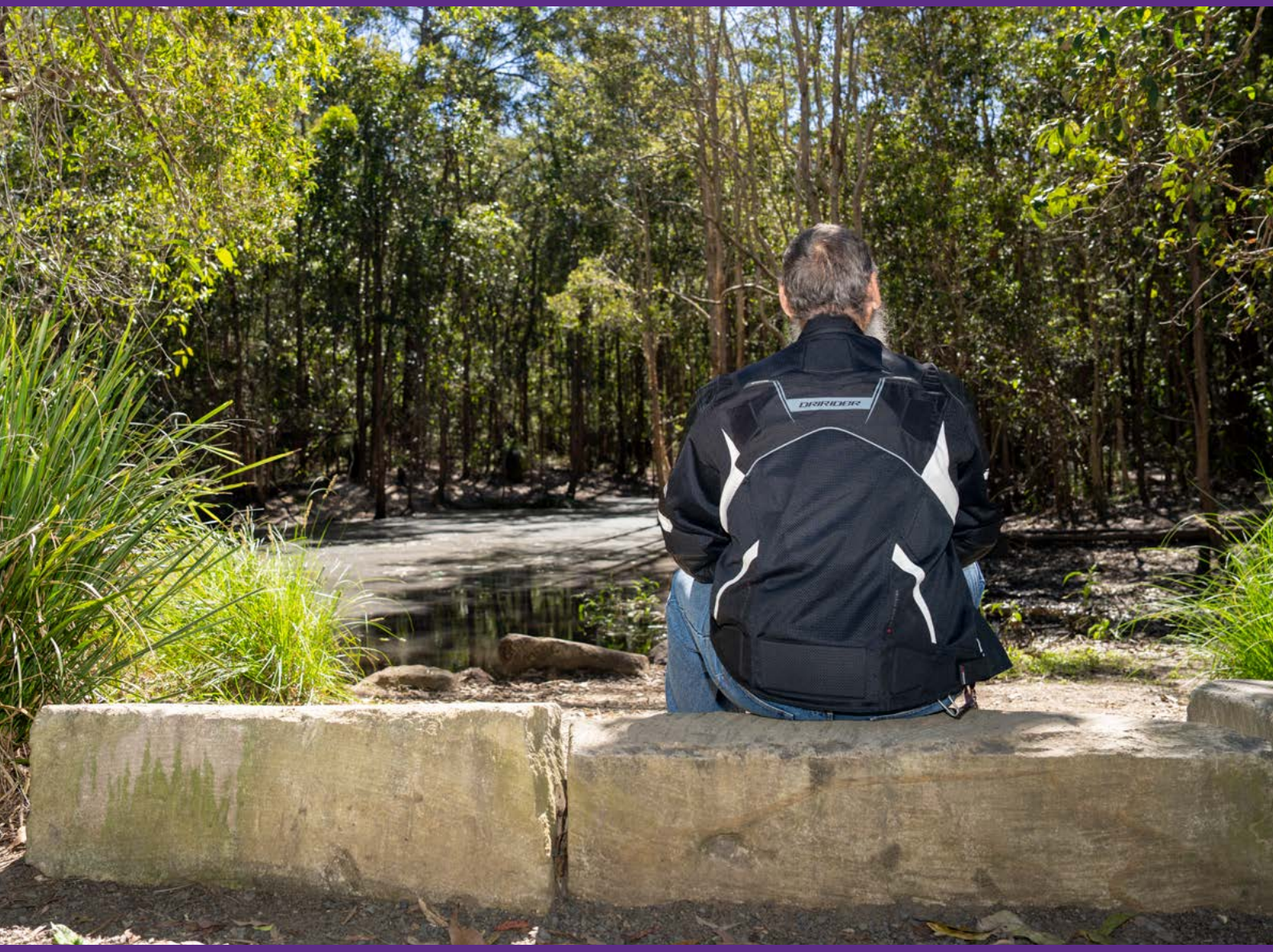
HealingFoundation



Gathering strength: Evaluation of the Collective Healing Grants 2022–2026

JULY 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Healing Foundation acknowledges Country, Custodians and Community of the lands on which we live and work.

We pay our respects to Elders and to Stolen Generations survivors, of the Dreaming and of the here and now and to those who never made it home.

We recognise the ongoing nature of trauma experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commit each day to survivor-led intergenerational healing.

Cultural advice

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised that this document may contain images or names of deceased people.

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This report has been prepared by Think Impact on the instructions, and for the benefit, of The Healing Foundation in relation to supporting the understanding of the Collective Healing Grants evaluation. It is not to be used for any other purpose.

Think Impact is a specialist social impact consultancy based in Melbourne focused on supporting organisations, across all sectors, to manage for better impact.

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Key findings at a glance

The Collective Healing Grants (CHGs) have been making a difference in the lives of Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants for more than a decade. Administered by The Healing Foundation and funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), the grants support culturally-led, community-controlled healing initiatives delivered by Stolen Generations Organisations (SGOs) across Australia. This report presents findings from an evaluation of the CHGs from 2022 to 2026, with a focus on the most recent rounds of granting and draws on longer-term stories and data to assess what the program has achieved and how it can go further.

About the program since 2012

$6.1m funding distributed

56 funded organisations

138 funded initiatives

Over 14 years of granting, the CHGs have distributed over $6.1 million to 56 organisations across ten rounds of funding, supporting 138 initiatives. In rounds 8 to 10, the grants reached more than 3,000 Stolen Generations survivors, descendants and family members, and an estimated 8,700+ participant opportunities across the earlier rounds. The grants operate across three intended domains of change: **Access**, **Truth-telling** and **Healing** – a framework developed collaboratively with SGOs and the steering committee as part of this evaluation.

Why these grants matter

With an estimated 33,600 Stolen Generations survivors identified in 2018–19, the majority now aged over 50, the urgency of culturally appropriate healing responses has never been greater. The landmark *Bringing them home* report made 83 recommendations for justice and healing in 1997, yet research commissioned by The Healing Foundation found that only 6% have been clearly implemented, nearly 30 years on. Against this backdrop, the work of SGOs – and the funding that makes it possible – is not supplementary. For many survivors and their communities, it is essential.

Healing from the forced removal of children is not a single event to be resolved once. Both the trauma and the healing are intergenerational, carried by survivors, their children, grandchildren and communities, and the journey is personal and cyclical, continuing across lifetimes and into future generations. Sustaining connection to community and culture across those generations requires funding that is ongoing and flexible enough to respond to emerging needs, which is why the CHGs matter as much today as when they began.

This work reaches beyond those it directly supports. By enabling communities to reconnect, share and record their histories, the CHGs build public understanding of forced removal and the ongoing legacy of the Stolen Generations. This truth-telling gives all Australians the opportunity to know, and reckon with, a fuller account of our shared history.

What the evaluation found

The evaluation found consistent, positive evidence of change across all three domains. The strongest and most consistent outcomes observed in round 10 (the most recent grant round) included:

- All survey participants reported observing, *'to a great extent'*, that **survivors** experienced more confidence to tell their stories, a stronger sense of belonging and social and emotional wellbeing, and greater pride and self-esteem.
- All survey participants reported observing, *'to a great extent'*, that **families and descendants** had an increased understanding of what Stolen Generations survivors have experienced, a deeper understanding of their own history, and greater pride and self-esteem.
- All survey participants reported that the grants had contributed *'to a great extent'* to increased **organisational capabilities**.

These outcomes are consistent with evidence from earlier grant rounds. Across rounds 1 to 6, an average of 80% of participants reported an increased sense of belonging and connection to culture, 76% reported greater understanding and strength in caring for their loss and grief, and 77% reported overall satisfaction with the programs they participated in.

A defining feature of the data is evidence of intergenerational healing – moments where survivors, descendants and families came together to share stories, strengthen cultural identity and rebuild connections that were fractured by forced removal.



How the grants work in practice

The grants' effectiveness is rooted in their flexibility. The ability to design activities according to community need rather than fitting community need to rigid funding criteria was consistently identified as the program's greatest strength. For organisations delivering work that is highly relational, culturally informed and context-specific, this flexibility is not a convenience, it is fundamental to effectiveness. It also enables organisations to respond to Sorry Business, natural disasters and other unforeseen events without compromising community engagement or healing outcomes.

A trusted partner, not just a funder

The relationship between The Healing Foundation and funded organisations was consistently identified as a strength. Recipients described The Healing Foundation as accessible, responsive and supportive, not simply a funding administrator, but a trusted partner, advocate and sector leader. Streamlined application processes and accessible guidance were particularly valued by smaller organisations with limited capacity to navigate complex funding requirements. At the same time, staff turnover within the granting team can disrupt established relationships, requiring SGOs to re-establish trust and re-explain their history to new contacts. Strengthening handover processes and maintaining continuity of organisational knowledge are important for sustaining the quality of these relationships over time.

A critical funding lifeline

For many SGOs, the CHGs are functioning as more than a project grant. They are a critical funding lifeline filling gaps left by core funding that is either insufficient, too restricted or simply unavailable for culturally led, healing-focused work. Without the CHGs, many of these activities simply would not have happened. This reflects a structural issue in the sector: organisations are delivering complex, emotionally intensive work, often across large geographic areas, without stable foundational funding.

Four elements underpin effective healing

Four elements consistently underpin the most effective healing activities funded through the CHGs:

- coming together with other survivors
- reconnecting with culture and cultural identity
- trauma-aware, healing-informed services
- healing solutions led by Stolen Generations survivors themselves.

Across the qualitative data, organisations consistently emphasised that healing, truth-telling and reconnection require trust, cultural safety and trauma-informed practice. Survivors and descendants engaged on their own terms and at a pace that was right for them. Building trust took time, and organisations invested in relationship-building, Elder engagement and ongoing conversations rather than rushing participation. This was particularly important for activities involving personal storytelling and the recording of survivor narratives, where consent, sensitivity and cultural safety were paramount.

Practical barriers also matter. Transport, accommodation and catering support have been critical to enabling participation, particularly for survivors and descendants in regional and remote areas. By reducing these financial and logistical barriers, the CHGs have made healing experiences possible that would otherwise not have occurred.

Alignment with *From Sorry to Action*

The evaluation findings demonstrate that the CHGs are contributing to the priorities and vision of *From Sorry to Action: A plan to act on Bringing them home (2026–2028)*, launched by The Healing Foundation in May 2026. Across funding rounds, grants have supported activities that strengthen intergenerational healing, truth-telling and SGO capacity – directly advancing the plan's national priorities for Stolen Generations survivors, descendants and communities.

Recommendations to strengthen grants impact

The evaluation provides seven recommendations to strengthen the Collective Healing Grants. These are not departures from the current model – they are refinements that would allow the program to go further, reach more communities, and better support the sustainability of the SGOs that deliver this work.

At the heart of these recommendations is a call for The Healing Foundation to use the evidence generated through this evaluation to advocate to NIAA for the sustained, long-term investment that SGOs need to meet the changing and increasingly urgent needs of Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities.

Recommendation 1: Increase and diversify funding

Demand far exceeds available funding, and annual project grants do not align with the long-term nature of healing work. We recommend NIAA increase the overall funding pool, introduce multi-year funding streams (of three to five years) for established SGOs, consider tiered grant categories – small, medium and larger strategic grants – and review grant ceilings to better reflect the real costs of delivering activities in regional and remote locations. The Healing Foundation should use this evaluation's evidence to advocate for increased investment and develop a strong evidence base for future funding advocacy.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen SGO sustainability and capacity

Many SGOs are delivering highly specialised work with limited infrastructure and operational resources. We recommend NIAA allow additional grant funding to support organisational development and core operational capacity. The Healing Foundation should develop a structured capability-building program covering governance, financial management, grant writing, evaluation, trauma-informed practice and workforce wellbeing – and broker access to shared expertise for smaller organisations that cannot access these resources independently.

Recommendation 3: Expand reach to under-served communities and regions

Some communities affected by Stolen Generations policies are not yet accessing support through the program – including in Tasmania, Far North Queensland and parts of regional and remote Western Australia and South Australia. We recommend targeted outreach to under-represented regions, pre-application support and grant readiness assistance for smaller organisations and first-time applicants, and improved mapping of where healing activities are occurring and where gaps remain. Additional funding to SGOs would support them to reach into under-served communities.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen relationship continuity and grant administration

Flexibility, trust and cultural responsiveness are central to effective healing. Staff turnover within the grants team can disrupt established relationships, requiring SGOs to re-establish trust and re-explain their history to new contacts – a significant burden on already stretched organisations. We recommend The Healing Foundation implement formal handover processes when granting staff change, maintain organisational profiles and relationship histories accessible to new staff, and communicate proactively with SGOs when staffing changes occur. NIAA should support grant settings that prioritise flexibility, community leadership and local decision-making.

Recommendation 5: Reduce administrative burden and strengthen outcomes reporting

SGOs want to demonstrate impact but frequently experience reporting fatigue, and evidencing outcomes is itself a capability that takes time, resources and infrastructure to build. Available data on outcomes varied in completeness and consistency across organisations, and the full reach and impact of the CHGs is likely larger than this data can show. We recommend reporting requirements are proportionate to grant size and organisational capacity. The Healing Foundation should co-design streamlined reporting approaches with SGOs, develop culturally appropriate evaluation tools that can be adapted locally, invest in simple digital reporting systems that reduce duplication, and continue to embed Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles throughout.

Recommendation 6: Build a national Stolen Generations healing network

SGOs consistently expressed a desire to learn from one another and reduce duplication of effort, and the capability workshops incorporated into this evaluation were genuinely welcomed as a first step. We recommend The Healing Foundation formalise its role as a national convenor – facilitating annual learning forums, communities of practice, peer mentoring and online knowledge-sharing platforms. NIAA should support sector development activities alongside project funding.

Recommendation 7: Support collaborative and place-based approaches to healing

Healing is collective in nature, yet current funding arrangements can inadvertently create competition between organisations. We recommend NIAA create funding streams designed for collaborative applications involving multiple SGOs and provide larger grants for regional partnerships and collective impact initiatives. The Healing Foundation should facilitate partnership development between SGOs working on shared priorities, identify opportunities for regional collaboration, and ensure collaborative funding models do not disadvantage smaller organisations or communities with less grant-writing capacity.



Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to the Stolen Generations Organisations and their staff, community members and clients who generously shared their stories, insights and experiences as part of this evaluation. We recognise that this sharing is not without personal cost, and that these organisations operate tirelessly in a complex and under-resourced landscape, often carrying significant emotional and cultural responsibilities while supporting some of the most vulnerable members of community. Your time, trust and openness have made this evaluation possible and meaningful.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the members of the steering committee, who have generously given their time, expertise and lived experience to guide and strengthen this evaluation over the past two years. Their insight and commitment have been invaluable.

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Tiffany McComsey	CEO, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation
Patricia Thompson AM	CEO, Link-Up Queensland
Tracy Bright	Program Manager, Link-Up Queensland (stand in for Patricia Thompson AM)
Jenny Day	Interim CEO, Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation

We wish to acknowledge and thank The Healing Foundation for their leadership in commissioning this evaluation, and for their ongoing commitment to supporting Stolen Generations survivors, families and descendants. We extend our sincere thanks to The Healing Foundation project team for their guidance, responsiveness and collaboration throughout this work.

About this report

Collective Healing Grants have been distributed by The Healing Foundation to Stolen Generations Organisations on behalf of the National Indigenous Australians Agency since 2012. This document provides an evaluation of the Collective Healing Grants, since it began and with a particular focus on the past four years of grants.

The purpose of this evaluation is to understand and communicate the changes created by the Collective Healing Grants – for Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants, and the organisations that support them and sought to answer the following questions:

- What changes have the Collective Healing Grants created in the past?
- Could these changes have occurred without the Collective Healing Grants?
- What changes are the Collective Healing Grants creating now?
- How do Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants describe the positive changes created by the Collective Healing Grants?
- What are the key opportunities to create more positive change through the Collective Healing Grants?
- Are there other needs that the Collective Healing Grants are not yet addressing?
- Would the Collective Healing Grants have more impact if managed differently?

This evaluation focuses on activities and initiatives funded through the Collective Healing Grants program from 2022 to 2026, spanning rounds 8 to 10, including Commemorative Grants (2024–25). It draws on new data and stories collected for round 10, alongside insights from acquittal reports and data available from rounds 8, 9 and 10. To provide a longer view of the program's impact, the evaluation also draws on previous analyses conducted for rounds 1 to 6. No data was available for round 7 grants. Together, these sources offer a picture of the changes created by the Collective Healing Grants across more than a decade of granting activity.

Quotations used in this report are identified as being from the perspective of recipients of round 10 grants or a past round (rounds 8 and 9). Quotations received through surveys, interviews and workshops have been included anonymously.

About the authors

Think Impact is a social impact consultancy working to create positive change for business, government, philanthropy and the community. Think Impact delivers tailored solutions that help organisations design their intended impact, measure and evaluate outcomes, communicate value clearly, and improve impact over time by embedding evidence, learning and stakeholder perspectives into decision-making and practice.

This evaluation was led by Suzi Young, with Nichole Maybury and Dhruv Iyer as co-authors, all of Think Impact. All three are non-Indigenous evaluators.

Together the team approaches this work with cultural humility and a shared commitment to community-led processes, recognising that First Nations peoples have the inherent right to determine how their stories and data are collected, interpreted and used. We are committed to ensuring evaluation processes strengthen, rather than extract from, the communities they involve.

We also come to this work as learners. The stories shared by Stolen Generations survivors, their families and the organisations that support them are not data points, they are accounts of survival, resilience and the enduring impacts of policies that governments have still failed to adequately address. We are deeply grateful to everyone who trusted us with their experiences. That trust is not something we take lightly. The stories in this report have stayed with us, and we hope they stay with the reader too.

The evaluation was guided throughout by a Project Steering Committee of SGO representatives, whose input shaped the evaluation approach, the story of change, and the interpretation of findings.

Glossary

The following terms and acronyms are used in this report:

Term	Definition
Activity/initiative	An action or effort undertaken which is intended to create change for beneficiaries.
Acquittal report	A report submitted by a funded organisation at the end of a grant, detailing how the funds were used and what was achieved.
Colonial load	Colonial load is the load placed knowingly and unknowingly on First Nations people by Settlers and institutions. It includes biases, assumptions, expectations and entitlement held by Settlers. Settlers are often ignorant or in denial of the load's existence. The Weenthunga Health Network distinguishes this from cultural responsibility which is how community would like First Nations people to show up and how they've been taught to show up for family, community and Country. As Weenthunga writes, cultural responsibility is something that First Nations people are proud to hold. Whereas colonial load is a burden and when coupled with racism harms First Nations people. Refer here to read more: https://weenthunga.com.au/march-enews-recognising-colonial-load-in-the-workplace/.
Country	The lands, waters and skies to which First Nations peoples are connected through ancestry, culture and lore. Capitalised to reflect this cultural meaning.
First Nations peoples	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Used in this report as the collective term, except where source material uses other wording.
Healing	Used in this report to describe collective, cultural and intergenerational processes of recovery – not clinical treatment.
Impact	The total sum or effect of change caused by an organisation, program or activity.
Indigenous Data Sovereignty	The right of First Nations/Indigenous peoples to exercise ownership over Indigenous Data. Ownership of data can be expressed through the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous Data.
Intended impact	A statement of the future impact that the program or activity intends to create
Intergenerational trauma	Trauma transmitted across generations through the ongoing effects of forced removal, dispossession and disrupted connection to culture, Country and kin.
n=	Sample size. For example, n=8 indicates eight respondents.
Outcome	Change(s) that people experience as a result of an activity. An outcome can be positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect, long-term or short-term, social or environmental. An outcome should be described as an end state – what will be seen if the desired change has occurred.
Outcomes framework	A tool that outlines what will be measured, and by whom, to enable change to be tracked and managed.
Steering committee	A committee of SGO representatives that guided the evaluation, including the story of change and outcomes framework.
Round	A funding cycle of the Collective Healing Grants, usually over the duration of 12 months.
Stolen Generations	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed or separated from their families and communities by governments, churches and welfare bodies using official laws, practices and policies that legitimised compulsion, duress or undue influence.
Stolen Generations Organisation (SGO)	An organisation established to provide services, support and advocacy for Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants.
Story of change	This is the starting point for measuring impact. It outlines how you think the activities you run will lead to change. It tells the story of how stakeholders are impacted by an activity, program or initiative. Also known as a theory of change.
Survivors	Members of the Stolen Generations who were forcibly removed as children.

Understanding the context

The Stolen Generations

From the mid-1800s through to the 1980s, successive Australian government policies sanctioned the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities. These children – now known as the Stolen Generations – were taken under the belief that assimilation into white Australian society was both desirable and necessary, severing connections to culture, Country, language and kin that are fundamental to First Nations peoples' identity and wellbeing.

The landmark 1997 *Bringing them home* report, which followed the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, documented the profound and ongoing trauma caused by these policies. The report found that forcible removal was not only widespread but was experienced as an act of profound violence – against individuals, families and entire communities. Despite its 83 recommendations, progress toward justice and healing has been 'woefully inadequate'. The 2025 report *Are you waiting for us to die?* found that only 6% of those recommendations have been clearly implemented, nearly 30 years later (The Healing Foundation, 2025).

The impacts of forced removal do not stop with those who were removed. As the *Bringing them home* report made clear, the trauma is inherited by survivors' children and grandchildren in complex and sometimes heightened ways, fracturing family bonds and cultural continuity across generations. This is reflected in the data – research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that Stolen Generations survivors and their families fare worse across a range of health and social outcomes – not just compared to non-Indigenous Australians, but compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were not removed.

With an estimated 33,600 Stolen Generations survivors identified in 2018–19, the majority of whom are now aged over 50, the urgency of healing responses has never been greater (AIHW, 2021).

Truth-telling is central to healing. For many survivors and their descendants, being able to share their stories and having those stories heard and acknowledged is itself a form of restoration. Culturally safe, community-led healing responses are essential not only to individual recovery but to rebuilding the collective strength of communities that were deliberately fractured by government policy.

About The Healing Foundation

The Healing Foundation supports Stolen Generations survivors – the many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people taken, as babies and children, from loving families, communities, culture and Country under previous government policies. These government policies of forced removal existed from the mid-1800s to the 1980s and have created a harmful legacy for Stolen Generations survivors and their families. These stories are not well understood amongst the public, and current government policies and practices continue to overlook the needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their families.

About the Collective Healing Grants

The Collective Healing Grants are a set of recurring annual grants distributed by The Healing Foundation since 2012 for Stolen Generations Initiatives, with funding provided by the NIAA. These initiatives are designed to meet the unique healing needs and aspirations of Stolen Generations survivors, with a focus on collective healing.



Figure 1 Overview of the Collective Healing Grants funding allocations



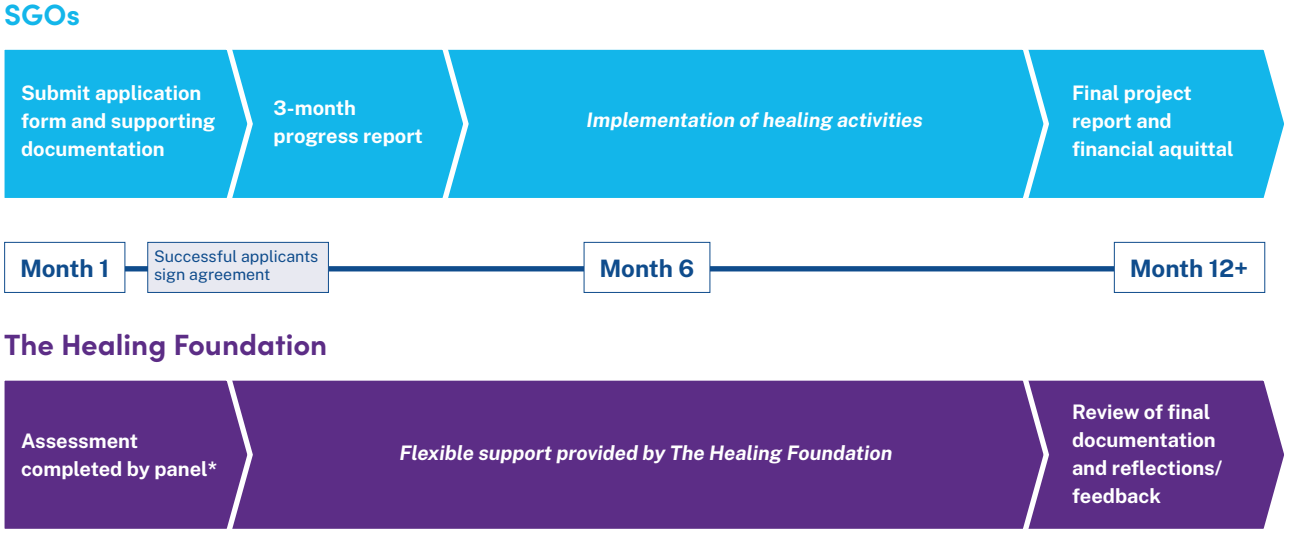
The purpose of the CHGs are to[1]:

- Support Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants through initiatives that promote healing, strengthen community connections, and enhance the wellbeing for Stolen Generations survivors and their communities. These initiatives are delivered by dedicated and committed organisations working to create lasting and positive change across Australia.
- Provide a program that emphasises the importance of intergenerational connections, cultural preservation, and capacity building within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

About the grants process

The grants are administered by The Healing Foundation, who have a granting team that invites and engages SGOs across Australia to apply for the grants, supports the assessment process and provides flexible support to SGOs with the delivery of their funded activity.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the funding cycle adopted for the 2025–26 granting round.



*** Criteria:**

- Survivor-led initiatives.
- Contribution to collective healing for survivors, their families and communities.
- Strengths-based approach.
- Trauma-aware and culturally informed methodologies.

Figure 2 Granting cycle overview, from 2025 guidelines

1 Available at The Healing Foundation website, healingfoundation.org.au, May 2026

Evaluation approach

The Healing Foundation engaged Think Impact in 2024 to undertake this evaluation of the Collective Healing Grants program from 2022 to 2026, with a primary focus on rounds 9 and 10 (2024–2026), and contextual insights drawn from earlier rounds through previously published evaluation reports.

The evaluation sought to answer three core questions: what changes have the CHGs created in the past; what changes are they creating now; and what opportunities exist to create more positive change in the future? These questions were developed to find a shared way to capture and communicate the stories of change that happen because of diverse activities funded by CHGs.

The evaluation was guided by a steering committee of representatives from SGOs and by a culturally informed approach grounded in the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty, recognising the right of SGOs and communities to inform how data about their work is collected, interpreted and used. The steering committee, comprising representatives from SGOs across Australia, provided input into the evaluation approach and helped shape the story of change and outcomes framework that underpins this report.

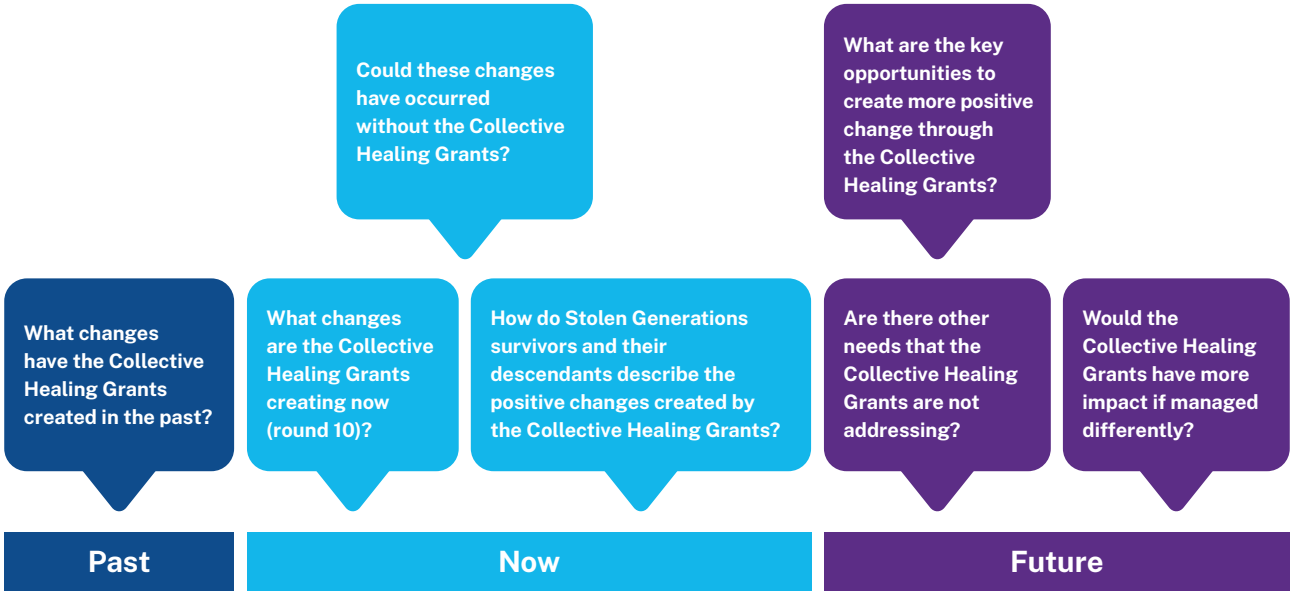


Figure 3 Evaluation questions





Evaluation framework

The Collective Healing Grants story of change and outcomes framework was developed collaboratively with SGOs, the steering committee and other stakeholders between May and December 2025. This involved context interviews with SGO representatives, focus groups with grant recipients, and ongoing input from the steering committee across a series of meetings during the project. The framework defines the intended impact of the CHGs across three domains – **Access, Truth-telling** and **Healing** – and guided the design of all data collection tools and analysis.

For recent recipients, the reflections included an opportunity to yarn with participants and document these experiences, participate in case study development and complete a survey which included open text responses and an assessment of the degree to which the grant had contributed to a set of outcomes for people involved in the funded activity.

How data was collected

Data was gathered across six streams:

- **Review of previous evaluation reports** covering rounds 1 to 6, drawing on the 2015 and 2022 reports to establish historical context and trends.
- **Acquittal report analysis** for rounds 8 to 10, with reports available from three of four organisations in round 8; 15 of 25 in round 9; and four of 22 in round 10.
- **Online surveys** administered February–May 2026: a qualitative insights survey for past-round recipients (n=8) and an outcomes survey for current round 10 recipients (n=9), capturing observed changes for survivors, families and descendants, and funded organisations.
- **A yarning guide** (optional) made available to grantees to facilitate community-level conversations about change, enabling locally led data collection alongside the surveys.
- **In-depth interviews** with SGO staff (n=~15), providing richer qualitative insight into program impacts and informing the case studies developed as part of the evaluation.
- **Capability building workshops** delivered with grant recipients (December 2025, January and March 2026), which was a further channel for gathering experience and feedback.

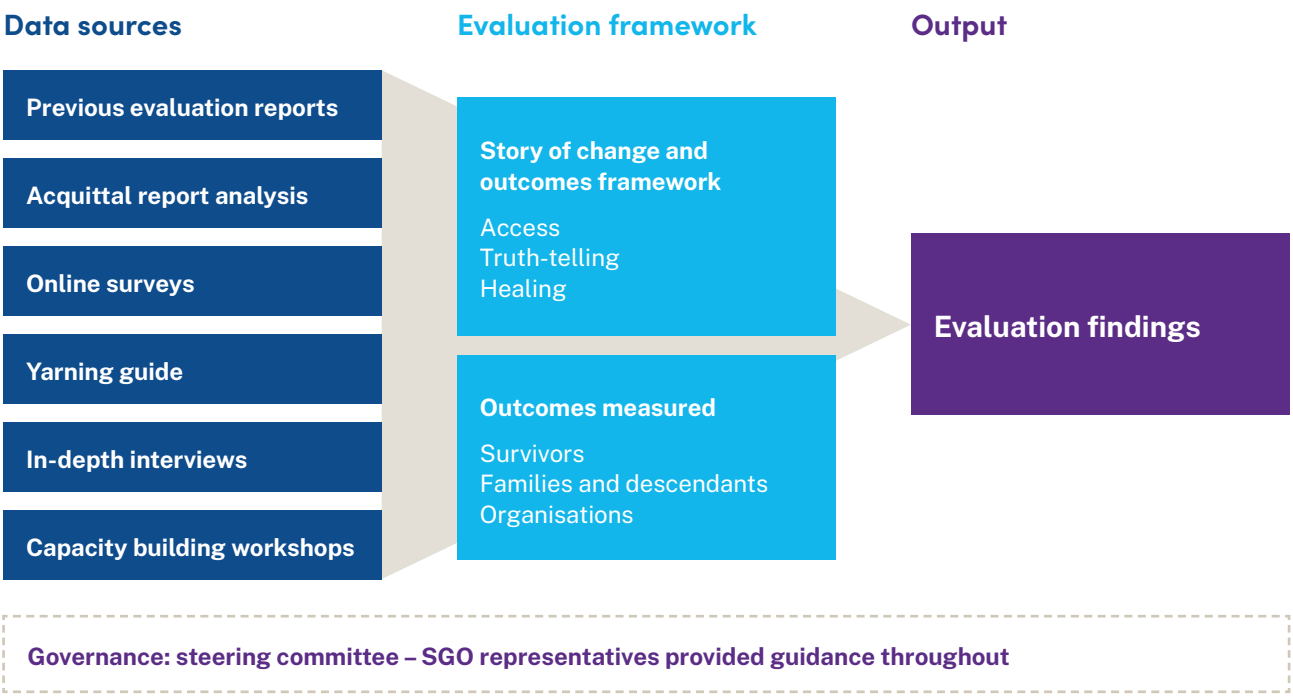


Figure 4 Data sources contributing to the evaluation findings

Limitations

Findings reflect a partial picture. This is due to varied acquittal report submission rates, and some round 10 initiatives were still in progress at the time of writing. Reporting consistency also varied across organisations, reflecting differences in capacity and resourcing. Similarly, participation rates in surveys varied. We acknowledge the significant capacity constraints many SGOs operate within and are grateful for the time contributed to this evaluation.

The Collective Healing Grants story of change

The CHGs story of change below provides a shared narrative of why the CHGs are needed, how the CHGs respond to this need and the intended changes created by the grants. As outlined in the story below, healing is deeply personal and not a one-off event. For Stolen Generations survivors, descendants and families, it is an ongoing, cyclical journey, and the CHGs are flexible enough to support it.

The story of change and outcomes framework were developed in consultation with SGOs and the steering committee undertaken between May–December 2025 and reflect the experiences and aspirations of Stolen Generations communities.

The story of change and outcomes framework underpin this outcomes evaluation, providing an articulation of the intended impact of the CHGs, including the type of outcomes and who experiences these outcomes, and it highlights the many ways recipients of the CHGs use funds to support their work.

The story of change also provides the context for understanding how the future granting can be strengthened so it continues to respond to the needs and priorities of Stolen Generations communities.

The story of change and outcomes framework include the three key areas of change that are broadly described as **Access, Truth-telling** and **Healing** and Appendix B provides an overview of the indicators used to understand these changes for the most recent recipients.



Collective Healing Grants story of change

Why are the Collective Healing Grants needed?

Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants don't have access to the supports, respect and recognition to meet their health and wellbeing needs and enable healing to occur.

SGOs and other key organisations that specifically represent and support survivors, their families and descendants do not have the commitment of funding, infrastructure, capacity and capabilities to meet their needs.

These deeply under-resourced organisations are also expected to lead broader community awareness and engagement with Stolen Generations history, including understanding the unique needs of survivors, their families and descendants, and the importance of remembrance days.

so

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How do Collective Healing Grants currently respond to the need?

Collective Healing Grants provide annual financial support of approximately $50k to SGOs and other organisations with a focus on supporting Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants.

Grant activities are self-determined by recipients with the grants providing flexible funding that can respond to changing community needs and priorities.

The grants enable these organisations to:

- provide intergenerational support direct to survivors, their families and descendants
- sustain core organisational functions
- deliver activities designed to support healing for survivors, their families and descendants; and raise awareness of Stolen Generations history and the need for ongoing support including culturally safe, trauma-informed aged care and health services, equitable redress and prioritised access to records.

Grants provide opportunities for knowledge creation and sharing, including seed funding to test and evidence activities that can be replicated and scaled across survivor networks.

and then

The changes we want Collective Healing Grants to create

Collective Healing Grants enable positive changes to be experienced in many diverse and contextualised ways:

Survivors, their families and descendants

- Access to culturally safe activities and services that support healing
- Feeling safe to express themselves
- Feeling a sense of belonging
- Increased understanding of survivors' experiences
- Healing through connection to Culture, Country, self and others
- Reconnecting with their mob
- Healing intergenerational trauma

Organisations

- Access to resources and building capabilities
- Access to survivors and a living archive of Stolen Generations knowledge and stories
- Ability to collaborate with other SGOs
- Strengthened education resources and creative documentation of survivor stories (i.e. films, dance, art)

Community

- Access to survivors' stories
- Awareness of Stolen Generations history and a fuller account of Australia's history
- Understanding the ongoing impacts of Stolen Generations history
- Understanding the needs of survivors and their descendants
- Understanding the meaning of remembrance days

Figure 5 Collective Healing Grants – story of change

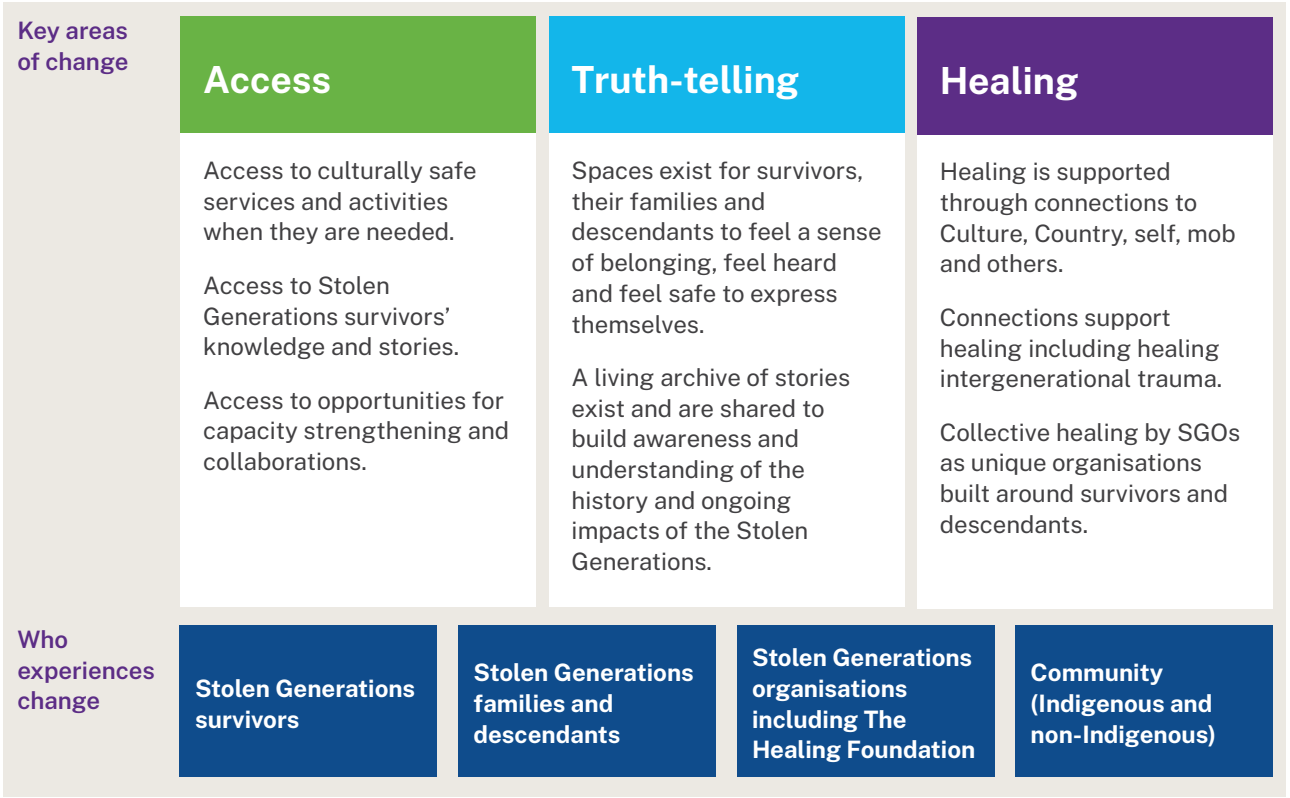


Figure 6 Collective Healing Grants – intended impact

Grants activity overview

The Collective Healing Grants have been distributed to communities since 2012 to fund Stolen Generations initiatives. During these years there have been ten rounds of funding distributed to SGOs. In total over $6.1m of funding[2] has been distributed to 56 organisations since 2012, supporting 138 initiatives.

$6.1m funding distributed

56 funded organisations

138 funded initiatives

The figure below illustrates the grant history since the CHGs started in 2012. The last two rounds have seen more organisations funded and more money distributed compared with previous rounds.

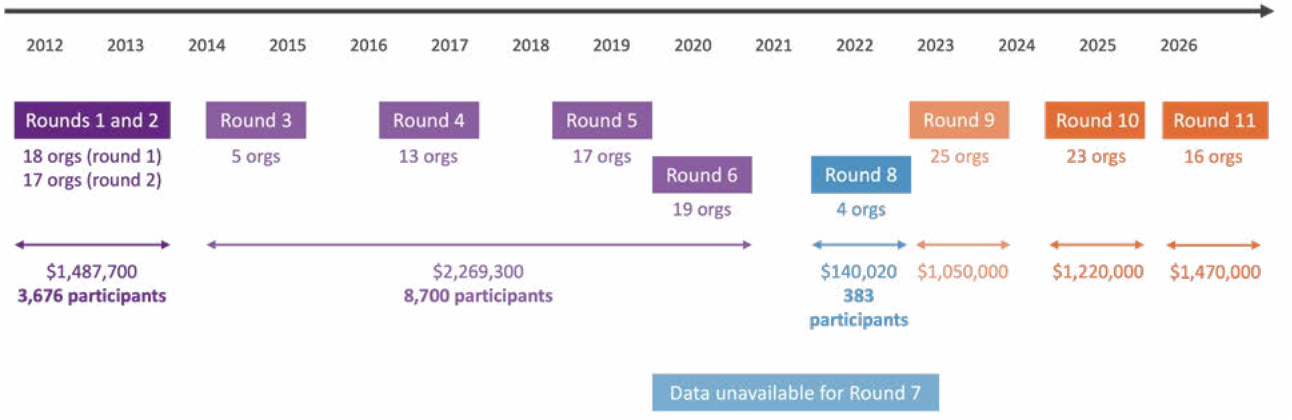


Figure 7 Grant timeline (as at July 2026 based on available data)

To understand the scale and reach of the CHGs, Figure 8 illustrates the geographic distribution of the 35 granted organisations for rounds 8 to 10 (representing 51 funded initiatives) distributed across Australia in support of Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities. The geographic spread of funded organisations is reflective of the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from every state and territory across Australia, affecting one in 10 to one in three children[3]. An interactive map provided on The Healing Foundation website shows the hundreds of institutions, reserves and missions nationwide where children are known or thought to have been placed.[4]

The map in Figure 8 illustrates the location of funded organisations, however, many of the funded activities were delivered outside of these locations or covered broad regions. For example, the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress located in Alice Springs provides support across a vast area, including up to Tennant Creek and down to the South Australian border (see the case study in Appendix A). Another point the map highlights is that no organisations or initiatives have been funded in Tasmania.

2 Please note this does not include data for Round 7 which was unavailable, and does not include data for round 11 which was outside the scope of this evaluation.

3 Available at https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/stolen-generations

4 The Stolen Generations Institutions Map, available at https://map.healingfoundation.org.au/

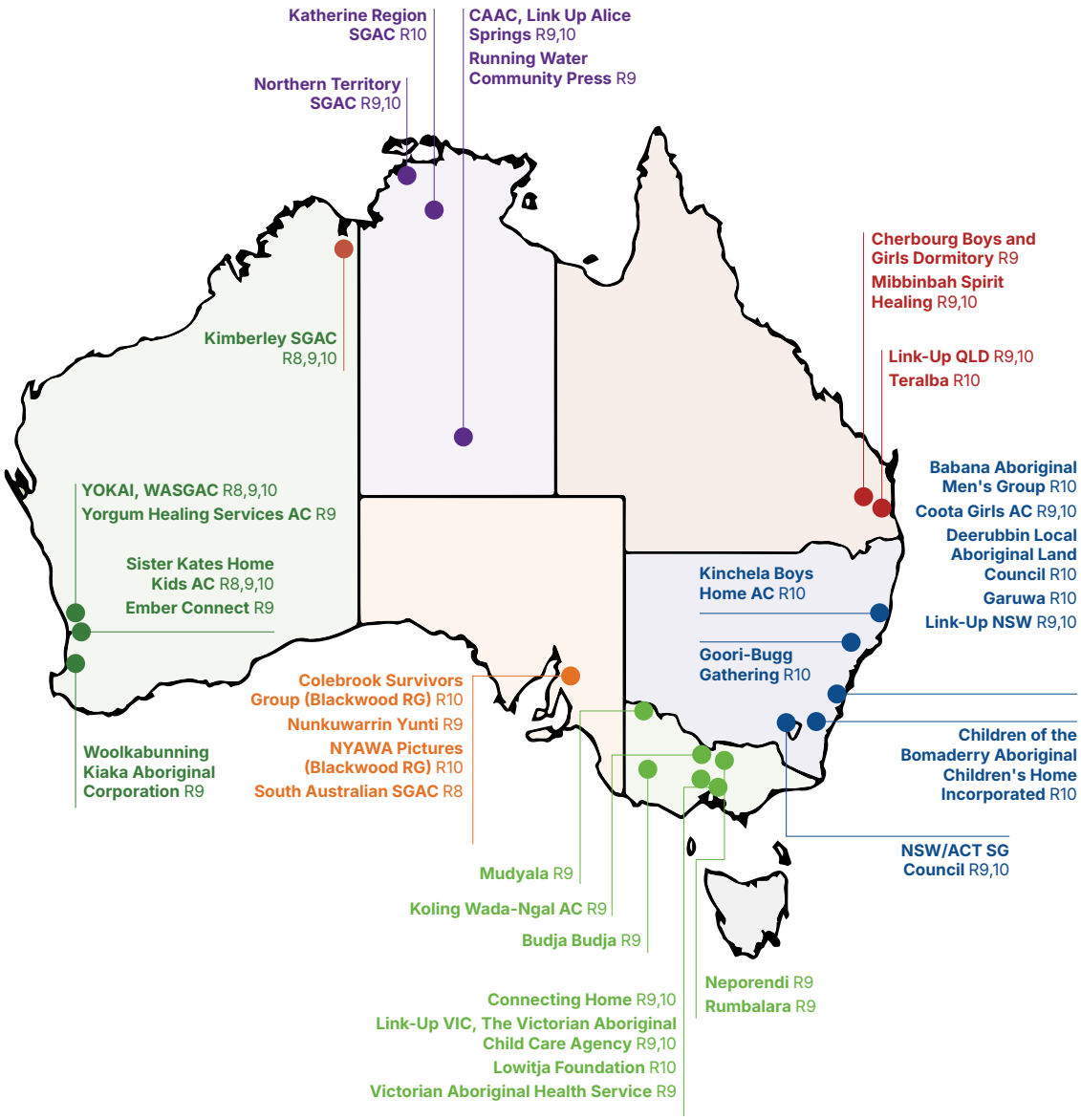


Figure 8 Map illustrating location of grantees for rounds 8 to 10

Funded organisations

The following table is an overview of the organisations funded through the CHGs over the 14 years of funding, including rounds 1 (2012) to 10 (up to 2026) – it excludes round 7 for which data is unavailable. It provides a summary of the funding rounds according to organisations funded and total organisations per round.

In summary, the CHGs has seen:

- 56 individual organisations funded across the ten rounds[5] of the CHGs
- 35 organisations were funded in rounds 8 to 10; with 17 of these organisations receiving funding for the first time
- 28 organisations have been funded for a single round only
- 8 organisations funded for two rounds
- 6 organisations funded for three rounds
- 5 organisations funded for four rounds
- 2 organisations funded for five rounds
- 4 organisations funded for six rounds
- 2 organisations funded for seven rounds (Connecting Home, Kimberley SGAC)
- 1 organisation funded for eight rounds (Link-Up QLD)

Please note that some data may be missing.

5 This excludes round 7 as data was not available.

Table 1 Organisations funded for each grant round

Organisation	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R8	R9	R10	Totals
Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat	●	●								2
Aboriginal Elders and Community Care Services	●									1
Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia						●				1
Aboriginal Sobriety Group	●									1
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	●			●						2
Babana Aboriginal Men's Group									●	1
Bringing Them Home Committee (WA)		●		●	●					3
Blackwood Reconciliation Group (auspiced Colbrook Survivors Group R9, NYAWA Pictures R10)								●	●	2
Budja Budja Aboriginal Cooperative								●		1
Catholic Education South Australia (Martin Pascoe)		●		●	●					3
Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Link Up Alice Springs						●		●	●	3
Cherbourg Boys & Girls Dormitory		●		●	●			●		4
Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Inc.						●			●	2
Clarence Valley Aboriginal Healing Centre						●				1
Connecting Home	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	7
Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation		●	●	●		●		●	●	6
Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council									●	1
Ember Connect								●		1
Garuwa Films (auspiced by Common Ground)									●	1
Goori-Bugg (auspiced by Maling Productions)									●	1
Gurriny Yealamucka	●									1
Healing Waters					●					1
Hope Community Services					●					1
Katherine Region Stolen Generations		●		●					●	3
Katherine Regional Aboriginal Health Services		●				●				2
Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	7
Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation	●	●	●		●	●			●	6
Koling wada-ngal Aboriginal Corporation								●		1
Link-Up NSW		●				●		●	●	4
Link-Up QLD	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	8
Link-Up VIC – The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency		●		●	●			●	●	5
Lowitja Institute – Lowitja Foundation									●	1
Mibbinbah Spirit Healing								●	●	2
Mudyala Aboriginal Corporation								●		1
Neporendi Aboriginal Forum Inc								●		1
Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation	●	●			●	●		●	●	6
NSW/ACT Stolen Generations Council								●	●	2
NPY Women's Council						●				1
Nunkuwarrin Yunti (Link-Up South Australia)		●	●			●		●		4
Pangula Mannamurna	●									1
Relationships Australia		●								1

Organisation	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R8	R9	R10	Totals
Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative	●			●				●		3
Running Water Community Press								●		1
Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation	●				●	●	●	●	●	6
South Australia Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation							●			1
Teralba Park Support Group									●	1
Townsville ATSI Health Service	●									1
Tullawon Health	●									1
Umoona Tjutagku	●									1
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service								●		1
Western Australia Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (YOKAI)					●	●	●	●	●	5
Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative	●			●						2
Winangali Marumali	●			●	●	●				4
Woolkabunning Kiaka Aboriginal Corporation (Roelands)					●	●		●		3
Yorgum Healing Services Aboriginal Corporation		●		●		●		●		4
Yura Yungi Aboriginal Medical Service	●									1
Total	**18**	**17**	**5**	**13**	**15**	**19**	**4**	**25**	**22**	**138**

Key

Organisations also funded in rounds 8 to 10
Organisations funded for the first time in rounds 8 to 10

● ● Received funding

Funded activities

Table 2 below provides an overview of activities funded through the CHGs. The types of activities funded across the rounds are similar, demonstrating the ongoing need to support survivor-led healing activities including gatherings, retreats and camps where survivors, descendants and families come together for healing, support to attend and deliver commemorative events and programs and funding to support truth-telling, including recording survivor stories (documented or filmed) which have been shared with families and communities through exhibitions and events.

Other more unique activities have included online communities and intergenerational mentoring programs. Funded activities have also supported building the capability of SGOs to support survivors, descendants and their families, such as skill-building in trauma-aware and healing-informed practices.

With Stolen Generations survivors ageing, the types of activities and how they are run so survivors can participate, is evolving. As an ageing group, there is also increasing urgency to capture survivor stories. This is reflected in recent funding rounds, which have supported activities such as photo and story archives, and the filming and recording of survivor stories.

While there has been some variation across rounds in application processes, funding structures and implementation, funded activities have centred on supporting healing for Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants. The one exception was during the COVID-19 pandemic over rounds 5 (in part) and 6, where The Healing Foundation funded SGOs to support First Nations Peoples with COVID-19 relief. During this time, 70% of Stolen Generations survivors reported that COVID-19 and the restrictions had negatively impacted their healing journey.[6]

Table 2 Overview of funded activities supporting Access, Truth-telling and Healing

Activities – rounds 1 to 6	Activities – rounds 8 to 10
• Material support for Stolen Generations survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions and other government-sanctioned public health measures. • Healing gatherings, camps and workshop • Men's and women's gatherings and camps/peer support groups • (Re)connection to Country and culture through cultural activities such as art, music, song and dance, language and ceremony • Reunions with families for those forcibly removed and those from institutions and missions • Support for Elders to document their stories and assist them to transfer their knowledge and wisdom • Documentation of individual and community stories and storytelling through art, poetry, song, writing and drama • Empowering Stolen Generations survivors to develop and lead their own healing solutions in their communities and organisations	• Yarning circles • Book launches and audiobooks • Truth-telling activities • Photography exhibitions, photo databases and filmed survivor stories • Stolen Generations forums • Healing gatherings, retreats and camps • Commemoration events and festivals • Healing and cultural workshops • Reconciliation walks • Online communities • Co-design of a collective healing space • Educational resources • Mentoring programs • Research activities

Participants engaged

SGOs provided data on the number of participants engaged in funded activities, including survivors, descendants and family members, and communities.

There is significant diversity in the number of people engaged through granted activity. For example, across 15 granted organisations in round 9, the number of total participants ranged from seven (for cultural healing activities) to 16,200 (online viewers), reflecting the differences in the types of activities delivered.

Based on the available reports from round 9, about 50% of the grants included commemorative activities, and over 30% included activities with an online reach.

6 Stolen Generations Collective Healing Initiatives Rounds 1–6: impacts and findings (2022)

Workforce contributions

Activities funded by the CHGs have contributed to supporting other organisations, First Nations staff and consultants, non-First Nations staff and consultants, and engaging First Nations services. Data provided by 11 organisations from round 9 grants show on average that 70% of people employed (42 people) were First Nations staff or consultants and the proportion of First Nations services engaged through the granted activities was 59%.

Data provided by four organisations from round 10 suggest that First Nations staff and consultants made up on average 89% of those employed by the grant, ranging from 65% to 100% (65%, 91%, 100% and 100%).

A skilled, sustainable and culturally safe workforce with strong connections to Stolen Generations survivors and descendants is central to effective healing support. Investing in workforce and organisational capacity is a priority under The Healing Foundation's action plan, *From Sorry to Action*, which identifies sustainable funding for the sector's workforce as critical to building and retaining Stolen Generations organisations, staff and expertise. Monitoring First Nations employment and service engagement also supports the program's reporting against the National Indigenous Australians Agency's (NIAA) key performance indicators.

How the grants activity has changed over time

Since the CHGs began, the amount of funding distributed has increased, more organisations have been funded and there has been greater reach across Australia. For example, 35 organisations were funded in rounds 8 to 10, with 17 of these organisations receiving funding for the first time. At the same time, there is an ongoing and growing need to invest in support, as Stolen Generations survivors age, and the impacts of government policies continue to be felt across generations and communities.

The CHGs have evolved considerably over more than a decade of funding. From establishing a foundational healing framework, they went through a period of growth and COVID-19 disruption, to a renewed focus on streamlining processes, improving transparency, and expanding access to funding, with ongoing internal improvements to grant assessment.

Table 3 summarises the key phases of grant activity since 2012.

Table 3 Evolution of the Collective Healing Grants and The Healing Foundation

Rounds	Period	Key developments
Rounds 1 and 2	2012–2014	Established The Healing Foundation's healing framework, grounded in four elements of intergenerational healing: coming together to share stories; reconnecting with culture and cultural identity; trauma-aware, healing-informed services; and healing solutions led by Stolen Generations survivors.
Rounds 3 to 6	2014–2022	The program continued to grow before experiencing complications and data gaps, including significant disruption during Rounds 5 and 6 due to COVID-19. Sufficient learning was gathered to enable The Healing Foundation to update and refine its theory of change in March 2022.
Rounds 8 and 9	2022–2024	The Healing Foundation team focused on streamlining processes and improving transparency in how SGOs receive funding. Round 9 expanded access beyond the 19 previously recognised SGOs.
Round 10	2025–2026	Continued internal improvements to grant assessment, including one-to-one CEO yarns with SGOs to gather external feedback, and development of a grants readiness tool.

What has changed for people

To understand the impact of the Collective Healing Grants, past and current recipients were invited to reflect on outcomes observed across different stakeholder groups including survivors, families and descendants, funded organisations, and the broader community.

The CHG story of change (Figure 5) recognises that healing is deeply personal, building trust, working through grief and strengthening community connection happens at the pace it needs to for each survivor, family and community. It identifies three interconnected domains of change, Access, Truth-telling and Healing, that build towards deeper and more lasting outcomes over time. Appendix B provides an overview of the outcomes and indicators used to understand and measure where the CHGs are making the most difference for Stolen Generations survivors, their descendants and SGOs. Because healing is an ongoing, personal and cyclical, these indicators capture the contribution activities make to healing journeys.

This section provides analysis of the outcomes observed, drawing on survey data from nine responses and four acquittal reports from 22 funded organisations in round 10. It also draws on reflections provided by past recipients including survey responses from eight past grant recipients, 15 acquittal reports from 25 funded organisations from round 9, and 3 acquittal reports from 4 funded organisations from round 8. These responses provide a qualitative and quantitative picture of how the grants have contributed to changes for people.

Outcomes for survivors – what has been observed

> *'Stolen Generations survivors have experienced a range of meaningful and positive changes as a result of the Collective Healing Grant. Many have reported feeling more culturally safe, supported, and connected – both to their own stories and to community.'* **– SGO representative**

Pride, belonging and confidence to share stories

Nearly all survey respondents (n=8 of 9) observed survivors experiencing three of ten outcomes 'a lot' including more confidence to share their stories about Stolen Generations history, a stronger sense of belonging and social and emotional wellbeing, and greater pride and self-esteem.

These outcomes were observed across diverse activity types, from yarning circles and community gatherings to cultural workshops, intergenerational mentoring programs and healing retreats. This points to the breadth of pathways through which healing can occur.



Figure 9 Strongest outcomes observed for survivors in round 10 (n=8)

These outcomes are also consistent with observations by past recipients as described below.

> *'I never thought anyone would want to hear my story. Seeing it on screen, and hearing all the people clap, it was a special feeling.'*
> **– Stolen Generations survivor**

> *'We utilised the Affirmation Cards [from The Healing Foundation] to hear from the survivors, their families and descendants. It was a bit slow to start but then they warmed to it and shared some really heartfelt stories of their journeys and about what they do to heal. They enjoyed hearing others' stories and supported each other.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Figure 10 shows the extent to which grant recipients from round 10 observed outcomes across the other seven indicators for Access, Truth-telling and Healing. Overall, responses were strongly positive.

Some quoted insights about the impacts of the initiatives are shared below.

> *'The experience fostered new friendships, intergenerational learning and a renewed commitment to cultural continuity.'*
> **– SGO representative**

> *'A place of profound pain now transformed into a place of strength and healing.'*
> **– SGO representative**

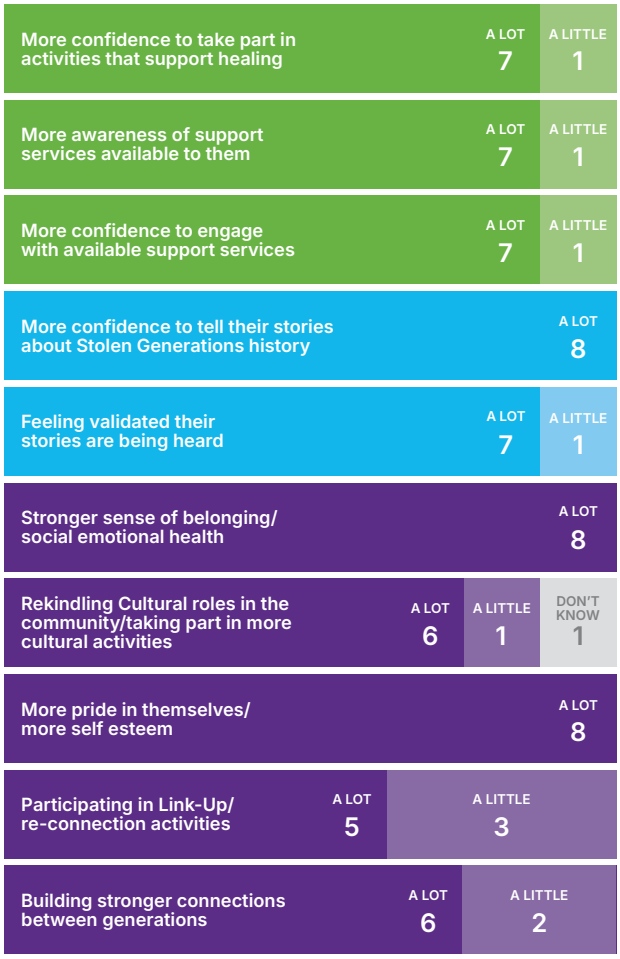


Figure 10 Extent that survivors have been observed experiencing or demonstrating these outcomes because of the funded activities (n=8)

> *'The healing outcomes for survivors, particularly Sister Kate's Home survivors has been immense. Some survivors who said they would never return have returned to [the] site and been heavily involved in our collective healing sessions, which is positive for their individual healing journey but also others involved in the sessions.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Within the Access domain, several organisations described how grant-funded activities created a natural entry point into services that were not reaching communities, with events and gatherings drawing in participants, and providing opportunities to connect with disability support, counselling and other community services alongside the healing activity itself.

> *'In utilising the Collective Healing Grant, we were able to re-engage our Stolen Generations survivors, descendants and our members by holding events with support services involved and this enabled our Stolen Generations survivors to link into these services.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Some quoted insights about the impacts of past initiatives are shared below.

> *'Participants created artefacts, including Possum Skin Healing Cloaks and clap sticks, supporting cultural expression and healing. The process strengthened community ties and personal cultural identity.'* **– SGO representative**

> *'Connection to culture is key to [survivors'] healing journey, providing a space where they feel acknowledged, supported, and embraced by their community.'* **– SGO representative**

Across a range of activity types, a common thread was the significance of survivors being able to gather with people who share their experiences, and the healing that flows from that connection.

> *'The grant has provided an opportunity for Stolen Generations members to come together regularly which provides healing through sharing and being together with laughter and crying.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Being seen, heard and acknowledged

Funded activities created spaces where survivors' experiences were recognised, honoured and witnessed, by each other, by community, and by the broader public. For some, this meant attending significant national events and truth-telling gatherings; for others, it meant smaller, community-led moments of recognition and celebration.

The significance of this cannot be overstated. The experiences of Stolen Generations survivors have been systematically absent from public life and policy for decades, not because those experiences are unknown, but because governments and institutions have chosen not to act. As *Are you waiting for us to die?* (2025) documents, since the National Apology in 2008, survivors have been called upon to testify at more than 20 government inquiries. The burden of repeatedly providing evidence of what happened, and what is still owed, has fallen on survivors themselves, yet governments have still failed to deliver a systematic response to their needs and rights.

Against this backdrop, the truth-telling activities supported by the grants carry profound weight. They offer spaces where survivors do not have to justify their experiences or prove their history. Their stories are received with respect, on their own terms, without being filtered through an institutional process. Truth-telling in this context is not about convincing governments; it is about restoration, dignity and the right of survivors and their families to have their histories honoured.

> *'The Collective Healing Grant enabled meaningful, survivor-centred changes by creating a culturally safe space for Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities to engage in truth-telling, reflection and connection.'* **– SGO representative**

> *'Several participants expressed that sharing their story helped them feel stronger in their identity and proud of their heritage.'* **– SGO representative**

Outcomes for families and descendants

Understanding of experiences and pride

All survey respondents (n=8) observed descendants experiencing three of eleven outcomes 'a lot' including more understanding of what Stolen Generations survivors have experienced, a deeper understanding of their own history, and greater pride and self-esteem, reflecting the role of intergenerational activities in deepening understanding and connection.

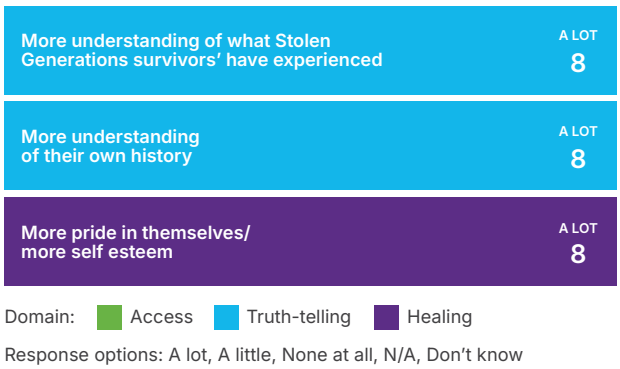


Figure 11 Strongest outcomes observed for families and descendants in round 10 (n=8)

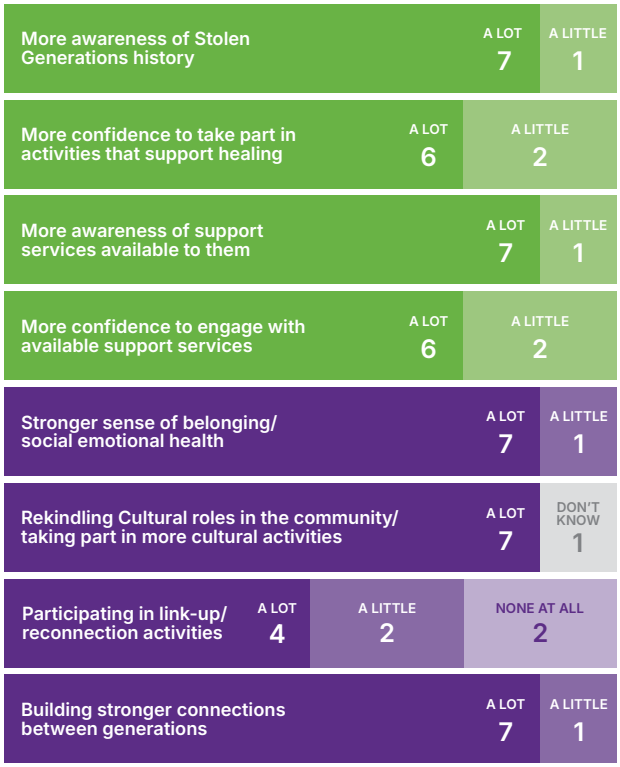


Figure 12 Extent that descendants and families have been observed experiencing or demonstrating these outcomes because of the activities funded by the grant (n=8)

Consistent with the survivor findings, a small number of organisations noted that they did not observe increased participation in Link-Up or other reconnection activities. As with survivors, this likely reflects the fact that not all funded organisations are Link-Up services or operate with reconnection as a primary focus.

Intergenerational healing

A defining feature of the round 10 data is the evidence of intergenerational healing – moments where survivors, descendants and families came together to share stories, strengthen cultural identity, and rebuild

connections that were fractured by forced removal. Several organisations described how this dynamic was both unexpected in its depth and central to the value of the work.

> *'Descendants of Stolen Generations survivors have experienced a range of positive and meaningful changes … There has been a strong increase in awareness and understanding of Stolen Generations history, along with a deeper appreciation of their families' experiences and resilience.'* **– SGO representative**

> *'Elders bringing them in [descendants] and making them feel safe and secure.'* **– SGO representative, describing how Elders supported younger descendants to reconnect with culture and community**

> *'The experience fostered new friendships, intergenerational learning and a renewed commitment to cultural continuity.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Past grant recipients also described the power of shared intergenerational experiences for enabling collective healing.

> *'The descendants are feeling proud and acknowledged as they have felt the Stolen Generations survivors never get as much acknowledgement as they should. There is so much negative on the Stolen Generations in the present time about the past, but we see the survivors and their descendants stand up together to share their stories.'*
> **– SGO representative**

> *'Yarning was also intergenerational, consolidating or creating understanding between Stolen parents and their children.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Allowing time for trust and connection to grow

Some organisations noted the complexity in working with descendants, particularly where intergenerational trauma and the disruption to community caused by forced removal created significant barriers to initial engagement.

> *'Because of intergenerational trauma, connection between generations is quite difficult because youth can take advantage of the Elders in certain scenarios. Elders feel the guilt of being Stolen Generations survivors and can take abuse or be pushed around by the youth.'*
> **– SGO representative**

At the same time, several organisations described how the work is contributing to trust-building and the conditions for intergenerational connections.

> *'The program has given a lot of Elders confidence to actually tell their stories to young fellas, and they can see what their grandparents went through and empathise with them.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Descendants engaging for the first time

For some descendants, engagement with grant-funded activities represented their first time accessing historical and archival materials about their families.

> *'Through the exhibition and dedicated event, descendants were able to access and engage with historical and archival materials, some for the first time, deepening their understanding of their families' experiences and the broader impacts of forced removal policies. This supported a stronger sense of identity, belonging, and connection to intergenerational stories that are often fragmented or lost.'*
> **– SGO representative**

> *'As a mixed heritage Stolen Generations descendant, thank you, so honoured.'*
> **– Stolen Generations descendant**

Organisational outcomes

Grant recipients were asked to reflect on outcomes observed within their organisations as a result of participating in funded initiatives. Figure 13 shows the extent to which organisations experienced outcomes across the Access, Truth-telling and Healing domains.

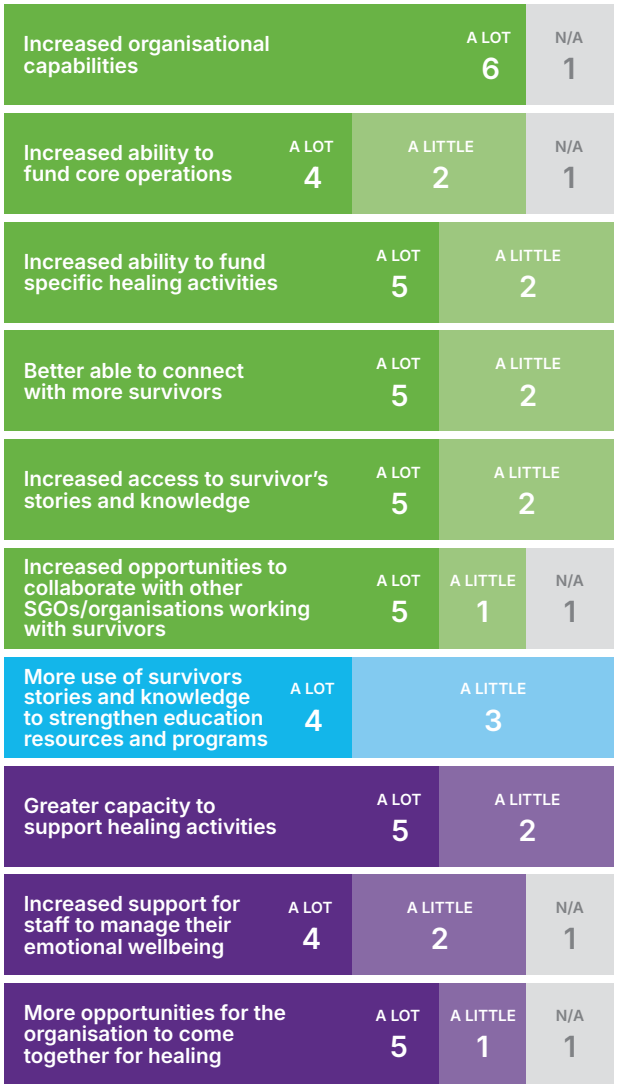


Figure 13 Extent that organisations have experienced these outcomes because of the activities funded by the grant (n=7)

Increased capabilities

All surveyed organisations observing 'increased organisational capabilities' had occurred 'a lot'. The qualitative data reveals that this change went beyond operational capacity – organisations described deeper shifts in how they work, how they understand their impact and how they relate to survivors and the broader sector.

> *'Our organisation has increased morale and connection to original purpose.'* **– SGO representative**

> *'The project strengthened the capacity of our Social and Emotional Wellbeing support team and client advocates.'* **– SGO representative**

A consistent theme across responses was the enabling role of the grant's flexibility that allowed organisations to respond to community needs and adapt their approaches. For example, the grants had allowed organisations to invest in relationship-building, staff wellbeing, and culturally appropriate practices in ways that more tightly restricted funding streams do not permit.

> *'The grant created conditions that enabled meaningful and sustained change, rather than incremental or fragmented improvements.'* **– SGO representative**

For past recipients, a recurring theme was the way the grants enabled organisations to invest in their own foundations for things like strategic planning, impact measurement, staff development and community relationships.

> *'The project had a positive impact on the workforce, with all workshop facilitators and event volunteers expressing strong enthusiasm to return should the gathering become an annual event … The project improved collaboration among staff, built stronger relationships with community leaders and provided valuable experience in coordinating culturally responsive events.'* **– SGO representative**

> *'The exercise of measuring and determining impact will certainly help [Stolen Generations Organisations] in terms of our engagement with other key stakeholders, e.g. Victorian Government.'* **– SGO representative**

Opportunities for collaboration and community involvement

Several organisations described increased collaboration and connections with other services, government bodies, community stakeholders and each other as a direct outcome of their funded activities. This can be seen as an organisational benefit that extends beyond the life of the funded initiative.

> *'We were more in touch with other support services, government departments, MLAs, Senators and locally elected Councillors.'* **– SGO representative**

> *'Board members not only gained practical skills in trauma-informed approaches, but also experienced meaningful healing through connection to Country, culture and each other.'* **– SGO representative**

Several past recipients described how grant-funded activities increased community trust and engagement, with survivors, descendants and families becoming more actively involved in planning and shaping future activities because of positive experiences. This kind of deepening community ownership is a significant organisational outcome that extends well beyond the funded activity itself.

> *'The grant has created a positive change as the organisation is getting more Stolen Generations survivors and descendants that want to be members and to provide ideas about future events.'* **– SGO representative**

Community-level change – grant recipient reflections

A distinctive feature of the feedback from past rounds is the reported ripple effects to community – strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and non-Indigenous people, increasing public awareness and understanding, and in some cases generating tangible changes in how local institutions engaged with Stolen Generations history.

> *'The grant has brought the community together – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – as events like Sorry Day should bring all the community together to acknowledge and share the history.'* **– SGO representative**

One organisation described how the stability and credibility of the CHGs supported their relationship with their local council leading to formal dual-naming of parks and public spaces, reduced vandalism and a growing network of community volunteers. This illustrates the potential for CHG-funded activities to catalyse change well beyond their immediate scope providing space, resources and continuity of funding to think and work creatively.

> *'We wouldn't have engaged the local community, the council, and volunteers of the council because we would have been chasing funds for this work. Instead, we have a more relaxed work environment to think and plan.'* **– SGO representative**

For non-Indigenous community members, past grant activities created opportunities to engage with Stolen Generations history in ways that were accessible and respectful, contributing to broader reconciliation and truth-telling efforts at a community level.

> *'Incredibly powerful and deeply confronting – in the most meaningful and necessary way. A strong reminder of the importance to be vocal in all spaces, not just to speak up but challenge harmful narratives and make room for truth-telling. It reinforced the need for us to guide our friends, communities and peers toward a deeper understanding of the true history, some that has long been silenced or ignored.'* **– Feedback from community member attending documentary screening**

> *'[The exhibition was] such a wonderful display of Lowitja's life. It helps to understand so much more of the journey of Stolen Generations.'* **– Feedback from community member attending SGO-organised exhibition**

Appendix A showcases case studies providing details of how six SGOs have activated the CHGs to have a positive impact on their clients and stakeholders. They include:

- Connecting Home
- Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Link Up Alice Springs
- Mibbinbah Spirit Healing
- Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation
- Teralba Park Stolen Generations Support Group Inc

What has been observed

The following section provides an overview of key insights related to:

- the grants process by The Healing Foundation
- how grants support healing
- learning, evidencing and communicating impact
- alignment to *From Sorry to Action*.

The grants process used by The Healing Foundation

In addition to the outcomes created for survivors, families and communities, this evaluation gathered reflections from grant recipients on the experience of receiving and delivering a grant. These process reflections draw on feedback from capability building workshops held with grant recipients and open-ended survey responses, and provide important context for understanding how the grant design influences their impact.

The relationship between The Healing Foundation and funded organisations is a key strength

The relationship between The Healing Foundation and funded organisations was consistently identified as a strength of the CHGs program. Recipients described The Healing Foundation as accessible, responsive and supportive throughout the funding process, contributing to a positive experience that extended beyond providing grant funding itself. To SGOs The Healing Foundation is not just a funding administrator, it is seen as a trusted partner, advocate and sector leader.

Organisations particularly valued the quality of communication and the willingness of The Healing Foundation staff to provide guidance, flexibility and support when needed. This approach fostered a sense of partnership and trust, with recipients reporting that they felt genuinely supported to deliver activities that responded to the needs of their communities.

> *'We remain deeply grateful for the support provided through the grant, including The Healing Foundation's role as a supporting partner.'* **– SGO grant recipient**

The accessibility of the grant application and administration processes was also viewed positively, particularly by smaller organisations with limited resources and capacity to navigate complex funding requirements. Recipients noted that the streamlined and supportive approach reduced administrative burden and made funding more accessible to community-led organisations.

Together, these factors contributed to a funding experience that reflected the values underpinning the program, reinforcing relationships between The Healing Foundation and funded organisations and enabling recipients to focus their efforts on delivering healing outcomes for survivors, descendants and communities.

Relationship continuity matters in a trust-based funding model

While SGOs consistently described their relationship with The Healing Foundation as a strength, several organisations noted that staff turnover within the granting team can disrupt established relationships and create additional administrative burden. When key contacts change, organisations are often required to re-establish relationships and re-explain their history, context and priorities. In a sector where trust, relationships and cultural understanding are critical, maintaining continuity of organisational knowledge and communication is an important component of effective grant administration.

The grants act as a critical funding lifeline

A strong and consistent theme across both surveys and the workshops is that the CHGs are playing a role that extends well beyond their intended scope as project-based healing grants. For many organisations, the grants are functioning as a critical funding lifeline filling gaps left by core funding that is either insufficient, too restricted or simply unavailable for culturally led, healing-focused work. This reflects a structural issue in the sector. Organisations are delivering complex, emotionally intensive work often across large geographic areas without stable foundational funding, and the CHGs provide a source of flexible, accessible funding in this context.

Activities would not have happened without the Collective Healing Grants

Organisations were clear that without the grants, many of these activities simply would not have happened. Core funding does not cover the kinds of healing-focused, culturally-led activities the CHGs support, and alternative sources of funding for this work are scarce.

> *'It would not have went ahead. Women's wellbeing is always hard to get funding for and no one funds women to heal.'*
> **– SGO representative**

How grants support healing

The findings outlined below build on the four essential elements identified in the 2015 analysis of rounds 1 to 6:[7]

- ***Coming together with other survivors and sharing stories of pain, hope, and renewal:***
  - Stolen Generations survivors provide a community of care for each other and a support system that cannot be replicated by any other professional means. Sharing their own stories and bearing witness to others' stories in a supportive environment helps participants to reduce their sense of isolation and increase their strength.
- ***Reconnecting and strengthening culture and cultural identity:***
  - reconnecting with cultural values, knowledge systems and practices, and restoring a sense of pride in one's cultural identity is a critical factor for healing. The inclusion of traditional arts, crafts, music, dance, and song as ways to connect brought great joy and pride to participants, as did being on Country and connecting with land and significant sites.
- ***Providing trauma-aware, healing-informed services and responses:***
  - increasing knowledge about trauma and its impacts enabled project workers to provide trauma-aware, healing-informed responses and helped Stolen Generations survivors and their families to better understand their healing needs. This allows participants to better manage their trauma and grief in more positive ways. Engagement with medical and counselling services, drug and alcohol programs, traditional healers and Link-Up services all increased.
- ***Healing solutions led and developed by Stolen Generations survivors:***
  - Stolen Generations services and organisations worked directly with Stolen Generations survivors to restore self-determination and aid participants in their recovery from trauma. Activities ranged from forums and gatherings to strengthening organisations that represent former residents of institutions.

Flexibility is critical

The flexibility of the CHGs was consistently identified as one of the program's greatest strengths. Recipients valued the ability to design and adapt activities in response to community needs, rather than tailoring programs to meet prescriptive funding requirements. This flexibility extended not only to the type of activities delivered, but also to their timing and implementation, enabling organisations to respond to changing circumstances and emerging priorities within their communities.

For organisations delivering healing-focused initiatives, where needs are highly relational, culturally informed and context-specific, this flexibility was seen as fundamental to effectiveness. Recipients described the grants as reflecting a trust-based and culturally respectful approach, allowing them to work in ways that aligned with community priorities and local realities without compromising their practice.

> *'Actually good because they are flexible. Not a lot of boundaries and conditions. Really helpful in that respect. You don't have to compromise.'*
> **– SGO representative**

The importance of this flexibility was heightened by the operating context in which many organisations work. Communities frequently experience Sorry Business, disruptions from natural disasters and other unforeseen events that can affect participation and program delivery. The ability to adjust activities, timelines and approaches in response to these circumstances was considered essential to maintaining community engagement and achieving intended outcomes.

7 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation (2015), Healing for our Stolen Generations: Sharing our Stories – Executive Summary, Canberra.

Creating culturally safe, trauma-informed spaces that allow people to engage on their own terms and in their own time for healing and truth-telling

Across the qualitative responses, organisations consistently emphasised that healing, truth-telling and reconnection require trust, cultural safety and trauma-informed practice. Survivors and descendants engaged on their own terms, with organisations highlighting the importance of creating environments where people felt safe, respected and supported to participate at a pace that was right for them.

Recipients described how culturally safe spaces, consistent relationships and flexible program design enabled trust to develop over time. Where the ongoing impacts of government policies of forced removal meant that trust needed to be built carefully, organisations invested in relationship-building, Elder engagement and ongoing conversations rather than rushing participation. This approach was particularly important for activities involving personal storytelling, truth-telling and the recording of survivor narratives.

> *'One challenge was initial hesitance from participants to engage due to trust issues stemming from past traumas. We overcame this by building rapport through consistent, culturally sensitive communication and offering practical support.'* **– SGO representative**

Healing activities commonly incorporated yarning, storytelling, cultural connection, connection to Country and opportunities for survivors and descendants to come together and share experiences. Participants described these environments as safe, welcoming and supportive, with some likening them to being part of a family.

> *'Respondents commonly described the [online] platform as "safe", "comforting" and "like being part of a big family".'* **– SGO representative**

Organisations also highlighted that sharing stories and preserving family histories is often a gradual process that cannot be constrained by predetermined timelines. Building the trust required for people to share deeply personal experiences takes time, and activities frequently evolved over longer periods than originally anticipated.

> *'Recording survivor narratives to preserve family history is ongoing. As this is a sensitive process, we have found that it needs to occur over a longer period of time.'* **– SGO representative**

The importance of trauma-informed practice was reinforced through measures such as participant consent processes, attention to individual needs and boundaries, and the availability of dedicated counsellors to provide emotional and cultural support throughout activities. Together, these approaches helped create the conditions for participants to feel heard, recognised and connected, strengthening the healing outcomes achieved through the grants.

> *'Feedback highlighted the importance of having dedicated counsellors onsite, ensuring emotional and cultural safety throughout the process. Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their stories in a respectful and supportive environment.'*
> **– SGO representative**

Providing practical support, removing barriers and enabling healing

The CHGs are helping to enable access and participation for communities that face significant practical barriers to engagement. Transport was consistently identified as a key challenge, particularly for survivors and descendants living in regional and remote areas where distance, limited public transport and the cost of travel can prevent participation. Organisations responded by arranging carpooling, direct pick-ups and local partnerships, highlighting the importance of flexible, person-centred logistics in supporting meaningful engagement.

The grants also helped address other practical costs associated with participation, including accommodation and catering. This support was particularly important for descendants, enabling them to attend gatherings and activities that created opportunities to connect with family histories, community networks and shared experiences.

> *'Grant funding assisted with travel, accommodation, and catering costs, helping to remove practical barriers that may otherwise have prevented participation ... For many descendants, these gatherings created valuable opportunities to connect more deeply with their family histories, community networks, and shared experiences.'* **– SGO representative**

By reducing financial and logistical barriers, the CHGs enabled healing experiences that may not otherwise have been possible. This included supporting culturally safe spaces for survivors, descendants and communities to come together, and funding activities centred on their own stories, priorities and needs.

SGO capacity for communicating and evidencing outcomes

SGOs operate in contexts of profound under-resourcing and staff turnover. Many people involved in this work are often survivors or descendants or carry colonial load and therefore themselves impacted by the trauma of government policies of forced removal, which means frequent Sorry Business, ill health and other cultural responsibilities. Gathering data and stories to support this evaluation was not straightforward. Engaging with SGOs over the course of this evaluation took time and needed to go at a pace that was responsive to SGO needs. The evaluation participation rates reflect those realities rather than any lack of willingness to engage.

Despite operating with limited resources, SGOs provided acquittal data that offers valuable insight into the reach of the CHGs. The completeness and consistency of this data varied across organisations, reflecting differences in resourcing rather than in the work itself. Inconsistencies in The Healing Foundation's database management also affected the retention of historical data, contributing to gaps in the acquittal data available. There is good reason to believe the full reach and impact of the CHGs is substantially larger than the available data can demonstrate.

A general observation is that acquittal form questions tend to ask what was delivered rather than what changed. Refining these questions to more explicitly explore the difference the activities are making to the lives of survivors, descendants, families, community and the SGO itself would give a clearer basis for evidencing outcomes.

These gaps point to a broader challenge for the sector: evidencing outcomes is itself a capability that takes time, resources and infrastructure to build. SGOs suggested alternative approaches to evaluation such as oral evaluations, yarns and video-based oral history catalogues as approaches that could reduce the burden on organisations while producing richer evidence of impact.

SGOs also noted that grant reporting fatigue is real, and that reporting expectations should be proportionate to the capacity of the organisation and the size of the grant.

One observation that emerged clearly across this evaluation is the absence of formal, structured opportunities for grant recipients to come together. Participants noted the value of dedicated spaces for knowledge sharing on things like evaluation approaches, capturing firsthand stories and learning from what others have tried.

The capability workshops incorporated into this evaluation process were genuinely welcomed as one such opportunity. This appetite for connection and shared learning is something the program is well-placed to respond to.

Alignment with *From Sorry to Action*

The findings of this evaluation demonstrate that the CHGs contribute to many of the priorities and vision statements outlined in *From Sorry to Action: A plan to act on Bringing them home (2026–2028)*[8], a new national plan by The Healing Foundation launched in May 2026.

Across funding rounds, grants have supported activities that strengthen intergenerational healing and wellbeing; improve access to records and family histories; preserve and document survivor experiences; support truth-telling and community awareness; strengthen the capacity of SGOs; and build culturally safe and trauma-informed approaches to healing.

The evaluation also highlights the important role of the CHGs in supporting several of the enabling conditions identified in *From Sorry to Action*, particularly strengthening the Stolen Generations sector, supporting community-led approaches and building the evidence base for healing through evaluation and storytelling.

Viewed through this lens, the CHGs are not only funding individual projects but are contributing to the broader national effort to support healing, truth-telling, connection and justice for Stolen Generations survivors, descendants and communities. Appendix E provides an overview of the alignment of the CHGs to the *From Sorry to Action* strategic focus areas.

8 Available at https://www.healingfoundation.org.au/what-we-do/from-sorry-to-action/

Opportunities to create more impact

> *'I would like to acknowledge and thank The Healing Foundation for giving me the opportunity to contribute to work that recognises and honours the resilience of our Stolen Generations survivors, their families, and communities. This acknowledgement is important for those who continue to show strength every day, even when they may not realise the resilience they carry.'* **– SGO representative**

The findings across the evaluation point to a CHGs program that is working well within the boundaries of its current design. The grants are creating change for survivors, descendants, families, SGOs and communities.

However, this work sits in the context of communities that have been deeply traumatised by government policies, and only 6% of the recommendations provided in the landmark 1997 *Bringing them home* report have been completed, nearly 30 years on. Across Australia, there is significant un-met need and preserving stories and transferring intergenerational knowledge is increasingly crucial due to the ageing and passing of survivors, whose firsthand accounts and lived experience are irreplaceable.

The evaluation findings suggest that the CHGs are making a meaningful contribution to the priorities outlined in *From Sorry to Action*. The recommendations below are intended to strengthen the program's ability to contribute to these national priorities and support the long-term sustainability of Stolen Generations healing initiatives.

Recommendation 1: Increase and diversify funding to better reflect the scale and complexity of healing work

> *'Help us lobby for expanded funding from NIAA and other federal bodies where previous programs have been demonstrated to be successful.'* **– SGO representative at an evaluation workshop**

> *'Multi-year funding commitments would support longer-term planning, continuity of programs, and sustained healing outcomes.'* **– SGO past recipient**

The strongest message from recipients is that demand exceeds available funding and annual project funding does not align with the long-term nature of healing.

For NIAA

- Increase the overall funding pool for the CHGs program.
- Introduce multi-year funding streams (e.g. 3–5 years) for established SGOs delivering ongoing healing activities.
- Consider tiered grant categories including:
  - small grants for emerging organisations and local activities
  - medium grants for established programs.
  - larger strategic grants for regional, collaborative and local activities
- Review grant ceiling to better reflect the true costs of delivering activities in regional and remote locations, including travel, accommodation, accessibility supports and specialist facilitation.

For The Healing Foundation

- Use evidence from the CHGs and this evaluation to advocate for increased investment in Stolen Generations healing, truth-telling and community connection activities.
- Develop an evidence base demonstrating the costs, benefits and outcomes of community-led healing initiatives to support future funding advocacy.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the sustainability and capacity of Stolen Generations Organisations

Many SGOs are delivering highly specialised work with limited infrastructure and operational resources.

For NIAA

- Provide additional grant funding to support organisational development and core operational capacity.
- Explore complementary funding mechanisms that support organisational sustainability alongside project delivery.

For The Healing Foundation

- Develop a structured capability-building program for SGOs covering:
  - governance
  - financial management
  - grant writing and development
  - evaluation and impact measurement
  - trauma-informed practice
  - workforce wellbeing and vicarious trauma support.
- Broker access to shared expertise and specialist resources that smaller organisations may not be able to access independently.
- Support SGOs with grant writing skills, such as assistance with drafting applications, budgets and reporting for government and philanthropic funding rounds.
- Facilitate SGOs' access to philanthropic and corporate funders, for example through funder introductions, sector networking events and matchmaking initiatives, to support organisations to diversify their income beyond Collective Healing Grants.

Recommendation 3: Expand the reach of the program to under-served communities and regions

Current funding distribution suggests some communities affected by Stolen Generations policies may not be accessing support through the program.

- Undertake targeted outreach to SGOs and community organisations in under-represented regions including Tasmania, Far North Queensland and parts of regional and remote Western Australia.
- Provide pre-application support and grant readiness assistance for smaller organisations and first-time applicants.
- Improve mapping of participant locations and service reach to better understand where healing activities are occurring and where gaps remain.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen relationship continuity and organisational knowledge within grant administration

Flexibility, trust and cultural responsiveness are central to the effectiveness of healing activities.

For NIAA

- Support grant settings that prioritise flexibility, community leadership and local decision-making.
- Consider funding models that allow organisations to develop budgets based on community needs rather than predetermined grant amounts.

For The Healing Foundation

- Maintain streamlined application and reporting processes proportionate to grant size.
- Implement formal handover processes when granting staff change.
- Maintain organisational profiles and relationship histories that can be accessed by new staff.
- Introduce relationship management practices that minimise the need for SGOs to repeatedly provide the same information.
- Communicate proactively with SGOs when staffing changes occur and provide clear transition arrangements.
- Where possible, maintain continuity of contacts across grant rounds.

Recommendation 5: Reduce administrative burden and strengthen outcomes reporting

Organisations want to demonstrate impact but frequently experience reporting fatigue. Acquittal data available for this evaluation varied considerably in completeness and consistency, reflecting differences in organisational capacity and resourcing. In addition, inconsistencies in The Healing Foundation's database management affected the retention of historical data, contributing to gaps in the available acquittal data. There is good reason to believe the full reach and impact of the CHGs is substantially larger than this data can demonstrate. Evidencing outcomes is itself a capability that takes time, resources and infrastructure to build, and the usefulness of current reporting in demonstrating outcomes is likely to evolve and strengthen over time, particularly for organisations receiving multi-year funding.

For NIAA

- Support reporting requirements that are proportionate to grant size and organisational capacity.
- Support evaluation approaches that recognise relational, cultural and healing outcomes, including alternative evaluations approaches such as oral evaluations, yarns and video-based oral history catalogues.

For The Healing Foundation

- Co-design streamlined reporting approaches with SGOs.
- Develop culturally appropriate evaluation tools that can be adapted locally.
- Pilot and resource alternative evaluation approaches, such as oral evaluations, yarns and video-based oral history catalogues, that reduce reporting burden while producing richer evidence of impact.
- Invest in simple digital reporting systems that reduce duplication and generate useful information for both organisations and funders.
- Continue to embed Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles in evaluation and reporting processes.

Recommendation 6: Build a stronger national Stolen Generations healing network

Organisations consistently expressed a desire to learn from one another and reduce duplication of effort.

For NIAA

- Support sector development activities alongside project funding.

For The Healing Foundation

- Adopt a partnership approach that positions SGOs as co-designers of sector-wide initiatives, drawing on the sector's own expertise and lived experience.
- Formalise its role as a national convenor and connector across the Stolen Generations sector.
- Facilitate:
  - annual or biannual learning forums
  - communities of practice, e.g. information yarning spaces
  - peer mentoring
  - online knowledge-sharing platforms e.g. a 'hotspot' map where SGO activities overlap to identify opportunities for collaboration and connection.
  - opportunities for collaborative project design.
- Create mechanisms for sharing lessons learned, promising practices and evaluation findings across grant rounds.

Recommendation 7: Support collaborative and place-based approaches to healing

> *'We need more grants that support community to heal together culturally.'* **– SGO representative**

> *'Creating a collaborative rather than competitive funding environment is essential; SGOs with limited resources should work together rather than compete for funds.'* **– SGO representative at an evaluation workshop**

Healing is collective in nature, yet current funding arrangements can inadvertently create competition between organisations.

For NIAA

- Support funding streams specifically designed for collaborative applications involving multiple SGOs.
- Provide larger grants for regional partnerships and collective impact initiatives.

For The Healing Foundation

- Facilitate partnership development between SGOs working on shared priorities.
- Identify opportunities for regional collaboration through mapping of activities and community needs.
- Ensure collaborative funding models do not disadvantage smaller organisations or communities with less grant-writing capacity.

> *'Share the positive projects to other Stolen Generations organisations. Including the things that didn't work. Learning off these experiences saves time and gives hope to ours. After all we are in a collective!'* **– SGO representative**

> *'A forum or page dedicated to past projects.'* **– SGO representative**

Appendix A Case studies

Case studies were developed to detail and share how six SGOs have used the CHGs and the impacts they have had. They include:

- Connecting Home
- Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Link Up Alice Springs
- Mibbinbah Spirit Healing
- Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation
- Teralba Park Stolen Generations Support Group Inc

Two case studies were also developed based on The Healing Foundation – one on how it facilitates connection, shared learning and collective healing; and one about its advocacy work and how the experiences of Collective Healing grantees are drawn on for this advocacy.

Connecting Home

Based in Victoria, Connecting Home is committed to providing a broad range of wraparound support services to survivors of the Stolen Generations and their families across South-Eastern Australia. Support includes case management, support with Stolen Generations reparations, National Stolen Generations Redress Scheme support, disability services and support, Stolen Generations Funeral Fund, support with needs related to ageing, and support with redress for Historical Institutional Abuse.

Connecting Home was established in 2010 in direct response to reports such as the *Bringing them home* report and *Closing the Gap* – with sensitivity and understanding that past removal policies still affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

How the Collective Healing Grant was used

Connecting Home used their 2025–26 Collective Healing Grant for strategic planning and to create a client information management system.

Engaging a consultant to help them, Connecting Home developed a 3–5 year strategic plan, setting the organisation's direction, priorities and actions. The process involved significant stakeholder engagement.

Connecting Home also developed a client information management system focused on enhancing their client support. The system will make it easier for staff to input and interact with, and also make reporting to various stakeholders more efficient.

Impact of the Collective Healing Grant

The grant has significantly impacted the organisational capabilities of Connecting Home, providing greater capacity for them to support healing activities for Stolen Generations survivors and their families. The projects also facilitated connection and collaboration with other organisations working in the sector.

Developing the strategic plan required consultation with and input from elders across the region, providing an opportunity for extensive engagement and relationship building. Paul Davis, Executive Leader – Corporate Services at Connecting Home said:

> *'We had a lot more consultation and input from elders in the processes than what we thought we would have been able to do initially, which was good.'*

Connecting Home
a service for the Stolen Generations

Connecting Home
Phone: (03) 8679 0777
Website: connectinghome.org.au

Collective Healing Grants have been distributed by The Healing Foundation to Stolen Generations Organisations on behalf of the National Indigenous Australians Agency since 2012.

The Collective Healing Grants support Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants through initiatives that promote healing, strengthen community connections, and enhance wellbeing for Stolen Generations survivors and their communities. These initiatives are delivered by dedicated and committed organisations working to create lasting and positive change across Australia.

The grants program emphasises the importance of intergenerational connections, cultural preservation, and capacity building within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Without the Collective Healing Grant, Connecting Home would not have been able to undertake the strategic planning and develop the client information management system to the same degree. In particular, the system has a lot more capability to do what is needed. Paul reflected:

> *'The Collective Healing Grants are good because they are quite flexible … there aren't too many options in terms of funding for building capacity.'*

Future plans

Connecting Home has received a 2026–27 Collective Healing Grant. This grant will be used to support project management and governance for a major project with the Department of Justice and Community Safety as part of the Victorian Stolen Generations Reparations Package, to record survivor stories.

Key learnings

> *Activities for both projects took longer than originally anticipated.*
> *A key takeaway is to allow enough time for the unexpected complexity and time required to effectively engage with stakeholders and deliver better outcomes.*

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation

The Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation was founded in 2013 by a courageous group of Coota Girls, former residents of the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls (1912–1969).

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation aims to address the complex healing needs of Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants impacted by forced removals. They work to meet social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing needs in a practical and holistic way that is survivor-led to address Stolen Generations and intergenerational trauma. This includes truth-telling and education activities, advocacy, projects and events.

How the Collective Healing Grants have been used

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation has received Collective Healing Grants over multiple years and used them to host a major in-person Sorry Day event for survivors on Gadigal land in Sydney, as well as other healing gatherings. The grant flexibility means they can support survivors with expenses related to travel and accommodation that meets their needs, and to bring a carer (often a family member) to the events.

With the most recent grant round funding, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation hosted a 2026 fundraising gala dinner event around Sorry Day for survivors to attend, along with other community gatherings. The gala aimed to raise funds to directly support survivors through a brokerage healing fund.

Without the grant funding the healing events would have to be restricted or scaled back. Finding alternative funding would be challenging. The Corporation values the flexibility of the Collective Healing Grants which supports them to undertake such meaningful in-person activities.

Impact of the Collective Healing Grants

Survivors are spread regionally and over different states. Some connect and talk on the phone, but many only see each other at the events arranged by the Corporation. Bringing them together in a safe space is a healing experience with genuine connection, reflection and conversation about their shared experience. For many, the Sorry Day event is the highlight of their year. Meagan Gerrard, Acting CEO of Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation acknowledges the importance of gathering face-to-face:

> *'Watching the connection, laughter, dancing and storytelling is something truly special. It can't be replicated any other way. Bringing survivors together provides a safe space for healing, reflection and connection through their shared experiences. One of the most moving moments I witnessed was seeing two Aunties reconnect for the first time since they were children in the Home. They embraced each other, both in tears, as memories and emotions resurfaced. They had shared a traumatic experience, and seeing them come together after so many years was incredibly powerful. After that emotional reunion, they were able to laugh together, reminisce and share some of their happier memories. Moments like these remind us why connection is such an important part of healing.'*

Collective Healing Grants have been distributed by The Healing Foundation to Stolen Generations Organisations on behalf of the National Indigenous Australians Agency since 2012.

The Collective Healing Grants support Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants through initiatives that promote healing, strengthen community connections, and enhance wellbeing for Stolen Generations survivors and their communities. These initiatives are delivered by dedicated and committed organisations working to create lasting and positive change across Australia.

The grants program emphasises the importance of intergenerational connections, cultural preservation, and capacity building within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation
Phone: (02) 8004 6162, Email: admin@cootagirls.org.au
Website: cootagirls.org.au

Ensuring survivors have comfortable travel and accommodation is an important part of what the Collective Healing Grant funds. Alex McWhirter, Project Officer, reflects:

> *'Being able to physically get the survivors together is so much of what's impactful. Being able to do that comfortably, especially as the survivors age – providing good, comfortable accommodation, the types of transport and travel they prefer, and not having to be too restricted on what that looks like is really good. It means that more and more survivors feel comfortable engaging in the events, knowing they'll be well supported and looked after. And it builds that trust between the Corporation and the survivors.'*

At the events survivors can connect with Culture and speak language, which many didn't get to do when they were younger. The events also allow Corporation staff to have group yarns and one-on-one conversations with survivors to identify services they may benefit from, and what their changing needs are.

There are positive impacts for the families and descendants of survivors too. Beyond a carer/family member, the events are often attended by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Family members can make new connections, experience Culture and gain greater understanding of their related survivor's past. According to Meagan:

> *'Some survivors haven't shared their stories with family before. They are able to share and answer questions in that environment. It's a safe, supportive space for sharing and connection, supporting intergenerational healing.'*

Public events hosted by the Corporation have education and truth-telling aspects, through survivor stories, mini-exhibitions and resources. Survivor voices are heard, and members of the broader community benefit from meeting survivors and gaining a better understanding of Stolen Generations history. Alex explains:

> *'It bridges that gap between just hearing about the history of Stolen Generations and connecting it to real people.'*

Being with survivors in person has supported Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation to gain a deeper understanding what survivors need so they can tailor their services and support. The events and media coverage have raised the profile of the organisation, spreading the word about their services to more survivors and supporting sponsorships and funding opportunities, which increases capacity.

Future plans

The Corporation hopes the first Sorry Day Gala Dinner fundraising event will build on the success of previous years events, and would like it to continue as the centrepiece of Sorry Day commemoration in future years. They plan to continue to evolve, innovate and ensure the sustainability of healing events for survivors, their families and descendants

About the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls (1912–1969)

Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls was operated by the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board and later the Aborigines Welfare Board, from 1912 to 1969. Aboriginal girls, from as young as 3–4 years old, who had been forcibly removed from their families under government assimilation policies, were institutionalised at the home.

The purpose of the institution was to train Aboriginal girls for domestic slavery/service and prepare them for placement in non-Aboriginal households. On average, approximately 40 girls lived at the institution at any one time. According to the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation, girls were institutionalised and subjected to policies designed to sever their connections to family, culture, Country and community.

Many girls experienced physical, psychological and sexual abuse while at the institution and while out on placement. They were not protected from harm. Their wages were controlled by government authorities and paid into trust accounts that many were unable to access.

The Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls was identified in the *Bringing them home* report (1997) as a significant institution involved in the removal of Aboriginal children and the implementation of policies that contributed to what is now known as the Stolen Generations. Former residents shared their experiences through the Bringing them home oral history project, documenting the lasting impacts of removal, institutionalisation and forced assimilation.

Children were often removed from their families at a very young age and first placed at the Bomaderry Children's Home. As they grew older, many girls were transferred to the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls, while boys were commonly transferred to the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home from around six years of age.

Source: Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Link Up Alice Springs

For over 50 years, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress), located in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), has provided support and advocacy for Aboriginal people in the struggle for justice and equity. The Congress Link Up Service supports Aboriginal people and families living in central Australia who have been separated from family through forced removal, fostering, adoption or institutionalisation between 1910 and 1970.

Support is provided across a vast area, including up to Tennant Creek and down to the South Australian border. The services include family history research and reunion; family tracing; graveside and return to Country reunions and associated social and emotional support; healing activities, including healing camps, support groups and counselling; and assistance with Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme applications.

How the Collective Healing Grant has been used

The Congress Link Up Service has received three Collective Healing Grants in the last four years, strengthening its engagement with members of the Stolen Generations. During 2024–25 they supported over 120 Stolen Generations members. They also referred 76 clients to the Redress Scheme, and advocacy for community members to test their eligibility for the scheme.

Social events are an important part of support activities, including morning tea and information sessions (for example on aged care, disability support and Centrelink) and an annual Christmas party. Events are held to commemorate significant days, such as National Sorry Day and National Apology Anniversary. In the last two years they have coordinated a community film event on Sorry Day, connecting the broader community. Stolen Generations members enjoy receiving 6-monthly printed newsletters which provide a written record of activities with photos and stories. The team also provides information on the Link-Up program to other local agencies and promotes their services at shows, during NAIDOC week and other events.

With funding from a Collective Healing Grant, Congress is undertaking an oral history project, facilitating members of the Stolen Generations to tell their stories. The grant has allowed a project lead and people with skills in writing and photography to be engaged, to honour the stories and produce them professionally.

According to a Senior Manager at Congress:

> *'Without the grants we wouldn't have been able to facilitate the film event for the broader community – it's a lot of work. Also the current project, "This is My Story", would not be possible without the Collective Healing Grant funding ... The Healing Foundation grants allows us to lift our profile and reach and provide additional activities for our Stolen Generation members.'*

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The Collective Healing Grants support Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants through initiatives that promote healing, strengthen community connections, and enhance wellbeing for Stolen Generations survivors and their communities. These initiatives are delivered by dedicated and committed organisations working to create lasting and positive change across Australia.

The grants program emphasises the importance of intergenerational connections, cultural preservation, and capacity building within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



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Collective Healing Grants case study

Impact of the Collective Healing Grants – the value of truth telling

The Congress Link Up Service helps Stolen Generations survivors across central Australia to participate in healing activities, tell their stories, and receive validation that their stories are being heard. Attending healing activities and events enhances their sense of belonging and positively impacts their social–emotional health, as well as building stronger connections between generations. The impacts are similar for their families and descendants. A Link Up staff member shares the significance of in-person events:

> *'Stolen Generations members who grew up together in group homes are family to one another. By bringing members together it provides an opportunity to catch up, share stories have a laugh, and share their healing.'*

They also noted the importance of the environment:

> *'By providing a safe comfortable space with supportive staff that acknowledges and reinforces to Stolen Generation members they are survivors, assists in healing.'*

Survivors are consulted about the topics for information sessions, to ensure they are valuable and meeting their changing needs. Being able to engage directly and regularly with survivors and their families have deepened relationships with staff and increased trust which facilitates better service delivery.

Sharing stories through the oral history project has provided a pathway to healing for survivors, supported by social workers, it ensures their stories are recorded before they are lost. The project will promote understanding in the broader community of the personal and intergenerational effects of the policies of forcible child removal, and was launched alongside National Sorry Day commemorations in 2026. Short versions of the stories will be available to the public, with a longer, detailed book for survivors and their families that provide a personal archive of photos and history. A Link Up staff member says recording these stories is a priority:

> *'Survivors were voicing they wanted their stories recorded. There were worries that their stories would be lost. Some Stolen Generation members never shared their stories before … it's a part of their healing journey. We are proud and privileged to be able to be a part of this healing journey.'*



The Collective Healing Grant has allowed the Congress Link Up team to engage with more survivors, strengthen education resources and programs, and build organisational capabilities. Members are also more connected with other support services, government departments, and other Stolen Generation Organisations. A Link Up staff member reflected on the benefits for the Congress Link Up team:

> *'We have held information sessions with local and interstate Stolen Generations Organisations and had the opportunity to work closely with The Healing Foundation which has been very beneficial. Our organisation has continued to thrive, along with our staff and we have strived for continuous quality improvements to provide a best practice, trauma-informed model of service delivery.'*

Future plans

The Congress Link Up team would like to continue their large-scale events and to scale up the 'This is My Story' history project, to record more stories. Ideally a bigger grant is needed to manage the project separately. Currently the Link Up team are doing a lot of work to support the project such as liaison with Stolen Generations survivors, assisting with transport, picking up photos and other associated activities, which adds pressure and impacts undertaking their other activities.

Mibbinbah Spirit Healing

Since 2007, Mibbinbah Spirit Healing has brought communities together to create safe spaces for healing, empowerment, celebration, education and training. Founded as a health promotion charity supporting the wellbeing of First Nations males – who continue to face significant inequalities – its work has since evolved to reach and support the whole community, including Stolen Generations survivors, their descendants and families.

How the Collective Healing Grant was used

With a Collective Healing Grant in 2023–24, Mibbinbah piloted a program to support Wilcannia (Western NSW) Stolen Generations Elders through its Intergenerational Mentoring program. The program continued in 2025–26 with further grant funding. The program enables Elders and their descendants to access healing programs, one-on-one support, and take active roles in expanded community initiatives.

The Intergenerational Mentoring program aims to rebuild intergenerational connections impacted by trauma and family breakdown, stemming from child removal and other policies that systematically undermined the authority of Elders. It supports Stolen Generations Elders and families to engage, heal and take on leadership roles.

The program is delivered through one-on-one sessions and workshops, using a strengths-based approach guided by Mibbinbah's Proper Way. It includes check-ins, follow-up support (in person and online), and opportunities to connect with existing community programs and yarning circles. Sessions incorporate guided meditation, breathing exercises, and cultural practices such as smoking ceremonies, Didgeridoo playing, basketweaving, boomerang throwing, and art workshops.

Impact of the Collective Healing Grant

The 2023–24 program connected with eight Wilcannia Stolen Generations survivors and a further 22 participants who identify as direct descendants of the Stolen Generation. In 2024–25 they continued to support these participants and connected with further survivors and descendants.

The Mibbinbah team has observed Stolen Generations survivors experience increased confidence to participate in healing activities, to access and engage with support services, and to share their stories. There is validation they are being heard.

Descendants have developed a stronger awareness of Stolen Generations history and a deeper understanding of both survivors' experiences and their own histories. They have also gained confidence to participate in healing activities and engage with support services.

MIBBINBAH

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Collective Healing Grants case study

According to Jack Bulman, Co-founder and CEO of Mibbinbah Spirit Healing:

> *Participants get a deeper understanding of each other through storytelling and the different workshops that we've run where they engage and share. Then they also get one-on-one support which is particularly valuable for survivors.*

Participants have experienced stronger social and emotional wellbeing, including a deeper sense of belonging, greater pride and renewed Cultural roles and participation. There are stronger connections across generations within the community.

Jack shared this story of healing to illustrate the impact of the program:

> *'One particular lad found out he was part of the Stolen Generation and that he grew up near his real family, that his best mate was his cousin. He had so much built up frustration from the lost years. His parents lived in the next street and couldn't speak to him. He had always felt different, but didn't understand why. There was so much anger and a lot of guilt – he had suicidal thoughts. Through this program he was able to talk and work through healing and the sacredness of anger and what it was doing. It was beautiful energy to witness. There are many other stories like that.'*

He also told how a participant was able to establish a Community leadership role:

> *'An Uncle had been taken away with his brother and sister, given a new identity and educated. Then he came back into Community and was subjected to reverse racism – seen as too white; not black. With the support of this program, he is standing today as one of the local Elders and men people go to.'*

Without the Collective Healing Grants, Mibbinbah would continue to deliver their core work, however, the situation in Wilcannia would be dire. According to Jack:

> *'Without the program suicide rates, mental health and wellbeing would be far worse. The program is incredibly impactful. We couldn't specifically visit Wilcannia without the funding. With it we can provide targeted support where there's a critical need. I think that it's fair to say that lives have been saved by us being able to be in Community.'*

Mibbinbah will use the evidence gathered in the Wilcannia program to advocate for this type of support for Stolen Generations members in other communities they work in.



Key lessons

According to Mibbinbah their program for Stolen Generations survivors in Wilcannia highlights the importance of a community-centred, strength-based approach grounded in respect, partnership and cultural integrity. They say the success of programs in similar communities depends on centring the process around community strengths, maintaining adaptability and committing to long-term engagement. They shared these key lessons:

1. Community engagement and trust

Building trust and respect takes time but is essential. Involving mob in planning and delivery strengthens ownership and participation.

2. Cultural sensitivity

Respecting local culture and values ensures relevance. Programs must be tailored to specific community needs, not one-size-fits-all.

3. Flexibility and adaptability

Programs need to respond to feedback and evolving community needs to remain effective. Ongoing refinement of program strategies supports continuous improvement.

4. Evaluation and feedback

Regular evaluations and participant insights help assess what works and what doesn't. This ensures programs can be enhanced to deliver their intended outcomes.

5. Sustainability

Focusing on long-term planning and sustainability – including alternative funding sources – from the outset helps community initiatives continue delivering benefits after external support ends.

Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation

On Whadjuk Nyoongar Boodja, Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation is a community dedicated to healing, cultural preservation and empowerment.

Established in 2004 by former residents of the Sister Kate's Children's Home in Queens Park, Western Australia, Sister Kate's believe in the power of connection – bringing together Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants to share stories, strengthen cultural identity, foster relationships and heal across generations.

How the Collective Healing Grants have been used

Sister Kate's supports Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants through a growing range of healing, cultural and community-led activities. Their work includes truth-telling, cultural learning experiences, kinship mapping, and intergenerational healing programs – all designed to strengthen connections between Elders and young people, build cultural identity, and support mental health and resilience. Central to this is helping younger generations understand the impacts of the Stolen Generations while developing their own sense of pride, identity and cultural responsibility.

The Healing Foundation's support has been critical to sustaining and growing this work. Five consecutive years of Collective Healing Grants have given Sister Kate's a rare and valuable foundation of stability in the community sector – one that makes it possible to hold a long-term vision and work towards it. With multi-year funding they can build trusted relationships, run programs with continuity, and develop as an organisation, rather than rebuilding with each new funding cycle.

The grant has also supported Sister Kate's successful bid to be granted care of 2.7 hectares of land in Queens Park.

Impact of the Collective Healing Grants

Sister Kate's work sits at the heart of intergenerational trauma, reconnecting survivors and young descendants while navigating the complex family dynamics trauma leaves behind. They support survivors to manage their guilt and the expectations of younger family members who don't fully understand the experience of survivors. To guide this sensitive work, the round 10 grant enabled Sister Kate's to engage an experienced social and emotional wellbeing specialist, a Nyungar woman, bringing both professional expertise and deep cultural knowledge to the programs.

A foundation of this work has been building trusted relationships with Elders, so they feel safe and confident to share their stories with younger participants. The results have been significant. Survivors have shown increased confidence to tell their stories, a stronger sense of belonging, and a feeling that their experiences are finally being heard and valued. As Jenny Day from Sister Kate's reflects:

> *'They're being recognised now ... they've got a good story and people are listening now. And these grants have done that.'*

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Alongside growing confidence, survivors have also reported greater pride and self-esteem. In Jenny's words:

> *'There's no longer the shame – stories are out in the open. The Elders are seen as heroes and we are respecting them, therefore their esteem is lifted.'*

For descendants, the programs have deepened their understanding of Stolen Generations history and their own family story. Jacinda Blurton from Sister Kate's describes the shift she has observed:

> *'The program has given a lot of Elders confidence to actually tell their stories to young fellas, and they can see what their grandparents went through and empathise with them.'*

This empathy is matched by a growing sense of belonging. For some descendants, the loss of family at a young age left them disconnected from Community and Country. The programs have allowed Elders to restore those connections. Jacinda shares:

> *'For some of the descendants, their grandparents, mum or dad died quite young, and other Elders have stood up and actually reconnected them back into the community – they're like, 'Oh, I know who your mob is'. They give them details of where they come from, what Country they should go back to and visit to reconnect with their like identity, and things like that, so they start feeling a bit of belonging.'*

Descendants have also developed greater social and emotional wellbeing, and practical life skills including confidence to engage with employment and health services. Sister Kate's supports young people to think beyond immediate employment goals, building the mental resilience and self-belief needed to navigate life independently.



Cousins Pictures by Jacinda Blurton

About the Sister Kate's Children's Home

Sister Kate's Children's Home was established in Queens Park by mid-1934 when Sister Kate Clutterbuck moved with seven Aboriginal children from the Children's Cottage Home at Buckland Hill in Cottesloe.

From 1935 it was run by non-denominational management committees and from 1955 by the Presbyterian Church. In 1947, Kenwick Farm was established as a branch of the home. In 1980, Sister Kate's amalgamated with the Methodist Training Centre at Mogumber and became Sister Kate's Child and Family Services. According to the *Bringing them home* report (1997), Sister Kate's was a site that housed many removed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Survivors share their stories including being left with an unrepairable scar of loneliness, mistrust, hatred and bitterness.

Source: The Healing Foundation map, map.healingfoundation.org.au

As Jacinda puts it:

> *'The program has been developing very well – it's about having them get so strong in the head, like having that mental resilience to the point where they get into work and other spaces without support and that they won't crumble. That's my goal for all of them ... That they start shifting their brain in a different direction and reprogramming.'*

Sister Kate's has also extended its impact into the broader community through Cultural Learning Experiences delivered to external organisations, such as supporting the City of Canning in their cultural awareness.

The Collective Healing Grants have also strengthened Sister Kate's as an organisation, building capacity, supporting core operations, and providing the clarity of purpose that sustained funding brings. As Jenny reflects:

> *'The grant has given us a purpose and end goal to commit to programs.'*

Future plans

Sister Kate's plan to build on the success of their programs and continue to deliver and evolve their intergenerational healing work. They will also continue to work with the community to determine how best to use the 2.7 hectares of land in Queens Park, envisioned as a cultural centre and place of healing and connection.

Teralba Park Stolen Generations Support Group Inc

Teralba Park Stolen Generations Support Group Inc. (TPSGSG) is a not-for-profit organisation founded as a direct response to the 1997 *Bringing them home* report. In 1998, an official opening was held at Teralba Park with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and they have held their annual National Sorry Day Commemoration there ever since.



What began as a small group of Stolen Generations survivors and supporters has grown into an annual commemoration attended by around 400 people – schools, community groups, the Australian Defence Force, politicians and local residents, all coming together to ensure that what happened is never forgotten, and that those who lived it are never invisible.

Alongside Sorry Day, TPSGSG supports healing through yarning circles, community gatherings, school visits, and intergenerational learning that connects survivors, descendants, and younger generations to one another. In the words of Zoe Andolfatto, Secretary, TPSGSG:

> *'Sorry Day is not just an event. It is a promise to those who have passed that they will not be forgotten. To those who never found their way back to their families, their stories live on. To those who found their families but could never find that connection again – we see you. We feel for you. We are here for you. That is what 27 years of showing up looks like.'*

How the Collective Healing Grant was used

The Collective Healing Grant has supported TPSGSG across a range of healing activities, from the annual National Sorry Day commemoration to community yarning circles that have brought together schoolchildren, their extended families, businesses and local politicians. The grant enabled TPSGSG to establish a new Elders group and begin working directly in schools, with Elders regularly visiting with students and hosting yarning circles. The stories of Stolen Generations survivors from Teralba Park have been recorded and documented, preserving their voices and lived experience for future generations. From listening deeply to those stories through yarning circles, an illustrated story and learning resource has been written for students. The grant has also allowed Elders who have given their time voluntarily for many years to be remunerated for their time and intellectual property.

The healing work of capturing stories, strengthening cultural connection and building intergenerational knowledge is important and urgent.

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Collective Healing Grants case study





Zoe shared:

> *'We don't have many Elders left. The loss this year alone has been significant, and the work of capturing their stories has never felt more urgent.'*

Impact of the Collective Healing Grants

For survivors

For some survivors, standing up and speaking publicly has been a step toward confidence, supported not only by the room's response but also by the presence of Elders beside them, holding space and leaning on one another. TPSGSG have observed increased confidence to engage in healing activities, a growing willingness to share their stories, and stronger connections between generations. As Zoe observed:

> *'When survivors speak, and the room listens – really listens – you can see something shift. That is where the confidence comes from.'*

Survivors have shown a stronger sense of belonging and social and emotional wellbeing. Zoe reflected on how quickly that shift has been felt:

> *'That's changed just in six months. The change is quite dramatic.'*

There has also been renewed participation in cultural roles and activities, increased pride and self-esteem, and stronger connections between generations. Survivors feeling validated that their stories are truly being heard remains something TPSGSG is actively working toward. As Zoe put it:

> *'While people are listening, they're not hearing, if that makes sense.'*

Progress is being made through the recording project and ongoing yarning circles, and the grant has been central to that work.

For descendants and families

For descendants and families, the disconnect from culture and community that removal created runs deep – it does not end with the survivor generation.

TPSGSG activities have supported descendants and families toward a greater understanding of their own history, connection to culture, and pride in who they are as a people. Zoe reflected on what that reconnection looks like in practice:

> *'Some descendants don't know how to feel pride in their Culture. There's a disconnect from Culture because of removal. Having Elders around has made a difference. Elders have a way of just bringing you in and making you feel safe and secure.'*

For the organisation

The grant has increased TPSGSG's capabilities, enabling them to fund their core operations, expand their healing activities and connect with more survivors. They were also able to collaborate with other Stolen Generation Organisations and strengthen education resources and programs.

> *'Without the grant, I think the activities would have still taken place, but it would have taken longer. What the grant actually did was give us a broader vision, like the storytelling and recording we were doing … the grant really made us think about the activities we could do and got us very excited about everything; it certainly pushed us beyond our perimeters. And we've got bigger dreams!'*

Future plans

The bigger dreams for TPSGSG include one day having a permanent home, a place where the service operates from and where people can walk in and feel welcome. The vision is to build capability and provide wraparound support within the community: education, financial literacy and a pathway back to connection for those coming out of. TPSGSG would also like to broaden the recording project and expand their illustrated story and learning resources.

TPSGSG's story is one of quiet, consistent, and determined presence. For 27 years, without fanfare and largely through volunteer effort, this organisation has held space for survivors, descendants, and families, showing up year after year because the work is not finished, and the people it serves have always deserved more than silence. Good governance, the right people, and a shared vision have been the foundation. But what has sustained it is something harder to measure, a deep commitment to ensuring that those who were taken are seen, that those who were lost are remembered, and that those who are still finding their way back are never alone.

Amplifying voices: advocating for Stolen Generations survivors

The recommendations of the 1997 *Bringing them home* report have sat largely unactioned. The Healing Foundation's 2025 report, *Are you waiting for us to die?*, found that just 6% of those 83 recommendations have been implemented. With most Stolen Generations survivors now aged over 50, many have been waiting their entire adult lives for governments to act.
The Healing Foundation's advocacy is built on a simple premise – there is no more time to wait.

Central to this advocacy is ensuring Stolen Generations survivors are heard directly by decision-makers. The Healing Foundation combines survivor testimony, research, policy analysis and direct engagement with governments to amplify survivor voices and press for implementation of the *Bringing them home* recommendations. The Collective Healing Grants are central to this – through its grants program and the relationships it sustains with Stolen Generation Organisations (SGOs) across Australia, The Healing Foundation stays directly connected to the emerging needs of survivors, their descendants and families – and ensures their voices and experiences shape national advocacy.

> *'The grants program and those relationships are a critical part of framing how we consult and get information about what's happening on-the-ground. More than half of our consultation is with our network of SGOs and survivors.'*
> ***– Leonie Williamson, Deputy CEO, The Healing Foundation***

The unfinished business

The 1997 *Bringing them home* report made 83 recommendations – spanning health, housing, family support, records access, cultural connection and redress – that were intended to begin the work of healing and restitution.

The review conducted for *Are you waiting for us to die?* drew directly on input from SGOs to identify the urgent priorities and activities needed to meet the needs of survivors.

The national advocacy platform created by The Healing Foundation creates conditions that contribute to state-based advocacy. The WA Redress Scheme – introduced after the *Are you waiting for us to die?* report – is one example. The Healing Foundation played a supporting role to locally led advocacy, helping WA SGOs participate in state-based discussions and the rollout of the scheme.

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HealingFoundation

'We have solid networks and relationships through the grants, and they provide a two-way channel through which we inform, support and know.'
– Leonie Williamson, Deputy CEO, The Healing Foundation

From Sorry to Action: The 2026–2028 plan

On 26 May 2026 – National Sorry Day, and 29 years after the *Bringing them home* report – The Healing Foundation launched *From Sorry to Action: A plan to act on Bringing them home (2026–2028)*. The plan outlines critical priorities and tangible actions for leaders and policymakers, translating long-outstanding recommendations into a clear, time-bound framework for change. The strong connections and ongoing relationships The Healing Foundation has with the SGOs through the Collective Healing Grants program supports them to be informed about these priorities and actions.

'The words and the language and the sentiment of From sorry to action are really from our SGOs and the survivors … the strategic direction, the intent of it – it's what we've heard over and over again.'
– Leonie Williamson, Deputy CEO, The Healing Foundation

The plan covers five interconnected priority areas that work together to contribute to Stolen Generations healing:

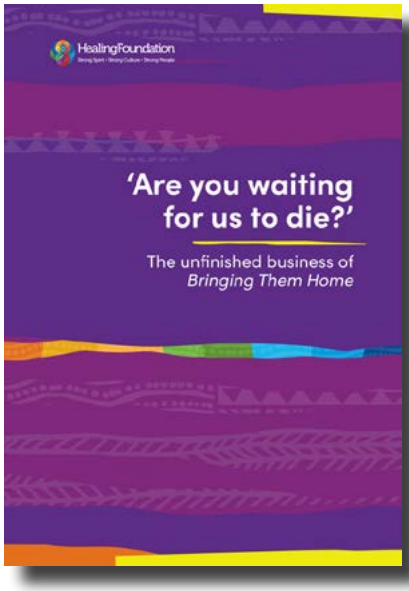
- health, social and emotional wellbeing, and ageing
- records, redress, and acknowledgements
- education, research and data
- sector support and workforce development
- governance and accountability.

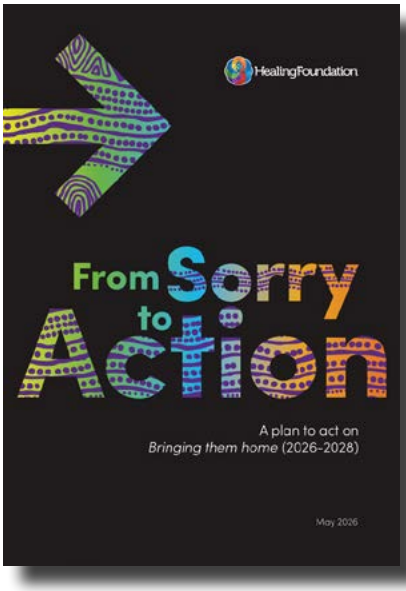
Why this advocacy matters

Since being established in 2009, The Healing Foundation has helped keep implementation of the *Bringing them home* recommendations on the national agenda. The *From Sorry to Action* plan provides a concrete, time-bound call to governments and institutions to finally deliver on promises made in 1997.

The Collective Healing Grants are part of how The Healing Foundation sustains the relationships and trust that make this advocacy credible – informing and supporting SGOs, while being informed by them, so that a collective national voice reinforces local action, and local action strengthens the national case for change.

'We've heard increasingly from SGOs that, "We do the work on the ground, but we need you to be our national voice."'
– Leonie Williamson, Deputy CEO, The Healing Foundation





HealingFoundation

The Gathering 2024 – bringing Stolen Generations Organisations together

In September 2024, The Healing Foundation brought together more than 100 people from across Australia in Garramilla (Darwin) for The Gathering 2024 – the first national gathering dedicated specifically to Stolen Generations Organisations and survivors.

Representatives from 18 Stolen Generations Organisations, alongside survivors, descendants, young people and sector leaders, spent three days sharing knowledge, strengthening relationships and identifying priorities for the future. With most Stolen Generations survivors now aged over 50 and the 30th anniversary of the *Bringing them home* report approaching in 2027, the event created an important space to reflect on progress, identify ongoing challenges and plan for the future.

A national conversation on healing and justice

The program included discussions on truth-telling, records access, redress, aged care, workforce sustainability, intergenerational healing and the future of Stolen Generations Organisations. Survivors remained at the centre of every conversation, sharing their experiences and insights while helping shape collective priorities.

> *'I feel really proud and privileged that we've been able to have this opportunity to bring together those organisations, services, Stolen Generation survivors, their descendants into one group … to have those really vital conversations about the things that are still needing to be implemented from the Bringing them home report. We're having some really great discussions about redress and compensation for survivors, looking at access to records, what ageing well looks like for our elders.'* – ***Shannan Dodson, CEO, The Healing Foundation***

Delegates explored what is working across the country, including survivor-led healing programs, stronger partnerships with archives and record-holding institutions, truth-telling initiatives and efforts to support younger generations to step into leadership roles. They also identified critical gaps that continue to affect survivors and their families, including inconsistent access to records, inadequate redress, culturally unsafe aged care services and short-term funding arrangements.

For many, the experience of gathering as one sector was itself transformative. As one survivor reflected:

> *'I feel safest in these walls when we are here together.'*

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HealingFoundation

Participants also described the event as a powerful healing experience that created space for survivors to be heard and for organisations to discuss shared challenges and opportunities.

> *'This event has been a healing moment for a lot of people. There has been a lot of listening to what survivors and organisations are saying about our needs as we age, about the issues we are facing in accessing our records, about the funding challenges for our volunteer-run organisations.'* ***– Aunty Jenni Caruso, Eastern Arrente woman and survivor***

Building collective strength

Post-event feedback showed overwhelmingly positive results. Opportunities to connect and collaborate received an average rating of 4.54 out of 5, with networking and knowledge exchange identified as the most valuable outcomes. Participants also reported greater understanding of The Healing Foundation's work and strong interest in future gatherings.

> *'Something big is happening for our survivor organisations and for the country. Momentum is here, the fire is burning.'* ***– Raelene Rosas, CEO, NT Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation***

The event reinforced the critical role that Stolen Generations Organisations play in supporting survivors, families and descendants through records access, family reunification, truth-telling, cultural connection, healing activities and advocacy. It also highlighted the need to recognise and sustain this specialised workforce, much of which is carried by survivors, descendants and community members themselves.

Lasting outcomes

The Gathering concluded with a shared commitment to advance the unfinished business of the *Bringing them home* report. Participants identified common priorities including sustainable funding, nationally consistent redress, culturally safe aged care, improved access to records, truth-telling and stronger support for intergenerational healing.

As the 30th anniversary of the *Bringing them home* report approaches in 2027, The Healing Foundation is committed to ensuring that survivor-led priorities drive advocacy, service delivery and healing initiatives nationally.



Appendix B Outcomes framework

The following tables provide an overview of the outcomes and indicators used to understand and measure the changes experienced by Stolen Generations survivors, their descendants and SGOs.

Indicators for survivors

Across the Access, Truth-telling and Healing domains, ten indicators were developed to understand the extent to which outcomes were observed to be occurring for survivors because of the grants.

Table 4 Ways of knowing that change is happening for Stolen Generations survivors, as observed by grant recipients

Domain	Outcome	Indicator question To what extent have you observed Stolen Generations survivors experiencing or demonstrating any of the following because of the activities funded by the grant? Likert scale from a lot - a little - none at all - n/a - don't know
Access	Access to culturally safe activities that support healing	More confidence to take part in activities that support healing
	Access to culturally safe services that support healing	More awareness of support services available to them
		More confidence to engage with available support services
Truth-telling	Feeling safe to express themselves	More confidence to tell their stories about Stolen Generations history
	Feeling heard	Feeling validated their stories are being heard
Healing	Healing through connection to others	Stronger sense of belonging/social emotional health
	Healing through connection to Culture and Country	Rekindling Cultural roles in the community/taking part in more cultural activities
	Healing through connection to self	More pride in themselves/more self esteem
	Healing through reconnecting with your mob	Participating in Link-Up/re-connection activities
	Healing intergenerational trauma	Building stronger connections between generations

Indicators for descendants

Across the Access, Truth-telling and Healing domains, 11 indicators were developed to understand the extent to which outcomes were observed to be occurring for families and descendants of survivors because of the grants.

Table 5 Ways of knowing that change is happening for Stolen Generations descendants, as observed by grant recipients

Domain	Outcome	Indicator question To what extent have you observed Stolen Generations decedants experiencing or demonstrating any of the following because of the activities funded by the grant? Likert scale from a lot - a little - none at all - n/a - don't know
Access	Access to Stolen Generations survivors' knowledge and stories	More awareness of Stolen Generations history
	Access to culturally safe activities that support healing	More confidence to take part in activities that support healing
	Access to culturally safe services that support healing	More awareness of support services available to them
		More confidence to engage with available support services
Truth-telling	Increased understanding of Stolen Generations survivors' experience	More understanding of what Stolen Generations survivors' have experienced
		More understanding of their own history
Healing	Healing through connection to others	Stronger sense of belonging/ social emotional health
	Healing through connection to Culture and Country	Rekindling Cultural roles in the community/taking part in more cultural activities
	Healing through connection to self	More pride in themselves/more self esteem
	Healing through reconnecting with your mob	Participating in Link-Up/re-connection activities
	Healing intergenerational trauma	Building stronger connections between generations

Indicators for organisations

Table 6 Ways of knowing that change is happening for Stolen Generations Organisations as reported by grant recipients

Domain	Outcome	Indicator question To what extent has your organisation experienced any of the following because of the activities funded by the grant? Likert scale from a lot - a little - none at all - n/a - don't know
Access	Increased opportunity to build organisational capabilities	Increased organisational capabilities
	Increased access to resources	Increased ability to fund core operations
		Increased ability to fund specific healing activities
	Improved access to survivor networks	Better able to connect with more survivors
	Access to more Stolen Generations knowledge and stories	Increased access to survivor's stories and knowledge
	Increased ability to collaborate with other SGOs (potential future outcome)	Increased opportunities to collaborate with other SGOs/ organisations working with survivors
Truth-telling	Increased use of survivor stories to strengthen education resources and programs	More use of survivors stories and knowledge to strengthen education resources and programs
Healing	Greater capacity to be more responsive and connected to healing	Greater capacity to support healing initiatives
	Increased support for staff to manage vicarious trauma/have self care in place	Increased support for staff to manage their emotional wellbeing
	Opportunity for collective healing by coming together as an organisation	More opportunities for the organisation to come together for healing



Appendix C Funded activities

Rounds 1 to 6

> The total investment across the six rounds of funding was $3.76m.

Across rounds 1 to 6, 42 organisations[9] were supported to deliver an estimated 90+ projects with more than 8,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participant opportunities.

It is intended that this report provides a summary of the outcomes created by the grants in rounds 1 to 6, drawing on the stories and data available in existing reports.

This includes drawing on the insights provided in the following documents:

- *Healing for our Stolen Generations sharing our stories' report, 2015:*
  - This report included a review of the first two years of the Stolen Generations Initiatives (2013–2015), providing insights about the challenges, emerging themes and outcomes experienced as a result of the first two rounds of the grants.
- *Stolen Generations Collective Healing initiatives rounds 1–6:* impacts and findings, June 2022
  - This report builds on the 2015 analysis and looks at available data from rounds 1 to 6. The data inputs include reviewing available reports, and in-depth interviews with staff from six SGOs.

The following section summarises the activities funded, and impacts and findings available for rounds 1 to 6 of the CHGs.

Summary of findings, rounds 1 to 6

The following data was provided in the 2022 analysis to assess changes in outcomes over time. It is not known how many data points make up these figures.

Table 7 Database reporting for National Outcome Indicators[10]

National Outcomes Indicators	R1 & 2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Average
Client satisfaction	86%	52%	71%	87%	90%	77%
Stolen Generations members have an increased sense of belonging and connection to culture	77%	71%	73%	88%	92%	80%
Stolen Generations members have an increased understanding and strength in caring for their loss and grief	72%	75%	71%	77%	84%	76%
Stolen Generations members have an increased knowledge and confidence in utilising available support services	68%	69%	71%	74%	79%	72%

9 As reported in Stolen Generations Collective Healing Initiatives Rounds 1–6: impacts and findings (2022). Please note this presents some discrepancies with figures in Table 5.

10 Stolen Generations Collective Healing Initiatives Rounds 1–6: impacts and findings (2022).

Rounds 8 to 10

The following information and data have been collated from the acquittal reports available for rounds 8 to 10, together with input from surveys conducted as part of the 2026 evaluation. Some funded initiatives in round 10 are still in progress, and there are gaps in the available data across these rounds. For example, 15 of 25 acquittal reports for round 9 were available for review, and 4 of 22 reports for round 10.

Activities funded

> The total investment across these three rounds of funding was $2.41m.

In rounds 8 to 10 of the CHGs, 52 grants were distributed across 35 organisations. These organisations were supported to deliver Collective Healing Initiatives to an estimated 3000+[11] Stolen Generations survivors, descendants and family members.

Round 8

The eighth round of funding for the CHGs was awarded to four organisations. This round was a closed tender and not open to the sector. Reports were available for three out of four organisations.

There was limited data/documentation available for this round[12]. The output data reported for round 8 is as follows:

Number of First Nations staff/consultants employed	21
Number of participants supported	383
Total number of services delivered	13

Round 9

The ninth round of funding was awarded to 25 organisations across the country. The following data has been drawn from acquittal reports submitted by 15 organisations. As the remaining reports were unavailable for analysis, the figures presented below likely understate the full extent of employment and engagement generated through the CHGs.

Number of First Nations staff/consultants employed	42
Number of non-First Nations staff or consultants employed	27
Number of participants supported	23,176*
Number of participants who identify as being Stolen Generations survivors	768
Number of participants who identify as being descendants or family of Stolen Generations survivors	885
Number of First Nations services engaged	187
Number of non-First Nations services engaged	246
Number of communities supported	63

* Includes 15,800 online viewers for a project sharing survivor stories.

Many Round 9 initiatives funded included events for survivors, descendants and families, such as healing camps, gatherings on Country, yarning opportunities, cultural workshops, commemorative events and exhibitions. Other initiatives included an online healing space for survivors and online exhibition; training and education programs for SGO staff and clients; an intergenerational mentoring program; and truth-telling sessions delivered to government, not-for-profit and private sector organisations.

Round 10

The tenth round of funding was awarded to 22 organisations across the country. The following data has been drawn from acquittal reports submitted by 4 organisations. As the remaining reports were unavailable for analysis, the figures presented below understate the full extent of employment and engagement generated through the CHGs.

Number of First Nations staff/consultants employed	65
Number of non-First Nations staff or consultants employed	20
Number of participants supported	4,101
Number of participants who identify as being Stolen Generations survivors	570
Number of participants who identify as being descendants or family of Stolen Generations survivors	519
Number of First Nations services engaged	56
Number of non-First Nations services engaged	25
Number of communities supported	114

Initiatives funded in Round 10 included a 45-year anniversary community event for Link-Up NSW and trauma-informed training for Stolen Generations board members; a 7-week exhibition at the University of South Australia that included Stolen Generations stories, lived experience and dedicated events; a youth gathering attracting around 200 people (NSW); and establishing the Sister Kate's Healing Centre (WA) co-designed with survivors.

11 This figure is estimated and is likely a lot higher as several reports are not available for analysis.

12 SKHKAC Round 8 reporting; KSGAC Round 8 reporting; WASGAC Round 8 reporting.

Appendix D References

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Stolen Generations. Available at https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/stolen-generations

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Appendix E *From Sorry to Action*

The following table summarises the alignment to and key ways the Collective Healing Grants contribute to the *From Sorry to Action* priority areas.

Table 8 Strategic alignment

***From Sorry to Action* priority**	**Evidence from CHG evaluation**
1. Health, social and emotional wellbeing and ageing 1.2 All survivors and descendants are supported through Intergenerational healing and wellbeing.	Family gatherings, cultural activities, survivor and descendant connection
2. Records, redress and acknowledgements 2.1 Access to records and family history.	Truth-telling projects, narrative recording, archival work
3. Education, research and data 3.1 Every Australian has an increased awareness and under-standing of the history of Stolen Generations and the ongoing impacts.	Sorry Day events, exhibitions, community education activities
4. Sector support and workforce development 4.1 There is a strong and ongoing network of Stolen Generations Organisations. 4.2 Stolen Generations Organisations are building their capacity, are well supported in fulfilling their mandate and are assured of funding continuity.	Partnerships, knowledge sharing, organisational strengthening
4. Sector support and workforce development 4.3 A skilled, sustainable, culturally safe and trauma-informed workforce operates across sectors and industries.	Trauma-informed practice, cultural capability building
5. Governance and accountability 5.2 Data collection and reporting on Stolen Generations and their descendants is strengthened.	Evaluation activities, impact reporting

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