



Media Release

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Stolen Generations want a better commitment to tackling trauma

Members of the Stolen Generations are calling on governments to commit to more healing resources to break the cycle of trauma destroying their families and communities, as they commemorate the 10th anniversary of the National Apology.

Chair of The Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Committee Florence Onus says many have never had the opportunity to heal from life-long trauma that began when they were stolen as children and institutionalised.

"Many haven't started their healing journey because they don't have access to the right tools and support. And for those of us who have tackled our demons, we remain worried for our children and grandchildren who have been affected by Intergenerational Trauma," said Ms Onus.

"I cried a dam of tears when I heard the former Prime Minister say 'we're sorry' back in 2018. I think many of us felt as though the pain and suffering we endured as children, and then as adults struggling with unresolved trauma, was finally acknowledged.

"People could no longer say that our history wasn't real," said Ms Onus.

"But 10 years later our people are still struggling. We need to see more focus on healing – and not just for individuals but whole families so that we can fix the health and social problems in our communities and finally close the gap."

Ms Onus spoke at a commemorative breakfast at Parliament House in Canberra, attended by Stolen Generations survivors.

Until recently, it was not known how many stolen children were still alive today but The Healing Foundation is finalising this data as part of its full analysis of current needs and believes there are about 20,000 survivors across Australia.

CEO Richard Weston said: "We hope this work will provide a framework to address issues like national reparations, and generate trauma and healing related services for an ageing Stolen Generations population.

"When we talk to Stolen Generations members, they keep telling us that a critical concern is establishing a different future for their descendants.

"Research shows that the Stolen Generations and their children and grandchildren are twice as likely to be arrested by police and a third less likely to be in good health, compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are already at a disadvantage.

"If we want to close the gap we can't keep ignoring the impact of trauma being passed from one generation to the next," said Mr Weston.

As part of commemorative activities, The Healing Foundation is also hosting a free public concert in Canberra tonight, to celebrate an historical event when Australia faced up to the truth of its past.

Performer Archie Roach said: "The Apology got people together and started the healing process, for me and other people I've met, especially Stolen Generations. I suppose we still need to go forward and address other things affecting our people like health and to close the gap," he said.

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