

New projects to support Stolen Generations' members

A film documenting stories of women who grew up at the Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Training Home, a culture day in Katherine and a healing gathering are among eight new healing initiatives to be announced on National Sorry Day today.

The projects, which will be funded by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation as part of their *Stolen Generations Initiative*, include:

- A collaborative oral history film involving surviving women Elders from the Cherbourg dormitory, community historians at the Ration Shed, local artists and musicians, professional filmmakers, and young mentees (*Cherbourg Historical Precinct Group*)
- A 3 day healing gathering for former residents of the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls, a pilot virtual support group, and short films documenting the stories of the Coota Girls (*Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation*)
- A "culture day" in Katherine in the Northern Territory where Stolen Generations' members will explore culture and build on their strengths as Aboriginal people through activities such as weaving workshops, painting, silk dyeing, storytelling and recording, and traditional healing massage (*Katherine Regional Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation*)

Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, Link-Up QLD, Link-Up SA (Nunkuwarrin Yunti), the Bringing Them Home Committee WA and Connecting Home will also receive funding.

"The Healing Foundation is excited to announce these new projects today, on National Sorry Day," Healing Foundation CEO Richard Weston said.

"Each of our Stolen Generations projects is designed to encourage collective healing, where people are supported and empowered to heal their communities, families, and themselves.

"What we are finding through our Royal Commission support work¹ is that Aboriginal people generally want to be able to access group healing responses rather than individual counselling. This has been especially evident following hearings into particular institutions, including Cherbourg and Retta Dixon.

"Culture is also integral to healing our Stolen Generations, particularly art and craft, dance and song, being on country, ceremony, knowledge sharing, traditional healing, and language," Mr Weston said.

Including these projects, the Healing Foundation has funded 39 Stolen Generations projects worth over \$1.83 million since 2012.

In 2013 and 2014, 77 per cent of participants in our Stolen Generations projects reported an increased sense of belonging and connection to culture, 72 per cent reported an improved ability to care for their loss and grief and 68 per cent felt more confident utilising available support services.

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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¹ The Healing Foundation is currently providing national support to Indigenous services working with clients affected by institutional child sexual abuse, as part of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*.