those who were forcibly removed, living and deceased,” Richard said in his evidence to the inquiry. “When generations of young people were stolen from their families their removal took away future healers, leaders, knowledge holders and cultural support from their communities and left entire families and communities grieving and traumatised.”

Message from our CEO

8 Year Anniversary

Welcome to the 2016 Apology anniversary edition of *Our Healing Our Way*.

Apology anniversary commemoration events held throughout Australia are recognition of the trauma caused by the policies of child removal. Bearing witness to the truth of the experiences of Stolen Generations is important for the healing process but there still remains much healing work to be done.

To heal we must understand and address trauma. Many recommendations from the 1997 Bringing Them Home report are yet to be implemented including the urgent need for reparations - not just financial compensation but guarantees that the policies will never be repeated and measures to promote healing from trauma.

Late last year South Australia announced its \$11million reparations fund and it is now time for all other state and territory governments to follow suit. NSW is currently conducting an inquiry into reparations for the Stolen Generations. Such schemes must include reparations for Stolen Generations members who have already passed away.

On the eve of the anniversary of the Apology we launched a report *Healing for Our Stolen Generations: Sharing Our Stories* (see story on page 2) containing four essential elements to create a healing environment for Stolen Generations. These essential elements include healing solutions being led and developed by Stolen Generations members themselves.

The report emphasised the need for collective healing processes; where Stolen Generations members provide a community of care for each other, a support system that cannot be replicated by any other professional means. It highlighted the need for what is known as “trauma-informed” services.

Trauma-informed practice simply refers to policy and practice based on what we know from research about the prevalence of trauma and about how it affects people. These are simple but effective policy initiatives that governments can implement to ensure that we continue the healing work following on from the Apology.



Richard Weston

Richard Weston CEO

Murri Ministry Apology event

Richard told the Parliamentary inquiry that reparations are a critical part of acknowledging the hurt suffered by the Stolen Generations.

“Reparation is about justice and justice starts with recognising the total truth of what colonialism meant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and then setting about creating the environment for healing to occur. This involves governments investing in healing processes that are designed, developed and delivered by Indigenous people for Indigenous people”.

“Healing must occur across all service areas – justice, corrections, drug and alcohol, mental health – and across communities not just at the individual and family levels,” Richard told the inquiry.

Richard called for all outstanding recommendations of the 1997 *Bringing them Home* report to be implemented as a matter of urgency.

If you want more information about the inquiry or wish to make a submission contact the committee secretariat by calling (02) 9230 2739 or by emailing: gpsc3@parliament.nsw.gov.au



New Stolen Generations healing report launched

On 11 February we launched a new report on the healing needs of Stolen Generations *Healing for Our Stolen Generations: Sharing Our Stories* at the NCIE in Redfern.

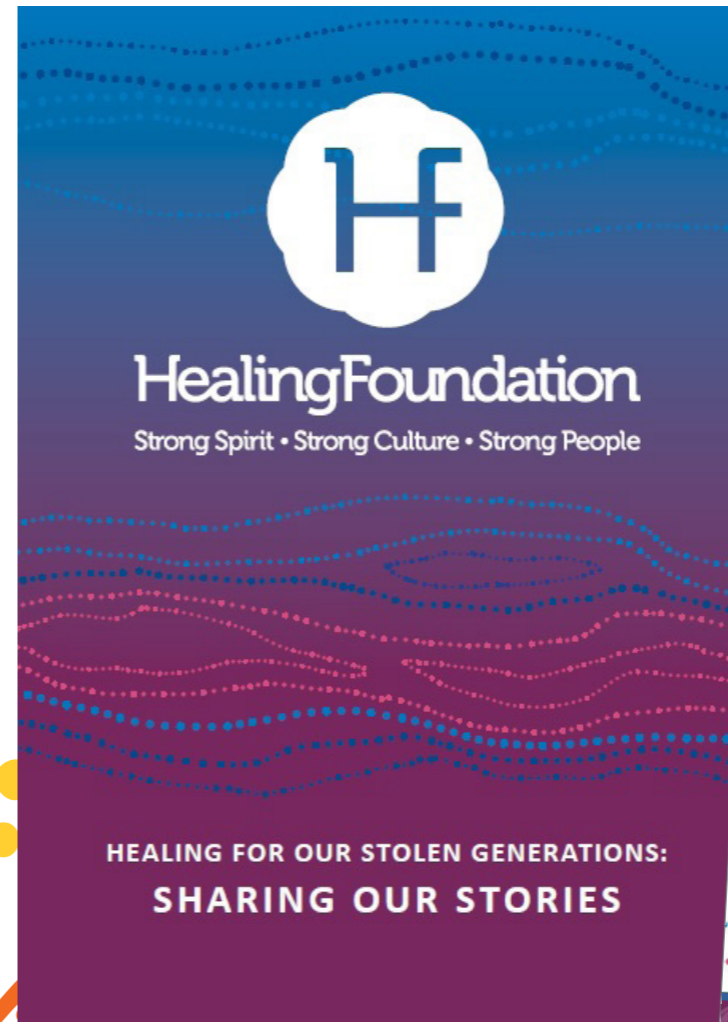
The report analysed 31 Healing Foundation projects involving more than 3,676 Stolen Generations members and contains evidence about what works in healing Stolen Generations.

One of its most important findings is that the western model of one on one counselling doesn't suit all Stolen Generations members especially if they were removed to institutions. The report provides data to support this and will help us in advocating for the healing needs of Stolen Generations members with governments and policy makers.

"Because Stolen Generations members were removed from their families, identities, lands, languages and cultures, they have unique healing needs," Healing Foundation Chair Professor Steve Larkin said.

"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."

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the executive summary of the report. A short video describing collective healing in the words of Stolen Generations members can be found [HERE](#).



Above: A moving performance by Archie Roach
Right: Watching the collective healing video



We would like to thank all who attended the launch and supported our event.



Above: Archie Roach and former residents of the Kinchela Boys Home
Left: Healing Foundation Chair Steve Larkin
Above Left: Aunty Lorraine Peeters sharing her experiences



Brisbane community commemorates the Apology

Hundreds of Brisbane's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community came together in the iconic Musgrave Park to commemorate the 8th anniversary of the Apology at an event hosted by Link-Up (Qld) and supported by the Healing Foundation.

To the great delight of the Queenslanders they were joined by Shane Phillips and NSW Koori Rugby League players, in town for the Indigenous All Stars game and there to show their respect to the Stolen Generations.

After the Welcome to Country and a heart-warming dance performance by students from Brisbane's Murri School the audience heard from Rosalie Kunoth-Monks who spoke of the continued denial of respect and rights to the Stolen Generation and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. *"The Aboriginal people and culture of this land provide the colour and dynamics to Australia and yet our culture and our people are constantly denigrated,"* she said.

Deputy Premier of Queensland, Jackie Trad, emphasised that the anniversary of the Apology was *"a day to remember and reflect, to celebrate and to educate."*

"This is a state where the Queensland Government's top Indigenous Affairs bureaucrat sent children on so-called Christmas holidays with couples in Victoria,"

she reminded people. *"Many would never return – given away like Christmas presents while their real parents had no legal recompense to right the wrong or ease their grief. We must never run from the past. We must confront the painful lessons to ensure we deliver a present and a future where all Australians are truly equal,"* she said to enthusiastic applause.

The audience also heard from Palm Island Mayor Alfred Lacey, Brisbane City Councillor Helen Abrahams and Florence Onus, chair of the Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Committee, who spoke of the importance of collective healing.

A highlight for many people was a performance by Murri music legend, Joe Geia, who performed his classic *Yil Lull* which he dedicated to the Stolen Generations. *"I sing, for the black, people of this land I sing, for the red, and the blood, that was shed,"* he sang to many teary eyes.

CEO of Queensland link-Up, Pat Conlon, said she was proud that her organisation hosted the Apology commemoration. *"It's a time when we come together to honour the lives of the people who were stolen away from their families. We remember those who, through sheer courage, resilience and determination, came back to us and we remember those who we have lost,"* Pat told *Our Healing, Our Way*.

"There are still people that need reconnecting to their families, their culture and their country and we have to continue advocating for our people to determine their own processes and methods of healing," said Pat.

Community members



Performers Rhonda Collard and Bessie Parsons



Above: Rosalie Kunoth-Monks

Left: A mother and daughter taking part in the candle lighting ceremony

Far Left: Florence Onus Chair of the Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Committee

Celebrating our Heroes – Marshall Saunders and the Cherbourg Boys Dormitory



Marshall Saunders is a respected Elder in the Brisbane Murri community and a long time health professional. He is also a survivor of the Cherbourg Boys Dormitory. On the eve Apology anniversary Marshall spoke to Steve Austin on ABC 612 ...

"I was 10 years old, mum passed with leukaemia. So the mission manager threw the three boys into the dormitory. My four sisters went to my auntie's. That drove a wedge through the family.

In the dorm there was about 50 other boys, I often wonder where they all are. A lot of them have passed on. Growing up I couldn't understand why there were boys there whose mums and dads were still in Cherbourg. It was sad for me ... I hated the place.

The rule was discipline; no love. We were not allowed to visit family and they weren't allowed to visit us; there was that fence there and if you walked out of that fence; loss of privileges. All discipline, no love.

It was lonely at night, you'd be crying for your mum or aunty. We'd be thinking, 'what did we do wrong?' Punishments were extreme, harsh.

... during the lead up to the Apology word came filtering out of Canberra that there'd be no compensation; I was looking for the tangibles, okay? How can we heal our pain and hurt? Saying sorry didn't go far enough; it was just the start. One thing that did come out of it was the Healing Foundation and they've been a great support to us providing counselling help but it takes time.

We have two healing camps a year supported by the Healing Foundation, Queensland Link-Up and Relationships Australia. Families still need to be reconnected."

Celebrating our Heroes – Around the Nation

Northern Territory – NT Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation, Darwin

Members of the Northern Territory Stolen Generations got together for morning tea at St Mary's Football Club.



Western Australia - Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation, Broome

Members of the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation watched a video address by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in Broome and then enjoyed a barbeque lunch, stalls, live entertainment and a tour of the renovated KSGAC building.



Victoria – Willum Warrain Aboriginal Corporation, Hastings

Some of the women who attended the Willum Warrain ladies breakfast in Hastings. The women heard from a local Elder about her healing journey and practiced some traditional weaving skills.



NSW – Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, East Nowra

Elders and families came together with their young ones at the Cullunghutti Centre, a purpose built Aboriginal child care centre in East Nowra.

Elders passed down their traditional knowledge through activities such as storytelling, boomerang painting and traditional instrument playing. Beginning with a flag raising ceremony the event finished with the planting of a lemon myrtle tree in the community garden as a sign of respect for the Elders.

VIC - Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group Inc, Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Operative Ltd, Shepparton

Shepparton's annual Apology breakfast brought together local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations, schools, councils and community members. High school students came early to set up the event, put breakfast on the table, hand out welcome gum leaves as people arrive and then introduce the speakers.

All the local secondary schools had a presence at the event and several primary schools.

There was a great turn out with around 300 people attending the event.



To commemorate the Apology anniversary the Healing Foundation funded more than 60 events around the country to honour our Stolen Generations heroes. Here's a sample of tweets from those events.



LEFT TO RIGHT: NSW – Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council, Muswellbrook; South Australia – Circle of Hope, Adelaide; ACT – Relationships Australia Canberra; Queensland – Somerset Hills P & C, Brisbane

