

8 years on from the Apology, addressing trauma is the key

Eight years on from the national Apology Australian governments must redouble their efforts to address the trauma affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, according to the Healing Foundation.

“While the Apology acknowledged the grief, suffering and loss inflicted on Stolen Generations members and their families, as a country I don’t think we’ve fully come to terms with the long term impact of these policies,” Healing Foundation CEO Richard Weston said.

“The trauma of forcibly removing children from their families, identities, lands, languages and cultures has been passed down from generation to generation and continues to profoundly affect our people’s health and wellbeing.

“Unresolved trauma often leads to self-medicating behaviours and has been linked to the development of chronic diseases like cancer and diabetes.

“Efforts to close the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians will continue to be derailed unless we address the systemic trauma affecting our people.

“At a state and territory level investment in trauma informed, healing responses has been the missing piece in the strategy to Close the Gap.

“The national Apology played an important role in acknowledging the wrongs committed against the Stolen Generations and their families but it was only one of 54 recommendations made by the landmark *Bringing them Home*¹ report.

“To effectively tackle the trauma pervading our communities, healing responses and the outstanding recommendations of the 1997 *Bringing them Home* report must be implemented as a priority, in a coordinated way across every state and territory,” Mr Weston said.

Today is the eighth anniversary of the national Apology to the Stolen Generations.

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

¹ *Bringing them Home* is the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. It was published in April 1997.