

## Responding to institutional child sexual abuse

The Healing Foundation has today released a cultural framework to drive healing responses and ensure action on the recommendations made by the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*.

The release of the framework coincides with Prime Minister Scott Morrison's apology to abuse survivors and aims to address the inaction that followed the 1997 Bringing Them Home Report, which outlined 54 recommendations to redress the impact of removal policies and tackle ongoing trauma – most remain unresolved.

With more than 14 per cent of respondents to the Royal Commission coming from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the effects of institutional child sexual abuse are overwhelming.

The Healing Foundation CEO Richard Weston said that while an apology was welcome and seen as a good first step, the inaction from the Bringing Them Home report necessitates a direct response.

"This report documents a cultural framework for addressing child sexual abuse and protecting our children now and into the future because we know the legacy of trauma is not just in the past," Mr Weston said.

"Community capacity to overcome the challenges of colonisation in general, and sexual abuse in particular, has been severely diminished due to the breakdown of cultural structures and processes that previously prevented harm."

The Royal Commission made a number of recommendations in relation to advocacy, support and treatment services for survivors, including providing access to tailored treatment and support services for as long as necessary, along with funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches as an ongoing, integral part of therapeutic responses.

The way forward is clear. However, it requires long term commitment from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations, the broader Australian community and mainstream organisations and collaboration between state and federal governments.

*The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to heal trauma caused by the widespread and deliberate disruption of populations, cultures and languages over 230 years. This includes specific actions like the forced removal of children from their families.*

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