

Scale up Indigenous healing to support communities in crisis

Governments around the country must invest in community led healing strategies to prevent catastrophes in our communities according to the Healing Foundation.

Speaking from the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference in Alice Springs today, Healing Foundation CEO Richard Weston said with many communities already in crisis urgent action was required to improve social and emotional wellbeing.

“Unaddressed the intergenerational trauma, pain and loss Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are experiencing as a result of the Stolen Generations and colonisation manifest in a range of complex issues,” Mr Weston said.

“Existing services are not equipped to deal with trauma and its impacts, meaning families and communities are not receiving the support they need to look after vulnerable people.

“Many schools are also struggling to provide culturally appropriate mental health supports for our children.

“We know addressing trauma and distress through regionally coordinated and community led healing initiatives works. It’s time for governments in every state and territory to stop tinkering at the edges and support healing strategies that are grounded in an understanding of the physical and neurological impacts of trauma.

“While the needs of each community and region will vary these strategies may include healing programs, healing centres, better integration of Western therapies and traditional healing, and measures to improve the relationship between families, hospitals and the mental health system,” Mr Weston said.

Healing Foundation programs address people’s trauma and work with them to improve their social and emotional wellbeing. On average 94% of people who participate in our programs report improvements in their social and emotional wellbeing.

A review of our 2013 and 2014 Stolen Generations programs found 72% of participants were better able to care for their loss and grief after taking part and 68% felt more confident using available support services, meaning they are accessing help before they reach crisis point.

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

Media contact: Raina Hunter, 0407 120 401