

MAKE HEALING HAPPEN

IT'S TIME TO ACT



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The Healing Foundation

The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that provides a platform to amplify the voices and lived experience of Stolen Generations survivors and their families.

We work with communities to create a place of safety, providing an environment for Stolen Generations survivors and their families to speak for themselves, tell their own stories, and be in charge of their own healing.

We promote trauma-aware, healing-informed practice to help government, policymakers, and workforces understand their role in intergenerational healing.

By addressing unresolved trauma in First Nations communities – trauma that was caused by colonisation and actions like the forced removal of children – we are walking alongside communities on the path to healing.

We are governed by a First Nations Board and Executive and guided in our work by our Stolen Generations and Youth Reference Groups.

Our work honours our First Nations ancestors to ensure our future generations continue to thrive for the next 60,000 years.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge Stolen Generations survivors across Australia, including those who have passed on, for their wisdom and courage in sharing their stories and leading the movement for justice over many decades.

In particular, we thank those Stolen Generations survivors, carers, and organisations who participated in The Healing Foundation's knowledge circle in February 2018 to mark the 10th anniversary of the National Apology. Their views and experience have informed every aspect of this report.

The Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Group guided the content of this report. Its members played a key role in ensuring the report and its recommendations reflect the experiences and current needs of the Stolen Generations.

We are proud to have worked with Gilimbaa, a Supply Nation-certified Indigenous-owned business, which designed the logo and artwork for *Make Healing Happen*.



“Their [Stolen Generations] time is not long, and we need to respond fast.”

Australian Association of Gerontology Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group¹

“Healing, justice and nation building: acknowledging that truth telling is an uncomfortable process, that the process is not about shame or guilt, but about driving positive change and acceptance.”

Healing Principle #9, Reconciliation Australia and The Healing Foundation Truth Telling Symposium Report²

¹ Australian Association of Gerontology Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group, The Healing Foundation, (2019), *Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum Report*, https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-07/AWF_001.04106.03.pdf p. 9

² Reconciliation Australia, The Healing Foundation, (2018), *Truth Telling Symposium Report*, <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/truth-telling-symposium-report1.pdf> p. 23

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Part one





Foreword

We are a nation, made up of many nations, in need of healing.

We need to recover from the trauma arising from colonisation, brutal past government assimilation policies, and ongoing systemic racism. Policies that led to the Stolen Generations continued right up until the 1970s.

Stolen children lost connection to family, land, culture, and language, and were taken to homes and institutions where they were often abused, neglected, and unloved. The mothers, fathers, families, and communities who were left behind also suffered from their loss. The removal of children created a cycle of intergenerational trauma, where the impact is passed from one generation to the next.

With the evidence of research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), we now know that there are more than 30,000 survivors, all of whom will be aged 50 and over in 2022; and that, across the nation, a third of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are descended from Stolen Generations. In some States and Territories, descendants make up more than half of the population.

This represents significant challenges for governments to address the growing needs in health, aged care, education, social justice, and equity.

It also represents a unique opportunity to unite the nation to achieve healing for all Australians.

This report brings together the testimonies from Stolen Generations survivors and their families with evidence and knowledge about the demography and contemporary experience of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

It tells the story of the extent of the 'gap within the gap' – the additional disadvantage arising from removal facing survivors and their families compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who did not directly experience removal.

It restores dignity for those who have suffered and eases a burden they had no say in having to carry.

It recognises the centrality of self-determination and the strength of culture in healing past trauma.

We must use this knowledge as a catalyst for redoubling our efforts to right the wrongs of the past so that there is finally justice and healing for our ageing Stolen Generations survivors, and to address intergenerational trauma through national healing.

With this report, The Healing Foundation is calling on all Australian governments to work together to deliver:

- Nationally-consistent, fair, and equitable redress for Stolen Generations survivors, their families, and descendants.
- Tailored and targeted trauma-aware and healing-informed services to meet the unique aged care, health, mental health, disability, and housing needs of significantly growing numbers of ageing Stolen Generations survivors.
- Nationally-consistent access to historical and contemporary records (including births, deaths, marriages) for Stolen Generations survivors and their families.
- A National Intergenerational Healing Strategy to address intergenerational trauma, which includes an overarching framework that encompasses truth telling, healing through culture; self-determination; and community-led services and programs.
- A national accountability framework to monitor and report progress towards achieving better outcomes for Stolen Generations and their descendants, including reporting to parliament.
- A significant national memorial to the long and rich history and culture of First Nations peoples, incorporating a National Centre for Healing, to be located in Canberra.
- An end to racism.

**We must make healing happen – urgently.
It's time to act.**

Professor Steve Larkin
Chairperson
The Healing Foundation

Summary

Despite the 1997 *Bringing them Home* report, the 2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations, and many other inquiries (more than 20 reports in the past 12 years alone), there has still been no systematic government response to the needs and rights of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

Stolen Generations survivors have endured a lifetime of trauma, grief and loss, and as a result they carry a significant burden of health, wellbeing, social, and economic disadvantage. They are growing older, and many live with disabilities and complex health problems, including poor mental health. They have increasingly complex and overlapping needs yet face personal and systemic barriers to accessing services. They are worried about the future of their families.

The trauma caused by the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been passed on to subsequent generations. It is reflected in the higher levels of disadvantage borne by Stolen Generations descendants and in the dangerous levels of child removals and incarceration suffered by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today.

Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants carry higher levels of disadvantage compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who are already at a disadvantage in Australia. There is a 'gap within the gap'.

Healing is fundamental to First Nations peoples reaching their full personal, cultural, social, educational, and economic potential. Healing is about restoring the wellbeing, strength of spirit, family connections, and lore that has made Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures the oldest living cultures on earth.

Healing enables people to overcome trauma and restore wellbeing. It allows people to act from a place of strength rather than a place of distress. Effective ways to support healing include reconnecting with culture, strengthening identity, restoring safe, and enduring relationships, supporting communities to understand the impacts of their experiences on behaviour, and supporting communities to create and lead change. For Stolen Generations, healing also means keeping children safe with family, and addressing the rates of out-of-home care and juvenile detention.

Make Healing Happen provides an in-depth insight into the experiences of Stolen Generations survivors and the extent and complexity of their contemporary needs as they grow older. It presents demographic data about where Stolen Generations survivors and their families live, and it considers the impact of forced removal on Stolen Generations descendants.

Stolen Generations survivors

In 2018–19 there were an estimated 33,600 Stolen Generations survivors nationally, with about one in five (21%) of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples born before 1972 and still living having been removed from their families.³ In Western Australia, a third of the surviving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population born before 1972 were removed as children.

Stolen Generations survivors are growing older. In 2018–19, more than 80% of survivors were aged 50 and over.⁴ By 2022, all will be aged at least 50, and eligible for aged care.

Nationally, more than one third (36%) of adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are descended from older generations who were removed (great/grand/parents, aunts, uncles). This equated to 142,200 descendants nationally in 2018–19, with the number growing over time.⁵ In some jurisdictions (Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and the ACT), between 40% and 60% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are descended from Stolen Generations survivors.⁶

“I have lost everything because of the so-called Protector of Aborigines. I lost my right as a human being, my parents, my siblings, my culture and my land, rights of living on the land and nurturing. I have had haunted memories of my youth. I have suffered this all of my life and so have my children ... It's bloody sad don't you think so?”

Submission to the Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce

Stolen Generations survivors have multiple complex and overlapping needs. They carry a legacy of social and economic disadvantage and often lack access to appropriate services, including to address their needs as they age. Their health and wellbeing is significantly worse than that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of a similar age who were not removed.

3 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

4 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

5 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

6 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 6

7 Public submission 174, Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce, *Reconciling the Past: Government control of Aboriginal monies in Western Australia, 1905–1972*. Department of Indigenous Affairs, 2008, p. 25 <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/2008/3.html>

Compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age, Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over were more likely to be:⁸

Living in tough economic circumstances

- 1.8 times** as likely not to be the owner of a home
- 1.6 times** as likely to live in a household that could not raise \$2,000 in an emergency
- 1.5 times** as likely to have government payments as their main income source

Living with ill health and other stressors

- 1.7 times** as likely to have experienced discrimination due to being Indigenous
- 1.5 times** as likely to have experienced actual or threatened physical violence
- 1.4 times** as likely to have a disability as a severe or profound core activity limitation
- 1.4 times** as likely to have poor mental health
- 1.3 times** as likely to have been diagnosed with a mental health condition

Living with higher levels of some health risk factors

- 1.7 times** as likely to be a current smoker.

Compared (on an age-standardised basis) with the general non-Indigenous population aged 50 and over, Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over are:⁹

- 6.4 times** as likely to live in an overcrowded house
- 4.1 times** as likely to not be a homeowner
- 3.5 times** as likely to be a current smoker
- 3.0 times** as likely to have a severe or profound core activity limitation
- 2.7 times** as likely to have poor mental health (K5 score)
- 2.3 times** as likely to have poor or fair self-assessed health
- 2.2 times** as likely to have government payments as main source of income
- 1.9 times** as likely to be unemployed (among working age up to 64).

For long-term health conditions, compared to the general non-Indigenous population, Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over are:

- 4.6 times** as likely to have kidney disease
- 3.1 times** as likely to have diabetes
- 3.0 times** as likely to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- 2.7 times** as likely to have heart, stroke or vascular diseases
- 2.3 times** as likely to have asthma.

8 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Figure 4

9 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 2

Stolen Generations descendants

Descendants of Stolen Generations survivors also experience significantly poorer wellbeing compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Adverse experiences in childhood can have lifelong effects. Traumatic childhood experiences such as those of Stolen Generations survivors may affect following generations through biological changes in stress responses, and by undermining survivors' ability to parent and love freely without fear.^{10,11} Stolen Generations survivors also find that the consequences of removal create environments of disadvantage for their families, which many struggle to address throughout their lives.

Compared with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, adult descendants of Stolen Generations survivors are:¹²

- 2 times** as likely to feel discriminated against in the last 12 months
- 2 times** as likely not to speak an Indigenous language
- 1.9 times** as likely to have experienced actual or threatened physical violence in the last 12 months
- 1.6 times** as likely not to have good health (based on a composite health measure)
- 1.5 times** as likely to have a problem accessing services in the last 12 months
- 1.5 times** as likely to have been arrested in the last five years
- 1.4 times** as likely to have a low level of trust in the general community
- 1.4 times** as likely to have ever been formally charged by police
- 1.4 times** as likely to have poor self-assessed health
- 1.4 times** as likely to have a low level of satisfaction with their lives
- 1.3 times** as likely to have poor mental health (high K5 score).

Stolen Generations descendants are significantly less likely to:

- Live in households with income in the bottom 30% (**0.7 times**)
- Have government payments as the main source of income (**0.6 times**).

10 Van Der Kolk, B. (2014), *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, Penguin, New York

11 See for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation reports: *Voices from the Campfire* (2009) https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/07_2012/healingfoundationreport09.pdf; *National Gathering of Healing Centres Final Report* (2012) <https://healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/healthinonet/getContent.php?linkid=555518&title=National+Gathering+of+Healing+Centres+Final+Report>; *Growing Our Children Up Strong and Deadly Final Report* (2013) <https://www.healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2017/02/Growing-our-Children-up-SINGLES-updated-2015.pdf>

12 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 5.2

There is an urgent need to heal past wrongs – for the wellbeing of those who were stolen, their descendants who have inherited their trauma, their communities who continue to hurt, and for Australia as a nation. This report provides guidance for how such healing can be achieved.

Urgent action is required for healing through the following priorities.

Healing for Stolen Generations survivors

ACTION 1: *Redress for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.*

Priority 1: All Australian governments, in collaboration with Stolen Generations survivors, co-design a universal, safe and culturally appropriate redress scheme for living and deceased Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

Priority 2: The Australian Government urgently addresses reparations for Stolen Generations survivors removed in Commonwealth territories (Northern Territory, ACT, Jervis Bay).

Priority 3: The Australian Government, with contributions from all jurisdictions, establishes a funding stream for investing in healing. The funds will be used to expand support and resources for Stolen Generations organisations, and other organisations nominated by Stolen Generations survivors, to deliver co-designed healing programs focused on the specific needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their families.

ACTION 2: *Meeting the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors.*

Priority 4: All governments resource programs and policies across Australia that are co-designed with Stolen Generations survivors to holistically address their specific needs, prioritising aged care, disability, health (especially mental health) and housing.

National Intergenerational Healing Strategy

ACTION 3: *Healing intergenerational trauma and preventing new harm.*

Priority 5: All governments resource and implement a national intergenerational healing strategy for addressing intergenerational trauma, developed with Stolen Generations survivors and descendants. The intergenerational healing strategy should include investments in:

- An overarching enabling framework that encompasses truth telling, self-determination, healing through culture, systems reform, and improvements at policy, program and workforce levels.
- Community-led services and programs.
- Capacity building for communities and other stakeholders to recognise and address trauma.
- Collective and family healing.
- Continued reform in access to records by Stolen Generations survivors and descendants.
- Consolidation, application and building of an evidence base.

Priority 6: That collective healing programs co-developed with local Stolen Generations organisations are established in Western Australia and South Australia as a high priority. This recognises the high proportion of adult Stolen Generations descendants in Western Australia and South Australia, who experience disproportionate levels of disadvantage.

Monitoring and accountability

ACTION 4: *Sustainable and robust monitoring and accountability.*

Priority 7: The Australian Government resources a national accountability framework to monitor and report progress towards achieving better outcomes for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, including annual/biennial reporting to parliament and the establishment of a web-based monitoring and reporting tool.

1.0 Introduction

Stolen Generations survivors and *Bringing them Home*

The forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families on the basis of their race was common government policy and practice across Australia from the 19th century until the 1970s.

Children were removed using laws aimed at eliminating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as distinct peoples, assuming that the children, their families and communities were racially inferior.¹³ This deliberate intent to eliminate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the forced removal of children was an act of genocide, as defined by the international *Genocide Convention* ratified by Australia in 1949.¹⁴

Many children were removed to institutions run by churches. Churches played key roles as instruments of state policy and in suppressing Indigenous culture and language.¹⁵ Others were adopted by non-Indigenous families, placed with non-Indigenous households or on pastoral stations to work as domestic servants or farmhands. Many children suffered harsh, degrading treatment, including sexual abuse.

The scale and extent of removals means that few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are untouched by the impacts of these policies.

All this is well known to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – it is an experience that remains ever present in their lives. However, until relatively recently there was widespread denial of this history by much of mainstream Australia.

The *Bringing them Home* report tabled in the Parliament of Australia on 26 May 1997¹⁶ was the first public documentation of the experiences of Stolen Generations survivors and the devastating effects of forced removals. The *Bringing them Home* report also documented how the trauma experienced by those removed and their families and communities has been passed down through generations, contributing significantly to issues such as substance misuse, mental illness, family violence, removal of children, and youth incarceration in contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The report made 54 recommendations, including a national apology, reparations including compensation, improved services, and a process for monitoring the implementation of its recommendations.

13 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) *Final Report Vol 2, Nature and Cause*, p236 https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_2_nature_and_cause.pdf

14 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997). *Bringing them Home: Community Guide* p10 https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bth_Community%20guide_final.pdf

15 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997). *Bringing them Home: Community Guide* p10 https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bth_Community%20guide_final.pdf

16 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997). *Bringing them Home Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf

Despite the weight of historical evidence and the testimony of Stolen Generations survivors themselves, the government of the day rejected most of the recommendations, including an apology and reparations. It did provide funding for Link-Up services, counselling, and the expansion of regional social and emotional wellbeing centres. Subsequent inquiries and reports identified widespread problems with government responses, including insufficient targeting, and poor coordination and documentation, resulting in a failure to meet the needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

The Australian Government's Apology to the Stolen Generations, made in February 2008, delivered on one of the central unfulfilled recommendations of the *Bringing them Home* inquiry, and led to the establishment of The Healing Foundation. There have since been further responses to the needs of Stolen Generations survivors, including:

- *State and territory apologies*, with all Australian parliaments having now apologised to those affected by the policies of forced removal of Indigenous children.
- *Reparations packages* in Tasmania (2007–08), New South Wales (2017) and South Australia (2017). In February 2020, the Victorian Government announced a Stolen Generations redress scheme would be established.
- *Additional resources for services* from the Australian Government, include limited funding for Link-Up and counselling services, funding for The Healing Foundation, and resourcing support to Stolen Generations survivors and their families before, during and after their interaction with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- *Access to records*, with most jurisdictions assisting Stolen Generations survivors with family history services and/or access to historical records.

The overall response remains fragmented and does not address the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors. Services to meet specific needs are geographically limited and inadequately funded. Fewer than half of Stolen Generations survivors have been eligible for the limited state-based reparations packages. By 2015, fewer than 1 in 10 *Bringing them Home* recommendations had been fully implemented, with more than half assessed as having been implemented in a limited way or not at all.¹⁷

The failure to systematically implement the *Bringing them Home* recommendations and comprehensively respond to the needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their families has exacerbated intergenerational trauma, causing more pain and distress across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

¹⁷ Rule J and Rice E (2015) *Bringing them Home: scorecard report 2015*. Commissioned by the National Sorry Day Committee DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.2.34358.50242](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34358.50242); Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) (2013). Overview of the Implementation of the *Bringing them Home* Report Recommendations. Melbourne, SNAICC

About this report

To mark the 20th anniversary of the *Bringing them Home* report in 2017, The Healing Foundation published *Bringing them Home 20 years on*,¹⁸ led by its Stolen Generations Reference Group and informed by consultations with Stolen Generations organisations across the country. The report outlined priority actions for addressing the needs and rights of Stolen Generations survivors and highlighted the lack of evidence about the current needs of survivors and how these might change as they age.

In response, the Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet funded The Healing Foundation to conduct a thorough analysis of the contemporary experience and needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants. The needs analysis aimed to:

- Document the contemporary experience of Stolen Generations survivors, including how many are still alive and where they live.
- Identify the needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, including their needs relative to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.
- Review the services required by Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants now and into the future.
- Outline a package of national measures to address the needs of Stolen Generations survivors.

Make Healing Happen summarises the results of that analysis and is based on:

- Testimony from Stolen Generations survivors to more than 20 different public inquiries over the past 10–12 years, reaffirmed at a national knowledge circle held in Canberra in February 2018, and updated to reflect recent developments.
- Quantitative analyses by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) of data from six Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) surveys from 2002 to 2018–19.
- Other reports that describe Australian reparations schemes, identify institutions to which children were removed, and map the current policy and service delivery landscape as it affects Stolen Generations survivors.

Make Healing Happen provides an in-depth insight into the experiences of Stolen Generations survivors and the extent and complexity of their contemporary needs as they age. It presents demographic data about where Stolen Generations survivors and their families live and considers the impacts of removal on descendants.

¹⁸ The Healing Foundation (2017) *Bringing them Home 20 years on* <http://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2017/05/Bringing-Them-Home-20-years-on-FINAL-SCREEN-1.pdf>

The analysis demonstrates that there is still an urgent need to heal past wrongs – for the wellbeing of those who were stolen, their descendants who have inherited their trauma, their communities who continue to hurt, and for Australia as a nation. This report provides guidance for how such healing can be achieved.

The evidence base

This report combines the new analyses with existing knowledge and experience of trauma and healing. Research commissioned for this report is described briefly in this section. Detailed descriptions of the methodologies used for the quantitative and qualitative analyses can be found in the AIHW publications,¹⁹ and in McCausland et al.²⁰

Stolen Generations testimony

*Bringing them Home*²¹ told the stories of Stolen Generations survivors and brought wider recognition to the history of forced removal and abuse, as well as its ongoing effects on survivors, their families and communities. It was the first time many Stolen Generations survivors had spoken publicly about their experiences of removal from family, culture and country.

Since then, and at personal cost, Stolen Generations survivors have testified at numerous inquiries and commissions – in the last 10–12 years, there have been more than 20 such inquiries. These have included the Stolen Wages taskforces in Queensland and Western Australia, and more recently the New South Wales and South Australia Stolen Generations reparations hearings, and the Royal Commissions examining institutional responses to child sexual abuse, aged care and disability. This testimony provides a public record of the contemporary experience and needs of Stolen Generations survivors.

A team led by Dr Ruth McCausland from the University of New South Wales undertook a qualitative analysis of the contemporary experience and needs (met and unmet) of Stolen Generations survivors, documented in Part two of this report.²² Their approach avoided asking Stolen Generations survivors about issues they had already provided testimony for, and instead enabled new consultations to be about gaps and current priorities.

19 AIHW (2018) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material>; AIHW 2018 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over. Cat. no. IHW 199, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generation-aged-50-and-over/contents/table-of-contents>

AIHW (2019) Children living in households with members of the Stolen Generations. Cat. no. IHW 214, Canberra: AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/children-living-in-households-with-members-of-the/contents/table-of-contents>; AIHW (2021) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19

20 McCausland R, Nettheim, A, and Kang C (2021) The Contemporary Experiences and Needs of Stolen Generations survivors; qualitative analysis, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation

21 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997) *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf

22 McCausland R, Nettheim, A, and Kang C (2021) *The Contemporary Experiences and Needs of Stolen Generations survivors; qualitative analysis*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation



Their testimony was reaffirmed and updated at a knowledge circle held with Stolen Generations survivors in Canberra in February 2018, as part of an event to mark the 10-year anniversary of the National Apology.²³ Participants communicated that they are increasingly grappling with their awareness of themselves as an ageing population, many of whom have chronic health conditions and trauma-related issues.

Demographic and contemporary needs – quantitative analyses

Although the exact numbers of children removed will never be known, it is possible to estimate current numbers of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants. As part of *Make Healing Happen*, The Healing Foundation commissioned the AIHW to provide data about the numbers and contemporary situations of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

The AIHW (2018)²⁴ analyses are based on data from five surveys conducted by the ABS: the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) of 2002, 2008, and 2014–15; and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) of 2004–05 and 2012–13. The AIHW subsequently updated some elements of the initial analyses using the 2018–19 NATSIHS.²⁵ These surveys are nationally representative, have relatively large sample sizes, and contain detailed data on a wide range of topics.

The surveys collect a consistent set of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have experience of removals. Both the NATSISS and NATSIHS ask if the survey respondent was removed, whether they have relatives who were removed, and if so who. A number of questions about socioeconomic status, health and cultural engagement are common across the surveys. However, the two surveys have different emphases and therefore report different sets of outcomes. For example, the NATSISS explores justice issues, whereas the NATSIHS does not.

For the purposes of the AIHW analyses, Stolen Generations survivors are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples born before 1972 who report having been removed from their families. Stolen Generations descendants are defined as individuals aged 18 and over who reported that any member of their elder generations (that is, great/grand/parents/uncles/aunties) had been removed. The AIHW also used data from the 2008 and 2014–15 NATSISS about children under the age of 15 living in households with Stolen Generations survivors, to uncover direct evidence of the intergenerational effects of removal.²⁶ Comparisons are made with responses from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same ages who report that they were not removed, and/or not descended from people who were removed.

23 Kang C and Nettheim A (March 2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation (unpublished)

24 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material>; AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over*. Cat. no. IHW 199, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generation-aged-50-and-over/contents/table-of-contents>

25 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

26 AIHW (2019) *Children living in households with members of the Stolen Generations*. Cat. no. IHW 214. Canberra: AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/children-living-in-households-with-members-of-the/contents/table-of-contents>

The Stolen Generations²⁷

The Stolen Generations are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were removed from their families as children, as a result of government policies across Australian jurisdictions in the 20th century.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics survey questions do not ask for details about the timing or reasons for any type of removal from family. However, 1972 is a commonly used watershed to distinguish between the removal of children who constitute the Stolen Generations and other types of more recent removals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

Hence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples born before 1972 who report having been removed in the ABS surveys can be used as a proxy for the Stolen Generations.

Other sources of information

The Healing Foundation also commissioned reports to identify institutions to which children were removed,²⁸ to map the policy and service delivery landscape as it affects Stolen Generations survivors,²⁹ and to describe reparations schemes in detail.³⁰



27 Adapted from AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

28 McCausland R, Nettheim, A, and Kang C (January 2018) Institutional mapping report, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation

29 Tilton E (December 2017) Australian policy and service delivery landscape as it affects the Stolen Generations, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation (unpublished)

30 McCausland R, Nettheim, A, and Kang C (March 2018) State-based reparations schemes, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation (unpublished)

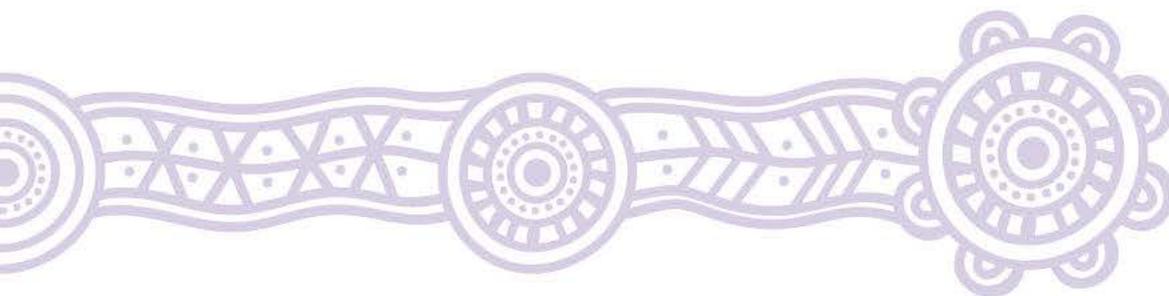
2.0 Numbers and locations of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants

The forced removal of children from their families on the basis of their race was a universal experience for Australia's First Nations peoples. Although it is not known how many children were removed in total, the estimate provided by the extensive work of the *Bringing them Home* inquiry was that:

"... Between one in three and one in 10 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities in the period from approximately 1910 until 1970. In certain regions and in certain periods the figure was undoubtedly much greater than one in 10. In that time not one Indigenous family has escaped the effects of forcible removal ... Most families have been affected, in one or more generations, by the forcible removal of one or more children."³¹

Bringing them Home report

The exact numbers of children removed will never be known, largely because full records were not kept, some records have been destroyed, and the complex and inconsistent policies and practices across jurisdictions and institutions limit access to the records that do exist.



31 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997) *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf

2.1 Stolen Generations survivors

The AIHW estimates that in 2018–19 there were approximately 33,600 Stolen Generations survivors nationally, with approximately one in five (21%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people born before 1972 and still living having been removed from their families.³²

Of those removed, 59% are women and 41% are men. A large majority (82%) of Stolen Generations survivors live in non-remote areas³³ and about three quarters (73%) live in either New South Wales (34%), Queensland (20%) or Western Australia (19%).³⁴

Removal rates differ between the jurisdictions.³⁵ Stolen Generations survivors make up a very high proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Western Australia, where more than a third (34%) of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples born before 1972 report being removed. In the ACT, around a quarter (27%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples born before 1972 report being removed. In Victoria the percentage of reported removals is 26.5%, while in the Northern Territory it is 25%, and in South Australia it is 25%.³⁶

Figure 1: Estimated population and proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 46 and over, who reported having been removed from their families, by state or territory, 2018–19³⁷

	Estimated Indigenous population	Estimated number reporting being removed	Distribution of those who were removed (%)	Percentage who were removed (rate of being removed)
Total aged 46 and over	159,900	33,600	100	21.0
By state/territory^(a)				
NSW	58,400	11,400	33.9	19.5
VIC	11,700	3,100	9.2	26.5
QLD	41,200	6,700	20.0	16.3
SA	8,300	2,100	6.1	24.7
WA	19,000	6,400	19.0	33.7
TAS ^(b)	7,100	400	1.2	5.6
NT	12,900	3,200	9.6	24.9
ACT ^(b)	1,300	400	1.0	27.0

(a) Refers to current state/territory of residence at time of survey.

(b) Denotes that the ACT and TAS estimates of the proportion of the population aged 46 and over who were removed from family are based on a small sample size of relevant persons in that category and should be interpreted with caution.

NOTE: The estimated total Indigenous population and the number reporting being removed are rounded to the nearest hundred. The percentages reported in the columns on distribution of the removed population and the rate of being removed, however, are based on the actual unrounded estimates

Source: AIHW analysis of NATSIHS 2018–19 (ABS 2019b).

32 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

33 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 1

34 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Figure 1

35 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Figure 2

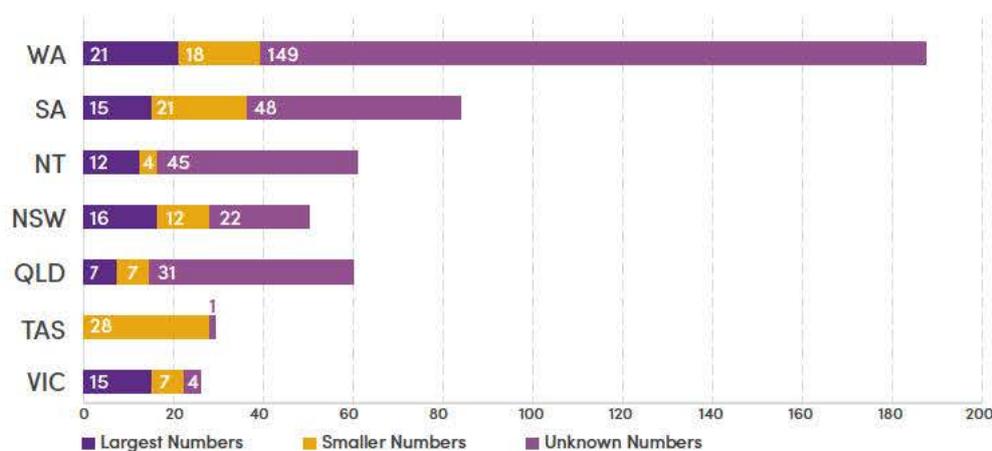
36 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 4

37 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19* (2021), Table 4

2.2 Institutions to which Stolen Generations children were removed

Institutions to which Stolen Generations children were removed were identified by reviewing relevant source material in all jurisdictions.³⁸ Nationally, 183 institutions were identified as housing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families, with a further 300 that warrant further research to determine if they also housed Stolen Generations children.³⁹ Almost 40% of the total number of institutions were in Western Australia.

Figure 2: Location of institutions to which Stolen Generations children were removed



Significantly, these figures only reflect formal institutions. They do not capture the many non-institutional places where children were placed, such as pastoral stations and private families/individual adoptions, or those who were taken overseas.

³⁸ McCausland R, Nettheim A and Kang C (2018) Institutional mapping report: unpublished research paper for The Healing Foundation, Canberra, The Healing Foundation

³⁹ Institutions were assessed as belonging to one of four categories: Categories 1 (larger numbers) and 2 (smaller numbers) were those institutions that had definitely housed removed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; Category 3 had probably done so; and Category 4 possibly had done so. The information is not exhaustive. Further input from Stolen Generations survivors, Stolen Generations organisations and/or additional research is likely to result in some institutions being added to the list and some moving into a different category.

2.3 Stolen Generations descendants

Based on the 2018–19 NATSIHS, the AIHW estimates that 36% of adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are descended from generations who were removed (great/grand/parents, aunts, uncles). This equates to 142,200 descendants nationally in 2018–19, with the number continuing to grow over time. This number includes approximately 13,200 people who were themselves removed.⁴⁰

In 2018–19, three quarters of descendants (75%) lived in either New South Wales (29%), Queensland (27%) and Western Australia (20%).⁴¹ In two jurisdictions, more than half of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult population are descended from Stolen Generations survivors: ACT (61%) and Western Australia (56%). This proportion is 48% in South Australia and 42% in Victoria.⁴²

Figure 3: Estimated population and proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 18 and over, who reported to be descendants of all people removed, by state or territory, 2018–19

	Estimated Indigenous population	Estimated number of descendants	Distribution of descendants (%)	Proportion who are descendants in total population (%)
Total aged 18 and over	396,100	142,200	100	35.7
By state/territory^(a)				
NSW	126,400	40,600	28.6	32.1
VIC	27,700	11,500	8.1	41.5
QLD	112,100	37,700	26.5	33.6
SA	22,800	10,900	7.7	47.8
WA	50,200	27,900	19.6	55.6
TAS ^(b)	14,200	2,200	1.5	15.5
NT	38,600	9,800	6.9	25.4
ACT ^(b)	4,100	2,500	1.8	61.0

(a) Refers to current state/territory of residence at time of survey.

(b) The ACT and TAS estimates of the number of descendants and the proportion of the population aged 18 and over who are descendants are based on a small sample size of relevant persons in that category, and should be interpreted with caution.

NOTE: The estimated total Indigenous population and the number of descendants are rounded to the nearest hundred. The percentages reported in the columns on distribution of descendants and the proportion who are descendants, however, are based on the actual unrounded estimates.

Source: AIHW analysis of NATSIHS 2018–19 (ABS 2020).⁴³

The AIHW estimates that in 2014–15, there were approximately 7,900 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–14 who lived in households with at least one family member who was a Stolen Generations survivor. This represents 3% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in that age group.⁴⁴

40 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

41 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 6

42 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 6

43 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19* (2021), Table 6

44 AIHW (2019) *Children living in households with members of the Stolen Generations*. Cat. no. IHW 214. Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/children-living-in-households-with-members-of-the/contents/table-of-contents>

3.0 The contemporary experience of Stolen Generations survivors

“When you are disconnected, when you do not know who you are, where you are from, what your language is or who your family is, then you are dysfunctional, you are lost and you are less resilient than you could be. When you are disconnected, outcomes in education, employment, economic stability, physical and mental health are all affected.”⁴⁵

Dr Ngiare Brown

Many Stolen Generations survivors have testified to a lifetime of trauma, grief and loss.

Their complex health and wellbeing needs include the challenges of growing older, poor mental and physical health, and high levels of disability. In 2018–19, more than 80% of Stolen Generations survivors were aged 50 and over, and all will be at least 50 and eligible for aged care by 2022. One in five reported living with a severe or profound disability.⁴⁶



⁴⁵ Jacobs and Walmsley, 'Mental As: Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal health service addresses Stolen Generations trauma' *ABC News*, 8 October 2015 www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-08/canberras-aboriginal-health-service-addresses-stolen-generation/6834528

⁴⁶ AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1

3.1 The 'gap within the gap'

Stolen Generations survivors form a significantly disadvantaged subgroup within the already disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Through their testimony, survivors detailed a legacy of social and economic disadvantage flowing from their forced removal. This has been quantified in the AIHW analyses. The analyses demonstrate the extent of additional disadvantage Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants have suffered as a result of being forcibly removed from their families and the abuse they suffered following removal, compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who were not removed.

Compared with those who were not removed, and after controlling for other potential influences on these outcomes, the results show that in 2014–15, Stolen Generations survivors were:⁴⁷

- 3.3 times** as likely to have been incarcerated in the last five years
- 2.2 times** as likely to have ever been formally charged by police
- 2 times** as likely to have been arrested in the last five years
- 1.8 times** as likely to have government payments as their main income source
- 1.7 times** as likely to have experienced actual or threatened violence in the previous 12 months
- 1.7 times** as likely to not be the owner of a home
- 1.7 times** as likely to have poor self-assessed health
- 1.6 times** as likely to be unemployed
- 1.6 times** as likely to have experienced homelessness in the previous 10 years
- 1.6 times** as likely not to have 'good health' (*as measured using a composite health index*)
- 1.5 times** as likely to have experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months
- 1.5 times** as likely to have poor mental health
- 1.5 times** as likely to have used substances in the previous 12 months
- 1.5 times** as likely to have had problems accessing services in the previous 12 months
- 1.4 times** as likely to be a current smoker
- 1.4 times** as likely to have a household income in the bottom 30%.

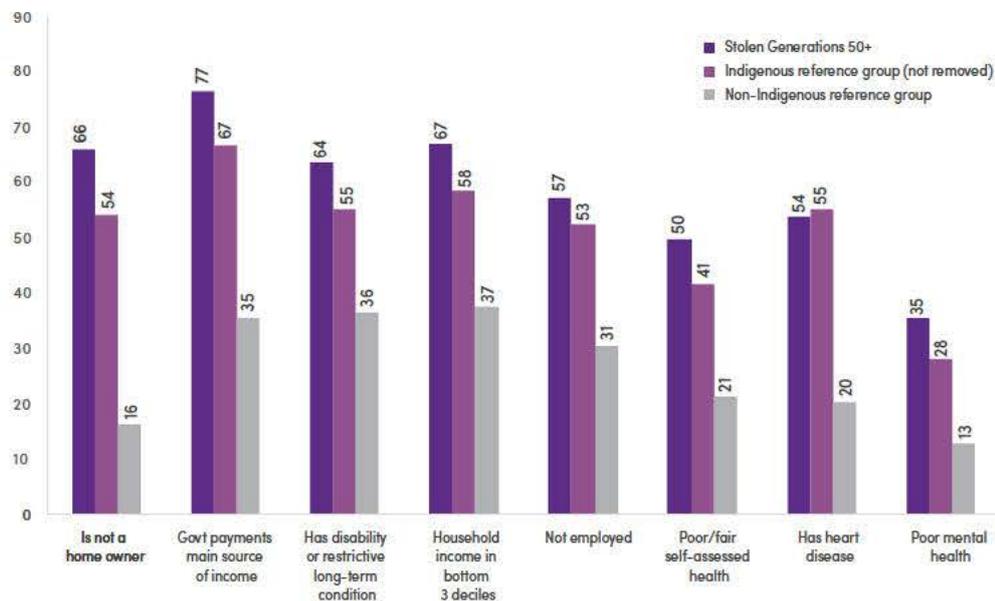
NOTE: The colour scheme indicates whether the estimated odds ratio is statistically different from 1 at the 5% and 10% test levels.

- Denotes the OR is significantly different from 1 at the conventional 5% level, consistent with a 95% confidence interval.
 - Denotes the OR is significantly different from 1 at the 10% level, consistent with a wider 90% confidence interval.
-

This extra burden of disadvantage is outlined in detail in the following subsections and spans the range of lived experience: economic (e.g. poverty, unemployment and increased reliance on government payments); social (particularly relating to homelessness or decreased likelihood of being a homeowner) and health (e.g. disability and chronic disease). Figure 4 illustrates 'the gap within the gap' for Stolen Generations survivors and comparable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous populations.

47 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material>, Figure 5.1

Figure 4: Comparison of selected characteristics of Stolen Generations survivors and comparable Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, age-standardised rates, 2018–19 and 2017–18⁴⁸



The AIHW compared age-standardised outcomes for Stolen Generations survivors and the general non-Indigenous population aged 50 and over and found substantial disparities in those outcomes.⁴⁹ For example, Stolen Generations survivors are:

- 6.4 times** as likely to live in an overcrowded house
- 4.1 times** as likely to not be a home owner
- 3.5 times** as likely to be a current smoker
- 3.0 times** as likely to have a severe or profound core activity limitation
- 2.7 times** as likely to have poor mental health (Kessler score)
- 2.3 times** as likely to have poor or fair self-assessed health
- 2.2 times** as likely to have government payments as main source of income
- 1.9 times** as likely to not be employed (among working age up to 64).

For long-term health conditions, compared to the general non-Indigenous population, Stolen Generations survivors are:

- 4.6 times** as likely to have kidney disease
- 3.1 times** as likely to have diabetes
- 3.0 times** as likely to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- 2.7 times** as likely to have heart, stroke or vascular diseases
- 2.3 times** as likely to have asthma.

⁴⁸ AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 2. Source: AIHW analysis of NATSIHS 2018–19 (ABS 2019b, 2020) and NHS 2017–18 (ABS 2018, 2019c). See box on 'age standardisation and rate ratios'. Tests of statistical significance of the rate ratios are not reported in Table 2 because the non-Indigenous and Indigenous data are tabulated from different surveys.

⁴⁹ AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 2

Despite their disproportionate needs, Stolen Generations survivors lack access to appropriate services, due to systemic issues, including poor cultural safety, a lack of understanding of survivors' specific needs, and difficulty navigating service systems.

3.2 Complex and overlapping needs

Forced removal has had profound effects on Stolen Generations survivors, impacting all aspects of their lives, including physical and mental health, access to education, economic independence, housing, and contact with the criminal justice system. In many cases, these impacts and their resulting needs intensify with age.

It is critical to note the intersection between, and compounding of, health and wellbeing, and social and economic outcomes, and the lack of recognition given to this issue by policy or service providers:

“One issue that has been highlighted again and again is that the needs of Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities are complex, and that policy makers, program developers and service providers need to understand, and respond to, that complexity.”⁵⁰

Bringing them Home: scorecard report 2015

Stolen Generations survivors experience adverse outcomes in more areas, on average, than do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who were not removed. Surveys of social outcomes in the 2014–15 NATSISS report, and physical health outcomes in the 2018–19 AIHW report, have highlighted the multidimensional impact of forced removal on survivors. Key findings relating to the individual social and health outcomes are below.⁵¹

The AIHW analysis of the 2014–15 data shows that:

- Approximately 88% of Stolen Generations survivors experienced 10 or more adverse outcomes, with 11% experiencing 20 or more; compared to 61% and 3.5% respectively of people not removed.⁵²
- Stolen Generations survivors experienced an average of 14 adverse outcomes, compared to 11 experienced by those not removed.⁵³

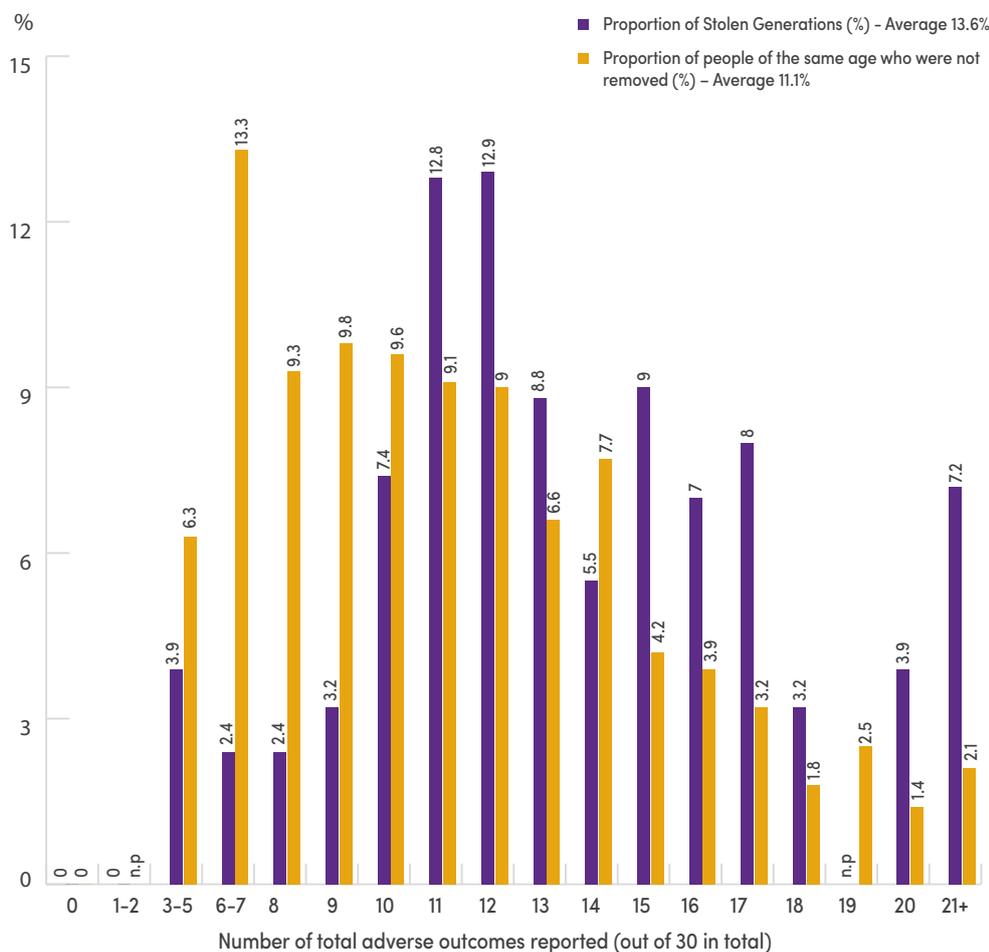
50 Rule, J and Rice, E (2015) *Bringing them Home: scorecard report 2015*, Commissioned by the National Sorry Day Committee DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.2.34358.50242](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34358.50242) p. 23

51 AIHW, Comparisons on multidimensional measures of adversity: unpublished research paper for The Healing Foundation Canberra, (unpublished)

52 AIHW, Comparisons on multidimensional measures of adversity: unpublished research paper for The Healing Foundation Canberra, (unpublished)

53 AIHW, Comparisons on multidimensional measures of adversity: unpublished research paper for The Healing Foundation Canberra, (unpublished)

Figure 5: Frequency distribution of the number of people with multiple adverse outcomes, Stolen Generations and people of the same age who were not removed, 2014–15



Source: AIHW analysis of 2014–15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (unpublished).

The 2018–19 AIHW report shows that:

- 45% of Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported experiencing at least seven of 13 long-term adverse health outcomes.⁵⁴

AIHW also consolidated 38 social outcomes from the NATSISS 2014–15 report into seven broader domains to consider complexity of outcomes and any differences between Stolen Generations survivors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who were not removed.

These domains were socioeconomic outcomes; physical and mental health; health risk behaviours; language and culture; life stressors; safety, law and justice; and community functioning and social network.⁵⁵ Analysis of these domains highlighted that:

- Two-thirds of Stolen Generations survivors experienced adverse outcomes in 6 or 7 of the domains, compared to fewer than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who had not been removed.

⁵⁴ AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Figure 3b

⁵⁵ AIHW, *Comparisons on multidimensional measures of adversity: unpublished research paper for The Healing Foundation Canberra*, (unpublished)

3.3 A lifetime of trauma, grief and loss

The loss of identity and grief for lost families and communities, first documented in the *Bringing them Home* report, persist among Stolen Generations survivors.

The racist and genocidal policies of forced removal resulted in many children being prevented from contacting their families, or being allowed only limited contact with family. Children were frequently indoctrinated to believe in the inferiority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture.⁵⁶

Restrictions were often placed on speaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and accessing cultural stories and practices. The lasting impacts of these experiences include a lack of identity, and feelings of being unwanted and not belonging. These systematic assaults on identity were themselves a grave form of abuse.

"I remember this woman saying to me, 'Your mother's dead, you've got no mother now. That's why you're here with us.' Then about two years after that my mother and my mother's sister came to The Bungalow but they weren't allowed to visit us because they were black."⁵⁷

Testimony to the *Bringing them Home* inquiry

These experiences represent complex childhood trauma, defined as exposure to multiple or prolonged traumatic events. While survivors of complex childhood trauma respond in different ways, it can profoundly affect the development of the brain, leading to lifelong emotional distress, shame and grief; difficulty forming relationships; and a greater likelihood of destructive behaviours, such as alcohol and other drug misuse, and suicide. These behaviours, together with systemic racism, can lead to increased contact with the criminal justice system. Complex childhood trauma has been linked to a range of physical health problems across the lifespan, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and liver disease.⁵⁸

The experience of complex childhood trauma underlies the Stolen Generations experience, driving many of the disadvantages described in this report.

The impacts of forced removal do not only affect those removed, but also their families and descendants (see Section 4 *Intergenerational impacts of forced removal*).



56 The Healing Foundation (2016) *Healing for our Stolen Generations: Sharing Our Stories*. <https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2017/02/Healing-for-Our-Stolen-Generations-Sharing-Our-Stories-2.pdf>

57 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997) *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf

58 Anda R and Felitti V *Adverse Childhood Experiences and their Relationship to Adult Well-being and Disease: Turning gold into lead* (2012) <http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Natl-Council-Webinar-8-2012.pdf>; Wall L, Higgins D and Hunter C *Trauma-informed care in child/family welfare services*, Melbourne, Australian Institute of Family Studies (2016)

3.4 A legacy of social and economic disadvantage

The forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families has often been justified – historically, and unfortunately more recently by some public commentators⁵⁹ – as being ‘for the good of the child’. On the contrary, the experience of removal, and the profound abuse it entailed, led to grief and trauma, reduced health and wellbeing, and significant social and economic disadvantage:

“Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their families and raised in non-Indigenous settings did not end up healthier, better educated or more likely to get jobs than those who were raised in Aboriginal communities. Rather, forced removal led to a cycle of poverty, ill health, discrimination and incarceration. As a result, the Stolen Generations are one of the most disadvantaged groups within the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.”⁶⁰

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

Stolen Generations survivors have testified extensively about the profound effects that loss of family and culture, and the subsequent abuse they suffered, have had on their social and economic experiences.

Poverty and unemployment

Stolen Generations survivors testify that their experiences of unemployment and poverty are a legacy of removal, arising from being denied educational opportunities and a pervasive lack of self-confidence created by being treated as inferior.

“...a widening employment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, which is worse for Stolen Generation survivors and their descendants.”⁶¹

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

The difficulties of employment, particularly in the context of ageing, were discussed at the national knowledge circle held in Canberra in February 2018,⁶² where Stolen Generations survivors reported that carrying a burden of chronic illness

59 Windschuttle K (2010) ‘Why there were no Stolen Generations’, *Quadrant* (2010); Bolt A, 2017 the Stolen Generations myth is killing Aboriginal children, *The Bolt Report*

60 Coota Girls Corporation cited in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*. Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf>, p. 131

61 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*. Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 135

62 Kang C and Nettheim A, (2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

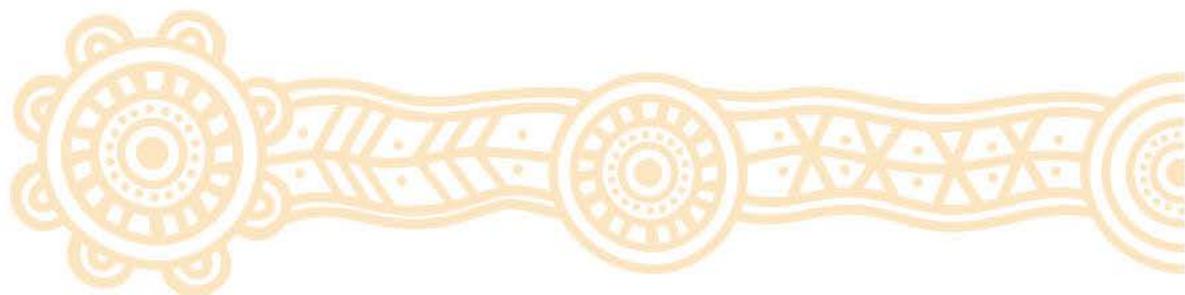
and trauma, and their need to care for grandchildren, often made it difficult to gain employment. This creates a reliance on unemployment benefits and further economic disadvantage that many find undignified and retraumatizing.

In 2014–15, in relation to poverty and unemployment, the AIHW reported that:⁶³

- Almost two-thirds (62%) of household incomes were in the bottom 30% (1.4 times as likely as people of the same age who were not removed).
- 62% of working age were unemployed (1.6 times as likely as people of the same age who were not removed).
- Government payments were the main source of income for 70% (1.8 times as likely as people of the same age who were not removed).

In 2018–19, Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported:⁶⁴

- Government payments were the main source of income for 71% (1.5 times as likely as people of the same age who were not removed).
- 63% had household incomes in the bottom 30% (1.3 times as likely as people of the same age who were not removed).
- 46% had personal incomes in the bottom 30%.
- 57% of working age were unemployed (1.3 times as likely as people of the same age who were not removed).
- 64% lived in households that could not raise \$2000 in an emergency (1.6 times as likely as people of the same age who were not removed).
- 43% had days without money for basic living expenses in the previous 12 months.



63 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material>, Table 3.1, Figure 5.1

64 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1, Figure 4

Housing and homelessness

Many Stolen Generations survivors have experienced homelessness, with secure housing an increasing concern, especially in the context of an ageing population:

"... A physical space that Stolen Generations survivors own and can go to be with their families would be a wonderful use of this fund ... don't forget these people have no place to call home, most of them, as they were removed from their homes!"⁶⁵

Survey participant, *Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund* report

The *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales* report also found that Stolen Generations survivors:

" ... may experience additional difficulties in accessing housing, particularly against the backdrop of an ever-increasing shortage of homes and high rates of homelessness for Aboriginal people."⁶⁶

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

The degree to which housing is an issue is reflected in the actions of some Stolen Generations organisations, with the Kinchela Boys Home (KBH) Aboriginal Corporation having:

" ... successfully established a Community House in Western Sydney for the Kinchela men and [will be] looking at developing more houses across New South Wales and becoming a registered Aboriginal Community Housing provider."⁶⁷

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

65 South Australian Department of State Development (2017) *South Australia Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations*. Adelaide: South Australian Department of State Development https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/...data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34510/Summary-of-Consultations.pdf, p. 12

66 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*. Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf>, p. 139

67 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*. Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf>, p. 139

Participants at the knowledge circle also identified housing as a priority. For many, the experience of removal and institutionalisation led to a strong wish for 'a place to call home' as they aged. A house of one's own was also seen as an economic investment that could be passed on to family, with one participant stating:

*"I want something tangible for my kids and grandkids after I'm gone."*⁶⁸

Knowledge circle participant

Severing cultural and spiritual links through forced removal has led to a disconnection from the sense of 'home' and continues to disadvantage Stolen Generations survivors in other ways, for example by denying them their native title rights, which are predicated on maintaining a continual connection to country.

In 2014–15, In relation to housing and homelessness:⁶⁹

- Stolen Generations survivors were significantly less likely to own their own home (25%), compared to those who had not been removed (40%).
- One in five Stolen Generations survivors (20%) reported having experienced homelessness in the previous decade (1.6 times as likely as the reference group), and two in five (42%) reported having been homeless at some point in their life.

In 2018–19:⁷⁰

- Only one third of Stolen Generations survivors owned their own home (1.8 times as likely to not own their own home compared with those not removed).
- 75% lived in houses that were of an acceptable standard.
- More than one third (35%) lived alone, and 12% lived in overcrowded dwellings.

68 Kang C and Nettheim A, (2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

69 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material>, Table 3.1, Figure 5.1

70 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1, Figure 4

Education

Poor educational outcomes stemming from removal underlie much of the socioeconomic disadvantage experienced by Stolen Generations survivors.

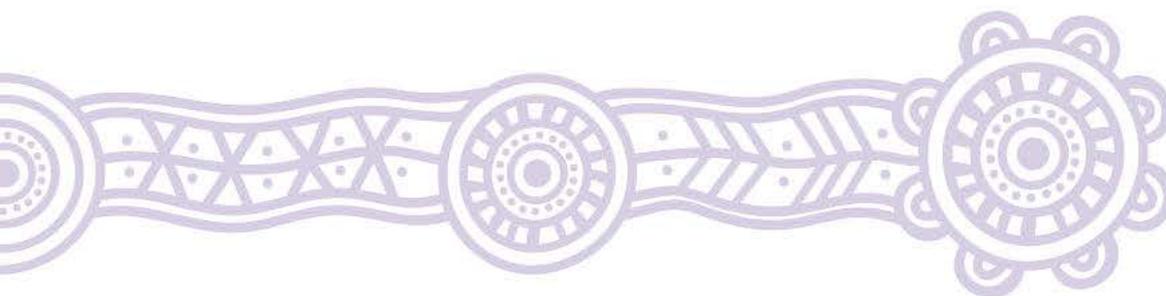
“... Growing up in Kahlin Compound [my mother] was never taught to read or write. Despite the rhetoric about Aboriginal children being taken away to improve their chances in life, literacy was one skill that the administration clearly thought was of no use to a young Aboriginal woman.”⁷¹

Pat Anderson, 17th Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture

As well as being denied education as children, the trauma experienced by Stolen Generations survivors – including an undermined sense of self-worth and confidence – has frequently affected their ability to access formal education later in life. The New South Wales reparations inquiry received numerous submissions identifying educational disadvantage as a key issue.⁷²

In relation to education:

- In 2014–15, 91% of Stolen Generations survivors reported not completing Year 12.⁷³
- In 2018–19, 88% of Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported not completing Year 12.⁷⁴



71 Anderson P (2017) *Our Hope for the Future: Voice. Treaty. Truth*, 17th Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture <https://nacchocommunique.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/patanderson-lingiari-lecture-final2-16-august-2017.pdf>

72 See, for example, Coota Girls Corporation cited in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 135

73 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Table 3.1

74 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1



Safety, law and justice

Many Stolen Generations survivors have testified about the impact of removal on their subsequent contact with police and the criminal justice system.

“The traumatic effect of being stolen is long-reaching, it goes on and on forever and ever. Many of us develop criminal records, and my own is extensive. Organisations are ill-equipped to address that trauma because they don’t have people who were stolen running them.”⁷⁵

Stolen Generations survivor Uncle Jack Charles

In 2014–15, in relation to contact with the criminal justice system and incarceration:⁷⁶

- More than half (52%) of Stolen Generations survivors reported having been charged at least once by the police (2.2 times as likely as people who were not removed)
- Almost a quarter (22%) reported having been incarcerated at least once in their lifetime
- 4% had been incarcerated in the previous five years (3.3 times as likely as people of the same age who had not been removed).

Many individuals grew up unable to learn parenting skills, and without the skills to sustain family relationships.⁷⁷ Many became victims of behaviours learned while institutionalised.

“[The families’] trauma has been the result of trying to support the [Kinchela Boys Home] men and yet being the victims of the behaviours instilled during their time at KBH, including alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence and social and emotional disconnection.”⁷⁸

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

75 Davey M, *The Guardian* (2017) Stolen Generation survivors still suffering, says Uncle Jack Charles <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/feb/12/stolen-generation-survivors-still-suffering-says-uncle-jack-charles>

76 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Table 3.1, Figure 5.1

77 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 34

78 Kinchela Boys’ Home cited in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 34

“A lot of partners have not been able to stick around with their men because of all the traumatic issues and stuff that they have not dealt with. Then there are other strong women who have put themselves through the wringer, like my mum, to stay.”⁷⁹

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

“... parental stress related to poverty, mental illness, serious physical illness and drug and alcohol abuse is closely linked to risk factors for violent behaviour ... [this] must also be understood in the context of past government policies that led to the Stolen Generations and the entrenched disadvantage that resulted.”⁸⁰

Always was, always will be Koori children report

In 2018–19, 15% of Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported being the victim of actual or threatened physical harm in the previous 12 months (1.5 times as likely as people of the same age who had not been removed).⁸¹



79 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 35

80 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence cited in Commission for Children and Young People (2016) *Always was, always will be Koori children: systemic inquiry into services provided to Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria*, Melbourne: Commission for Children and Young People <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/Publications-inquiries/always-was-always-will-be-koori-children-inquiry-report-oct16.pdf> p. 48

81 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1, Figure 4

3.5 An ageing population with complex health and wellbeing needs

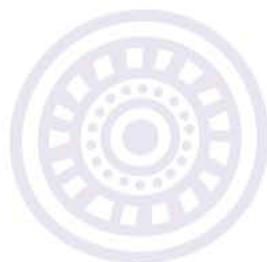
Stolen Generations survivors bear the burden of complex needs related to their traumatic experiences; needs that are changing and intensifying as they age. Consistent with the evidence related to the compounding lifelong effects of childhood trauma, Stolen Generations survivors report that:

“The consequences of forced removal on health and wellbeing are far-reaching as a consequence of being disconnected from sources of Aboriginal identity and social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.”⁸²

Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice

Ageing

Stolen Generations survivors are an ageing population. In 2018–19, more than 80% were aged 50 and over, making up approximately one in five (21%) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in this age group.⁸³ With eligibility for government aged care support being age 50 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 27,200 Stolen Generations survivors were eligible in 2018–19, with all survivors being eligible by 2022–23.



82 Peeters L, Hamann S and Kelly K. (2010) The Marumali Program: Healing for Stolen Generations in P Dudgeon, H Milroy and R Walker, eds., *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice*, Canberra, Department of Health and Ageing, p. 497 <https://www.telethonkids.org.au/globalassets/media/documents/aboriginal-health/working-together-second-edition/working-together-aboriginal-and-wellbeing-2014.pdf>

83 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*

Figure 6: Estimated population and proportions of Indigenous Australians aged 50 and over, who reported having been removed from their families, by age, sex and remoteness, 2018–19⁸⁴

	Estimated Indigenous population	Estimated number reporting being removed	Distribution of those who were removed (%)	Percentage who were removed (rate of being removed)
Total aged 50 and over	127,500	27,200	100	21.4
By age group (years)				
50–64	90,500	19,500	71.7	21.6
65 and over	37,100	7,700	28.3	20.8
By sex				
Men	58,400	11,200	41.1	19.2
Women	69,100	16,000	58.9	23.2
By remoteness^(a)				
Remote	23,100	5,100	18.9	22.2
Non-remote	104,400	22,100	81.1	21.2

(a) Remoteness refers to current location of residence at time of the survey.

Note: The estimated total Indigenous population and number reporting being removed from family are rounded to the nearest hundred. The percentages reported as the distribution of the removed population and rate of being removed, however, are based on the actual unrounded estimates.

Source: AIHW analysis of NATSIHS 2018–19 (ABS 2019b).

“Given the spasmodic response to date in addressing the needs of the Stolen Generations, whose life journey has, by any measure, been a difficult one based on the trauma of childhood removal, it is only proper that we do not make the journey into ageing unnecessarily painful or burdensome.

While it is too late for many of the Stolen Generations, we need to get on with this unfinished business and provide for the specific needs of this ageing population, in a way that acknowledges their legacy of social and economic disadvantage.

We need to focus our efforts on breaking the trauma cycle, to relieve the stresses of ageing for the Stolen Generations, otherwise we will not only fail again, there will also be additional and unnecessary costs to the Australian taxpayer.”⁸⁵

Ian Hamm, Chair of The Healing Foundation Stolen Generations Reference Group

⁸⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19* (2021), Table 1.

⁸⁵ Ian Hamm, Chair Stolen Generations Reference Group quoted in The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, *Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum*, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

Life expectancy is approximately 10 years lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than other Australians.⁸⁶ Many Stolen Generations survivors are concerned about the ageing process and the more complex healthcare needs it brings, and about the challenges they will face at this time of their lives.

They are particularly concerned that their history of hard labour in institutions and on missions, as well as the trauma they continue to live with, means that *'lots of people are worn out by the age of 60'*⁸⁷ and are unable to continue working. They are also increasingly worried about meeting the cost of care as they grow older.

Elderly survivors may not have any family support and may be reluctant to go into aged care facilities. The Chief Executive Officer of the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation pointed out *'that for those who were institutionalised, going into residential care is quite scary,'* with those going into institutional care at risk of re-traumatisation.⁸⁸

*"Aged care is a big thing. Mum and Dad were institutionalised in the dormitory system, then us being removed We became Mum's carers. My biggest regret is that we had to put her in full-time care because we didn't have the resources to keep her out of an institution."*⁸⁹

Stolen Generations descendant

*"It's hard to put her back in an institution because she started in an institution and will die in an institution."*⁹⁰

Stolen Generations descendant

Although trauma and the impacts of forced removal are common features of Stolen Generations histories, individual survivors have had unique childhood and adult experiences and are at different stages of their healing journeys. This means that a single model of aged care/support cannot meet everyone's needs. Individuals need the ability to choose services and models of delivery that suit their circumstances.⁹¹

For example, although some Stolen Generations survivors may want access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, others feel more comfortable with mainstream services. Many would prefer to receive care in their local community, to avoid further family fragmentation, and to maintain connections to community, family and country.⁹²

86 AIHW (2017) Life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths-in-australia/contents/life-expectancy>

87 Kang C and Nettheim A, (2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

88 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 143

89 Kang C and Nettheim A, (2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

90 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

91 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

92 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

"We came into the world alone; we are still alone in our aged care. We don't always have family around us. We need people who can help us."⁹³

Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum participant

Waiting lists are long for the relatively few existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled aged care services. Many of these services are situated in remote areas, while most Stolen Generations survivors live in non-remote areas. Where survivors are considered, they find themselves as 'add-ons' rather than a central focus of services.⁹⁴

Stolen Generations survivors may not be aware of the services that exist, or about their rights in relation to those services. This, together with a reluctance to speak up against authority, means they may not be accessing services, or they are unable to complain about negative experiences.

"When we talk to the facility, they say she says she likes it. She complies, but she always tells us how much she hates it."⁹⁵

Stolen Generations descendant

Lack of knowledge about the impact of removal on Stolen Generations survivors means that many people in the aged care system are unaware of the trauma survivors have and continue to experience. Policy and program designers, service provider management and staff, including many in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector, are unlikely to have formal training in trauma-aware, healing-informed care. Programs and services therefore risk re-traumatising Stolen Generations survivors as they grow older. The assessment process is particularly daunting, with detailed questioning having a high risk of retriggering trauma.

There are critical needs for education, advocacy and support for Stolen Generations survivors.⁹⁶ The Healing Foundation has partnered with peak organisations for general practitioners, dentists and aged care services to prepare fact sheets that provide practical tips for working with Stolen Generations survivors.⁹⁷

Like other elderly people, Stolen Generations survivors may feel uncomfortable sharing their story with an unfamiliar person. If, and when, they seek to access care via the *My Aged Care* portal, this can be exacerbated by a response officer who is unlikely to be trained to understand Stolen Generations survivors and their trauma/healing journey.⁹⁸

93 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

94 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

95 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

96 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

97 The Healing Foundation, Working with Stolen Generations fact sheets <https://healingfoundation.org.au/working-stolen-generations/>

98 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

"It goes back to the assessment – they didn't consider her trauma or how best to serve her. We felt they didn't take into consideration her cultural needs or what she has gone through."⁹⁹

Stolen Generations descendant

Even Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled organisations must earn the trust of community members, so that survivors are confident their privacy is ensured, and that staff are trauma-aware and healing-informed and understand survivors' complex needs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled service providers can face similar challenges to mainstream services in finding sufficient, appropriately trained, frontline staff.

Aged Care Action Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, prepared under the Aged Care Diversity Framework,¹⁰⁰ identifies the need for action by the aged care system, including government, mainstream providers and specialist providers, to acknowledge and respond to increased service demands from older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in both residential and home-care environments. The plan identifies the need to be sensitive to the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors, to plan ahead for the provision of culturally appropriate trauma-aware, healing-informed care for survivors, and to ensure aged care workers understand the meaning of 'healing' and the risks of re-traumatising members of this community.

"The Action Plan calls for evidence-based investment strategies. The Working Group is concerned that public policy and its investments have failed to reflect the diversity of circumstance and need of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, within and between remote, rural, regional and urban areas."¹⁰¹

Actions to support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people report

99 The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

100 Department of Health (2019) *Actions to Support Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: a Guide for Consumers* <https://agedcare.health.gov.au/actions-to-support-older-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people>

101 Department of Health (2019) *Actions to support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: A guide for aged care providers* <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019/12/actions-to-support-older-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-a-guide-for-aged-care-providers.pdf>

The needs of ageing Stolen Generations survivors appear broadly consistent with other vulnerable groups who have experienced traumatic out-of-home care, including Forgotten Australians and Child Migrants:

“[N]on-institutional forms of aged care [should] be explored to support ageing needs of this cohort in place to minimise disruption to living arrangements of Forgotten Australians, former Child Migrants, and the Stolen Generations, or where a high level of care is necessary, prompting a move to residential care settings, [it is essential] that these settings do not replicate oppressive aspects [survivors] were exposed [to] as children.”¹⁰²

No Child Should Grow Up Like This: Identifying long term outcomes of Forgotten Australians, Child Migrants and the Stolen Generations

Disability

Stolen Generations survivors also have concerns around disability, with some reporting difficulties being assessed as eligible for a disability support pension (and, although this was not raised in depth, by extension with accessing the NDIS). As one knowledge circle participant stated:

“For a lot of our mob, their lives are broken. How do you measure trauma? People are really struggling to be eligible for disability pensions.”¹⁰³

Knowledge circle participant

In relation to disability,

- In 2014–15, more than two-thirds (67%) of Stolen Generations survivors reported they lived with a disability/restrictive long-term condition. This is significantly higher than the 59% reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who had not been removed. One in seven (14.5%) of Stolen Generations survivors reported living with a severe or profound core activity limitation.¹⁰⁴
- In 2018–19, approximately 61% of Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported living with a disability/restrictive long-term condition. One in five reported that they lived with a severe or profound core activity limitation (1.4 times as likely as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who were not removed).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² UNSW, Fernandez E et al (2016) *No Child Should Grow Up Like This: Identifying long term outcomes of Forgotten Australians, Child Migrants and the Stolen Generations*, http://www.forgottenaustralians.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/uploads/LOW%20RES%2012859_UNSW_FASS_ForgottenAustralians_Report_Nov16_LR_FA.pdf p. 242

¹⁰³ Kang C and Nettheim A, (2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

¹⁰⁴ AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*, Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Table 3.1

¹⁰⁵ AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*. Table S1, Figure 4

- In 2018–19, approximately 37% of non-Indigenous people aged 50 and over had any disability or restrictive long-term condition, and 7% had severe or profound core activity limitations.¹⁰⁶

Mental health/social and emotional wellbeing

“Many current Western models used by general medicine, psychiatry, psychology and mental health when working with many individuals diagnosed with ‘mental health issues’ do not meet victims’ needs. They often focus on first-order change, dealing with the symptoms not the cause.”¹⁰⁷

Testimony to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

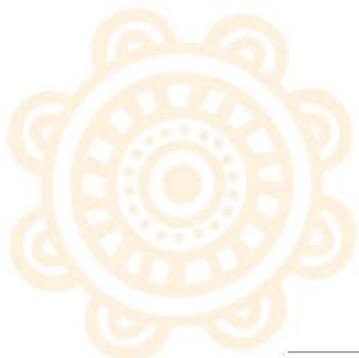
Given the extent of trauma experienced by Stolen Generations survivors, there is a significantly higher level of reporting of mental health and wellbeing issues, such as anxiety and depression, than for people who were not removed. As one knowledge circle participant stated, ‘Our illnesses are linked to our social and emotional wellbeing.’¹⁰⁸

The AIHW analysis found that in 2014–15, Stolen Generations survivors were:

- 1.5 times as likely to report having poor mental health as people of the same age who were not removed.¹⁰⁹
- Significantly less likely to report being very satisfied with their lives, and more likely to have moderate or high levels of psychological distress.¹¹⁰

In 2018–19, Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over were:

- 1.4 times as likely to report poor mental health (40%) as people of the same age who were not removed.
- 1.3 times as likely to report having been diagnosed with a mental health condition (43%) as people of the same age who were not removed.¹¹¹



106 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 2

107 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) *Final Report Vol 9 Advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services* https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_9_advocacy_support_and_therapeutic_treatment_services.pdf p. 137

108 Kang C and Nettheim A, (2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation (unpublished)

109 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*, Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 5.1

110 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 3.11

111 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1, Figure 4

Physical health

Stolen Generations survivors have testified about the physical health impacts of forced removal, including high levels of chronic disease and increased involvement in risky health behaviours, including smoking, drinking harmful levels of alcohol, and using illicit drugs.¹¹²

“Stolen Generations survivors/members often suffer from complex, and a multitude of diagnosed and undiagnosed disorders, stressors and or other physical or mental health related issues. There needs to be a focus on understanding this and addressing it”¹¹³

Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations

In relation to physical health¹¹⁴, compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who had not been removed, in 2014–15 Stolen Generations survivors were:

- 1.7 times as likely to have poor self-assessed general health and 1.6 times as likely not to have ‘good health’.¹¹⁵
- Significantly more likely to report having had chronic health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, back pain and eyesight problems.¹¹⁶

In 2018–19, Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over were:

- More likely to report having asthma, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and hypertension. From a list of 13 long-term health conditions, 45% reported having seven or more, and almost a quarter reported having 10 or more.¹¹⁷ These levels were not significantly different to those experienced by those who were not removed.¹¹⁸
- Significantly more likely to be current smokers (47%) compared to those not removed (35%).
- Significantly more likely to have used substances in the past 12 months (30%) compared to those not removed (14%).¹¹⁹
- Less likely (but not significantly) to have short-term, or lifetime, alcohol risk levels exceeding guidelines than people who were not removed.¹²⁰

112 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf>

113 Department of State Development (2017) *South Australia Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations*, Adelaide, South Australian Government https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34510/Summary-of-Consultations.pdf p. 7

114 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 5.1

115 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 5.1

116 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 3.3

117 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, p. 9

118 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1

119 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1

120 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*. Table S1

COVID-19

"This feels like being back in Kinchela, except it's worse this time, without our brothers."¹²¹

Stolen Generations survivor Uncle Michael Welsh

The impacts of COVID-19 have had a significant effect on elderly Stolen Generations survivors, many of whom are more than 80 years old and experiencing isolation, loneliness, and separation from family and friends, combined with difficulty accessing health services.

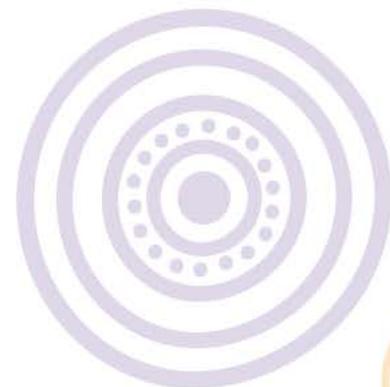
Stolen Generations survivors identified that impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions retriggered trauma; impacted attendance at funerals and the ability to carry out Sorry Business; presented challenges around the use of technology and connectivity; caused issues around accessing practical support and the provision of funding for practical and financial support; and risked vulnerable groups becoming more disadvantaged.¹²²

COVID-19 has also created further problems for people trying to access psychological support in rural and remote regions, by reducing the ability for collective and community based healing, and by re-traumatising people.

"It reminds our survivors of a time when they weren't in control of their lives and were subject to rules and restrictions."¹²³

The Healing Foundation CEO Fiona Cornforth

During 2020, The Healing Foundation partnered with the National Indigenous Australians Agency to provide small grants of up to \$30,000 each. These grants enabled 18 Stolen Generations organisations across Australia to deliver COVID-19 response projects, including guided meditations in local languages, food hampers and care packs, and virtual gathering spaces. The Healing Foundation will continue to work with Stolen Generations organisations and survivors to develop resources to support the long-term response to the impacts of COVID-19.¹²⁴



121 The Healing Foundation (2020) COVID-19 Resilience Emerging Themes, Virtual yarnning circles, Uncle Michael Welsh

122 The Healing Foundation (2020) COVID-19 resilience project. <https://healingfoundation.org.au/covid-19-resilience-project/>

123 Commonwealth of Australia (2020) Proof Committee Hansard, *Joint Select Committee on Implementation of The Scheme*, Evidence from Fiona Petersen [Cornforth], Chief Executive Officer, The Healing Foundation, 28 September 2020, Canberra, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/commsen/9110f8f0-f71e-4f16-8ede-3569bc558eee/toc_pdf/joint%20select%20committee%20on%20implementation%20of%20the%20national%20redress%20scheme_2020_09_28_8149_Official.pdf;fileType=app%20licatation%20pdf#search=%22Implementation%20of%20the%20National%20Redress%20Scheme%22 p. 10

124 The Healing Foundation (2020) COVID-19 resilience project. <https://healingfoundation.org.au/covid-19-resilience-project/>

3.6 Lack of access to appropriate services

Despite the level of disadvantage they suffer, Stolen Generations survivors face numerous challenges in accessing the services they need to support them as they grow older. Their experiences of removal can result in social isolation, including from services:

“Survivors of Stolen Generations are largely marginalised and silent members in the broader Aboriginal communities they come from or live within ... There is a vast sense of ‘not belonging’...”¹²⁵

Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations

Stolen Generations survivors can also face systemic issues with access to services, including poor cultural safety, a lack of understanding among service providers of the specific needs of survivors, and the difficulty of navigating the service system:

“A significant percentage of Stolen Generations members reported difficulty in accessing and using services, particularly in some regional areas.”¹²⁶

Stolen Generations Taskforce: report to Victorian Government

The lack of cultural competency of service organisations was commonly identified as a barrier to accessing services:

“[NSW Reparations] Inquiry participants raised the need for greater emphasis on education, and awareness about the history and impacts of past forced removal policies and practices, and the need for genuine cultural awareness and competency – particularly in regard to the impacts experienced by members of the Stolen Generations and their descendants – for public sector staff providing services to Aboriginal people.”¹²⁷

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

125 South Australian Department of State Development (2017) *South Australia Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations*. Adelaide: South Australian Department of State Development, https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/...data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34510/Summary-of-Consultations.pdf p. 9

126 Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, *Stolen Generations Taskforce (Vic.) (2009) Stolen Generations Taskforce: report to Victorian Government*. Melbourne VIC.: Dept. of Victorian Communities p. 24

127 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 171

The failure of government agencies to ensure that their services are trauma-aware and healing-informed, and able to address the specific needs of Stolen Generations survivors (as distinct from the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population), presents a further barrier.

“Government workers in Housing, Centrelink and so on, need to be aware that they are dealing with survivors of trauma, with many people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.”¹²⁸

Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations

The 2019 OCHRE Review Report¹²⁹ emphasises that the public sector needs greater cultural competence, and that one way of achieving this is through “growing a well-qualified Aboriginal workforce across both the government and non-government service sector”.

The lack of awareness about the impacts of trauma experienced by Stolen Generations survivors often extends to the services survivors access to address consequences of their removal, especially mental health, wellbeing and counselling services. Organisations established by and for Stolen Generations survivors that run healing and counselling programs are highly regarded. However, some other organisations, both mainstream and Indigenous services, are not considered to have the skills, knowledge or specific focus to deal with survivors’ complex needs. Stolen Generations survivors also observe that some of these organisations profess to address their needs but do not do so – or are not able to do so effectively – in practice.

“When a program is designed, it is important that a well-established, long-standing Aboriginal organisation with good governance and management systems is involved in the implementation of the programs. Members of the Stolen Generation need to have confidence in the Aboriginal organisation helping them with this very important role. The Aboriginal organisation also needs to have a good track record and the confidence of the Aboriginal community to achieve the best outcomes.”¹³⁰

Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations

128 South Australian Department of State Development (2017) *South Australia Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations*. Adelaide: South Australian Department of State Development, https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34510/Summary-of-Consultations.pdf p. 9

129 Ombudsman NSW (October 2019) *UCHRE Review Report*, https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/74183/UCHRE-Report_October-2019.pdf p. 51

130 South Australian Department of State Development (2017) *South Australia Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations*. Adelaide: South Australian Department of State Development https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34510/Summary-of-Consultations.pdf p. 13

The 2019 *OCHRE Review Report*¹³¹ recommends ongoing support aimed at increasing the capacity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector to develop and deliver services to Indigenous peoples, noting that this in itself is a form of healing through supporting greater self-determination and increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A particularly profound barrier to accessing services can arise when funding for social services is directed to non-Indigenous, non-government organisations, especially church-run organisations. Knowledge circle participants expressed concern about the perceived sidelining of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in favour of such organisations. They pointed out that with many survivors having experienced abuse at the hands of the clergy, people are understandably reluctant to access church-affiliated services. As one survivor said, *'We can't go to them for healing, they traumatised us.'*¹³²

Stolen Generations survivors also identify a lack of availability of the services they need, especially culturally safe healing programs that involve families and communities as well as individuals to address the intergenerational effects of removal. As noted by the Kinchela Boys Home survivors:

*"We need to be supported so we can lead the healing of our families and help put an end to the intergenerational trauma that continues to harm them."*¹³³

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

Poorly integrated services also create barriers to accessing services for Stolen Generations survivors. Numerous standalone services, addressing different aspects of disadvantage (for example, health, housing, healing, aged care and disability services), that do not effectively work together, create a complex, difficult-to-navigate, service system that risks re-traumatising clients through requirements to 'tell their story' many times to different providers.



131 Ombudsman NSW (October 2019) *OCHRE Review Report* https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/74183/OCHRE-Report_October-2019.pdf p. 50–51

132 Kang C and Nettheim A (March 2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

133 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 59

There are also areas where Stolen Generations survivors have not been informed about services that might meet their needs. For example, despite high levels of disability among survivors, relatively few participants in the 2018 knowledge circle seemed aware of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).¹³⁴ This can also be seen in the context of a common distrust of government services:

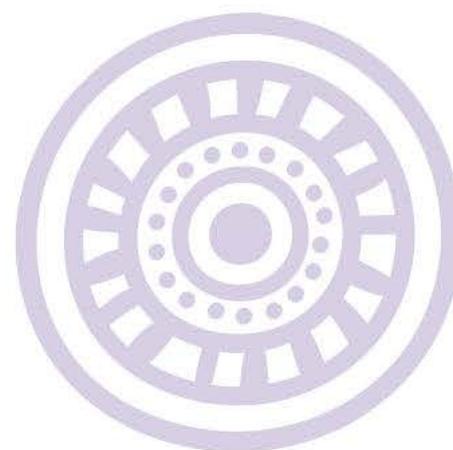
“Initially, community members responded to the NDIS being added to their existing number of ‘other’ services would cause additional stress. Aboriginal families are often involved with multiple government and non-government agencies, many of whom are seen to make unwelcome and coercive intrusions into family life ... This means that Aboriginal families are often wary of new initiatives and see avoidance as the safest response.”¹³⁵

National Disability Insurance Agency, ‘Getting it Right’ project report

The AIHW analysis indicates that in 2014–15:¹³⁶

- Almost a third (32%) of Stolen Generations survivors reported having problems accessing services.
- Similarly, 42% of Stolen Generations survivors experienced discrimination in the previous year.

In 2018–19, 42% of Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported having problems accessing health services, which was the same proportion of people of the same age who were not removed.¹³⁷



¹³⁴ Kang C and Nettheim A (March 2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

¹³⁵ NDIA (2015) *‘Getting it Right’ project report* https://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/application/files/8014/6778/2262/final_report_NDIA_Getting_it_Right_project.pdf p. 5

¹³⁶ AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Table 3.1, Figure 5.1

¹³⁷ AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1

3.7 Reconnection to culture, country and kin

“Successful healing involves reconnecting with culture and identity, restoring safe and enduring relationships, and understanding the impact of trauma to find healing pathways.”¹³⁸

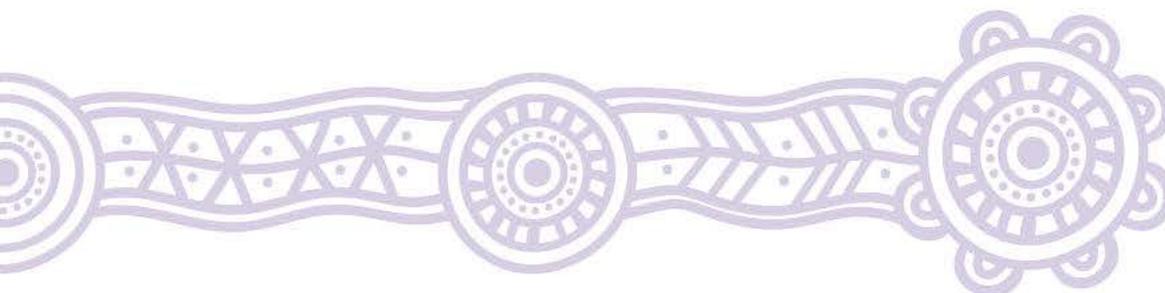
The Healing Foundation CEO Fiona Cornforth

Culture is the gateway to healing. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture is made up of four elements – lore, country, family, and spirit. Culture gives purpose, identity and connection, acting as a compass, and guiding people through challenges. Stronger connections to culture and country build stronger individual and collective identities, a sense of self-esteem, resilience and improved outcomes.¹³⁹

For Stolen Generations survivors, reconnecting to family, community and country is critical to their healing journeys.

“It is now increasingly being recognised, both in Australia and internationally, that positive connection to one’s culture also helps children to develop their identities; fosters positive self-esteem, emotional strength and resilience; and increases the number of secure attachment relationships around the child.”¹⁴⁰

Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse



138 Cornforth F (November 2020) 'NAIDOC Week shines a light on healing', The Healing Foundation <https://healingfoundation.org.au/2020/11/08/naidoc-week-shines-a-light-on-healing/>

139 The Lowitja Institute (2018) *Journeys to Healing and Strong Wellbeing Final Report*. <https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/services/resources/Cultural-and-social-determinants/mental-health/journeys-to-healing-and-strong-wellbeing-final-report>

140 Anderson P, Bamblett M, Bessarab D, Bromfield L, Chan S, Maddock G, Menzies K, O'Connell M, Pearson G, Walker R and Wright M (2017) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and child sexual abuse in institutional settings, Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Sydney, Telethon Kids Institute https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/research_report_-_aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_children_and_child_sexual_abuse_in_institutional_contexts_-_causes.pdf p. 43

Language-based activities

There has been some progress towards establishing language-based activities, although these are not specifically aimed at Stolen Generations survivors and their families. Examples include:

- The Mura online catalogue and audiovisual archive hosted by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and the recognition of the Australian Indigenous Languages Collection on the Memory of the World Register.¹⁴¹
- The New South Wales *Aboriginal Languages Act 2017* is aimed at nurturing and growing Aboriginal languages, and supporting people to connect/reconnect with culture.¹⁴²
- Support for the use and revival of Aboriginal languages in Victoria, where activities include integrating Aboriginal language programs into schools and early childhood centres; developing accredited training in learning and teaching an endangered Aboriginal language; and initiatives around Aboriginal place names.¹⁴³
- In 2020, a \$200,000 Indigenous Languages Grants program was launched in Queensland to support initiatives to teach, learn and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.¹⁴⁴

For language and culture in 2014-15:¹⁴⁵

- 71% of Stolen Generations survivors identified with clan, tribal or language groups; 84% recognised an area as homeland/traditional country and two thirds were involved in cultural events, ceremonies or organisations in the previous 12 months. In each case, this was slightly, but not significantly, higher than the proportion of people of the same age who had not been removed.
- 23% of Stolen Generations survivors reported speaking an Indigenous language, and a quarter reported they understood an Indigenous language. Again, this was slightly, but not significantly, higher than the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who had not been removed.

141 Rule, J and Rice, E (2015) *Bringing them Home: scorecard report 2015*, Commissioned by the National Sorry Day Committee, DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.2.34358.50242](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34358.50242) p. 26

142 Ombudsman NSW (October 2019) *OCHRE Review Report* https://www.omb.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/74183/OCHRE-Report-October-2019.pdf, pp. 61-62, 72; NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs (2018) Unfinished Business Progress Report to Parliament, <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/healing-and-reparations/stolen-generations/Unfinished-Business-Digital-Version.pdf> p. 15.

143 Victorian Government (2019) *Culture and Country: Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2019*, <https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-aboriginal-affairs-report-2019/culture-country>

144 Lucas, F (2020) 'New initiative will prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language in QLD'. The Sector 21 August 2020, <https://thesector.com.au/2020/08/21/new-initiative-will-prioritise-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-language-in-qld/>

145 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*, Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Table 3.1

In 2018–19,¹⁴⁶ 52% of Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported that they identified with clan, tribal or language groups; 82% recognised an area as homeland/traditional country; and 8% reported speaking an Indigenous language as the main language spoken at home. These proportions were slightly, but not significantly, higher than for people of the same age who had not been removed.

Family reunions

Tracing and reuniting with family are essential elements of healing for Stolen Generations survivors, as well as important in helping them to establish identity and connections to culture and country. However, this can be a difficult process with uncertain outcomes.

Family tracing and reunion services are not funded in all regional centres,¹⁴⁷ and demands for reunions, and associated counselling, outstrip the resources available to support them.¹⁴⁸ For example, Link-Up New South Wales reported they were unable to meet the present demand for reunions and associated counselling, with current funding sufficient for only 36 reunions a year, and up to three months of post-reunion counselling.¹⁴⁹ Additional support is also required for those individuals who are unable to locate family, discover that their family have passed away, are rejected by family or community, or experience other factors that make reunions difficult, such as language or cultural differences.¹⁵⁰

The New South Wales Reparations Scheme has provided financial support for Stolen Generations organisations, with the aim of increasing the capacity of these organisations to facilitate reunions for survivors. In addition, the New South Wales Stolen Generations Healing Fund was aimed at supporting priority healing initiatives, including survivor reunions.¹⁵¹ It is unclear whether, or to what degree, this has led to an increase in reunions.

Even with Link-Up or other support services, some Stolen Generations survivors are unable to reunite with family or reconnect with country, due to inadequate records, and others have reunions that are not what they hoped for. In response, Link-Up South Australia developed and piloted a healing program for Stolen Generations survivors in and around Adelaide, called *Reunion to Self*. This included a series of six-day trips where people visited *'important cultural sites and participated in yarning circles around themes of colonisation and survival, grief and loss, the healing journey, spiritual healing and cultural connections.'*¹⁵²

146 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1

147 Rule J and Rice E (2015) *Bringing them Home: scorecard report 2015*, Commissioned by the National Sorry Day Committee, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.34358.50242

148 NSW Aboriginal Land Council cited in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 169

149 NSW Aboriginal Land Council cited in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf>

150 NSW Aboriginal Land Council cited in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf>

151 NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs (2018) *Unfinished Business Progress Report 2018*, <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/healing-and-reparations/stolen-generations/Unfinished-Business-Digital-Version.pdf> p. 23

152 The Healing Foundation (2015) *Healing for Our Stolen Generations: Sharing Our Stories*, <https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2017/02/Healing-for-Our-Stolen-Generations-Sharing-Our-Stories-2.pdf> p. 12

The role of records

Timely and supported access to records is often a fundamental aspect of healing for Stolen Generations survivors and their families. Although records may contain confronting and incorrect information and don't always tell the full story, they are an important part of finding out about and reconnecting with family, culture and country; truth telling and sharing history; accessing redress and reparations schemes; and stemming the tide of intergenerational trauma.

The *Bringing them Home* report highlighted that access to individual and family Stolen Generations records was fundamental to locating and reunifying families. It concluded that 'access to records must be made easier and less hurtful. This involves improving access procedures, ensuring culturally appropriate access, and involving the counselling and support assistance of Indigenous family tracing and reunion services.'¹⁵³ Problems accessing Stolen Generations records have persisted despite government responses to the report and efforts from Link-Up agencies to prioritise family reunions.

Records are managed under different legislation in each state and territory and are administered differently by individual churches and non-government organisations. Within jurisdictions and institutions, access and release of records may also be handled differently, depending on individual interpretations of privacy principles, freedom of information decision making, and redaction practices.

This means Stolen Generations survivors and their families face multiple and inconsistent processes when seeking their own or their family's records, especially as searches often extend across multiple states and/or territories.

"What are the challenges for Stolen Generation survivors locating records? Unfortunately, it's not as simple as requesting a file and getting access to all the records about someone's time in an institution. These records were created by government organisations, church organisations and others, and they still are held in a variety of different organisations today, so getting access to them today means contacting multiple organisations, and potentially navigating different laws as well to do that."¹⁵⁴

Kirsten Wright, Find & Connect

Systemic change resulting in more permissive access is needed to guide individual decision makers. Greater consistency across jurisdictions and organisations, preferably through establishing national standards, is a critical step in improving access to Stolen Generations records, both within and across jurisdictions.

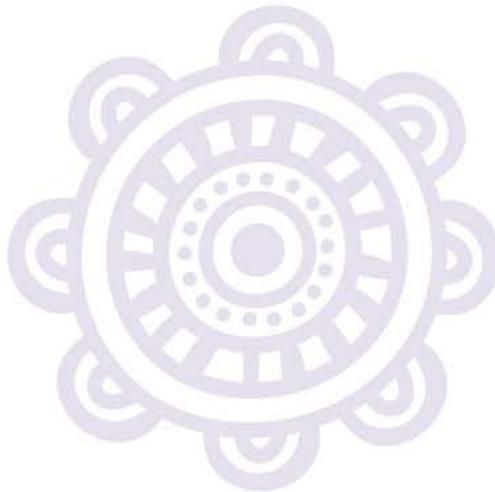
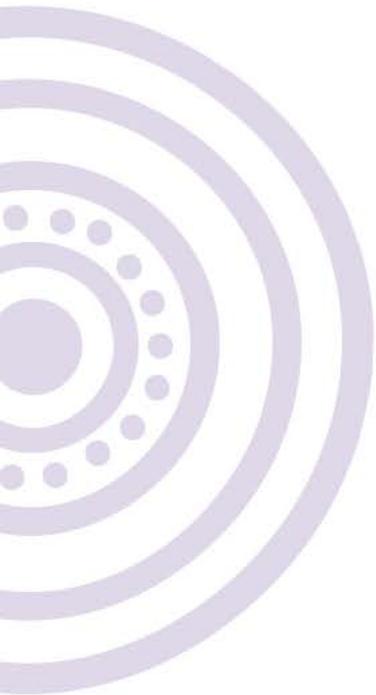
Because responsibility for records management is so fragmented, there can be no single solution to improving access to Stolen Generations records. Work is required on many levels. Given its national footprint, The Healing Foundation is well placed to continue a coordinating role. This has begun with the establishment of an ongoing Taskforce with Australia-wide representatives.

153 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1997) *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf

154 Kirsten Wright, *Better Access to Stolen Generations Records learning module* [video], Better Access to Stolen Generations Records professional development module, (The Australian Society of Archivists, The Healing Foundation, 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P21l4VCUqgI>

Urgent action for improving access to records:

- All governments reaffirm their commitment to managing access to Stolen Generations records consistent with the *Bringing them Home* principles.
- National guidelines/protocols established for accessing records held by state and territory Births, Deaths and Marriages registries, and for decision making by freedom of information and information commissioners/delegates.
- Overarching, statewide agreements formalised between governments and Link-Ups/other Stolen Generations organisations in each jurisdiction.
- Training in trauma-aware, healing-informed access to records rolled out for all record holding institutions.
- Pathways are found for accessing Stolen Generations records that are held in private hands and are unavailable to survivors and their families.



3.8 Truth telling

“Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations, and truth-telling about our history.”¹⁵⁵

Uluru Statement from the Heart

Truth telling can take many forms and can take place at interpersonal, local, state, national and international levels. Processes such as commissions, education and memorials promote awareness of the historical and ongoing impact of past actions and encourage peaceful reconciliation.¹⁵⁶

The need for acknowledgement of past wrongdoing, and its ongoing impact on people’s lives, is a recurrent theme in Stolen Generations testimony. People seek public acknowledgement and some also require individual apologies.¹⁵⁷

“Truth being denied, not listened to or respected is one of the great challenges of healing.”¹⁵⁸

Online submission to Queensland Healing Strategy

“Healing means understanding past history, building the mindset needed, having the mindset to face discomfort and moving forward in a positive direction.”¹⁵⁹

Gold Coast Community Members and Health Service Providers
Yarning Circle

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also experience trauma as a result of ongoing racism, violence and disadvantage. In 2014–15, 42% of Stolen Generations survivors reported they had experienced discrimination in the last 12 months (1.5 times as likely as other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the same age who were not removed).¹⁶⁰ In the 2018–19 NATSIHS, 32% of Stolen

155 Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017) <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement>

156 Reconciliation Australia and The Healing Foundation (October 2018) Truth Telling Media Statement https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2018/10/Truth-Telling_Media-Statement.pdf

157 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 69

158 Online submission to Queensland Healing Strategy 2020, The Healing Foundation, *Making Spirit Strong Research and Co-design Report for the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy* (unpublished)

159 Gold Coast Community Members and Health Service Providers Yarning Circle (2020), *The Healing Foundation, Making Spirit Strong Research and Co-design Report for the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy* (unpublished)

160 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*. Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Table 3.1, Figure 5.1

Generations survivors aged 50 and over reported experiencing discrimination due to being Indigenous in the last 12 months, compared to 24% of those who had not been removed. This difference was not significant.¹⁶¹

Truth telling – Memorials

“Aboriginal people feel a deep connection to place. Acknowledgement of the significance of places and events, whether the memories are sad or happy, is important.”¹⁶²

Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations

Memorials serve a variety of purposes, including acknowledgement and healing. There has been a steady growth in the number of Stolen Generations memorials being established around Australia. Examples include:

- The Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation opened an office in Central Station in Sydney, in June 2018, as a way of reclaiming a place children had passed through on their way to Cootamundra.¹⁶³
- A plaque and memorial recognising Stolen Generations survivors was unveiled at Kempsey Railway Station in October 2018.¹⁶⁴ This was a joint project between local Aboriginal Elders, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation and New South Wales trainlink, at a site where large numbers of Stolen Generations survivors were removed from their families and communities.
- A plaque created in collaboration with Stolen Generations survivor organisations and the New South Wales Government was placed on Platform 1 of Sydney’s Central Station in December 2018.¹⁶⁵
- In 2017, Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park in New South Wales opened a memorial commemorating 20 years since the *Bringing them Home* report.¹⁶⁶ La Perouse Elders led the design of the memorial, which was dedicated in memory of the Aboriginal children who were taken from their parents, and the parents who were buried in the cemetery before their children could return home. Soil from the sites of the Bomaderry Children’s Home, Kinchela Boys Home and the Cootamundra Girls Home was sprinkled in the gardens surrounding the memorial.

161 AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table S1.

162 South Australian Department of State Development (2017) *South Australia Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations*. Adelaide: South Australian Department of State Development https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/.../data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34510/Summary-of-Consultations.pdf p. 10

163 Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Heroic Peace <https://www.oric.gov.au/publications/spotlight/heroic-peace>

164 Monument Australia, Stolen Generations Memorial (2018) <https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/culture/indigenous/display/115284-stolen-generations-memorial>

165 NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs (December 2018) ‘Stolen Generations Commemorated in Central Station’ <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/our-agency/news/stolen-generations-commemorated-in-central-station>

166 Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (2017) New memorial to the Stolen Generations unveiled at Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park, <https://healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/about/news/5221/>

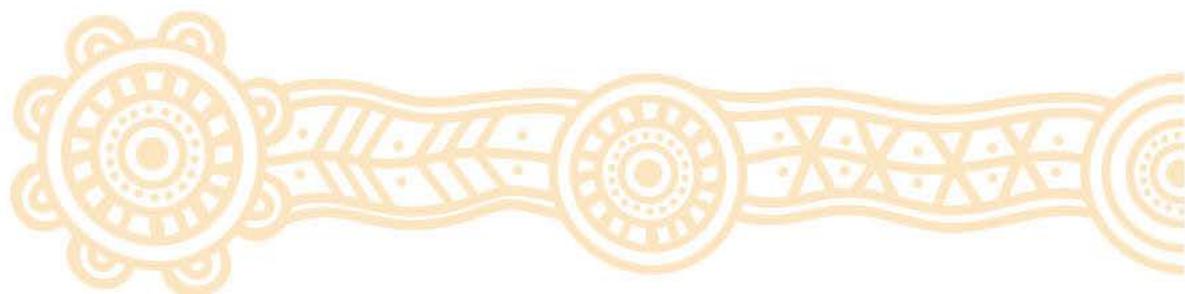
Truth telling – educating the public

"[We] want the history of Aboriginal people taught in schools, including the truth about murders and the theft of land, Maralinga, and the Stolen Generations, as well [as] the story of all the Aboriginal fighters for reform. Healing can only begin when this true history is taught."¹⁶⁷

Adelaide Regional dialogue – Uluru Statement from the Heart

Stolen Generations survivors want the mainstream educational curriculum to include the history of forced removal as well as the ongoing impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Although the national curriculum now includes information on the Stolen Generations, issues remain with an inconsistent approach to teaching this history in schools, resulting from insufficient teacher training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, and an overcrowded syllabus where schools and teachers can elect what aspects of Indigenous history to focus on.¹⁶⁸

For example, the New South Wales reparations report stated that *'several inquiry participants felt that the state's school curricula inadequately covers the history of past forced removal policies and practices, and suggested that more needs to be done to avoid a repetition of the past'*.¹⁶⁹ It recommended that the New South Wales Government *'ensure that the history of past forced removal policies and practices and its continuing impacts on Aboriginal people are compulsory modules in primary and secondary school curricula, and encourage private providers to do the same.'*¹⁷⁰



¹⁶⁷ Adelaide Regional Dialogue (2017) Our Story – Mourning, Uluru Statement from the Heart <https://ulurustatement.org/our-story>

¹⁶⁸ Chrysanthos N (2020) 'How Indigenous history is taught in NSW schools', Sydney Morning Herald <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/how-indigenous-history-is-taught-in-nsw-schools-20200616-p5534w.html>

¹⁶⁹ New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 173

¹⁷⁰ New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 178

Stolen Generations educational resources

Non-government organisations and individuals are taking the matter of Stolen Generations education into their own hands. Examples include:

- The Healing Foundation and Stolen Generations survivors developed a Stolen Generations Resource Kit for Teachers and Students to help teachers integrate Stolen Generations history into their classrooms.¹⁷¹
- In early 2020, Kinchela Boys Home survivors created a mobile Stolen Generations education centre in an old bus and began to tour it around New South Wales to mark 50 years since the closure of the infamous institution, and to expand on education about the Stolen Generations taught in schools. Survivor Richard Campbell says truth telling of this nature is *'very important for our kids because they suffer from our trauma through intergenerational trauma and it's still affecting our kids at the moment'*. The project is also aimed at reconnecting survivors with the communities from which they were stolen.¹⁷²
- During COVID-19 in 2020, musician and Stolen Generations survivor Archie Roach recorded the stories of Aboriginal Elders and created a set of Stolen Generations resources to be used in schools, utilising song, books and stories to educate and promote critical conversations across the country.¹⁷³

171 The Healing Foundation (2019) Stolen Generations Resource Kit for Teachers and Students, Canberra, <https://healingfoundation.org.au/schools/>

172 Wellauer K (2020) 'Kinchela Boys Home survivors create first mobile Stolen Generations education centre', ABC News, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-12/survivors-create-first-stolen-generations-education-centre/11819600>

173 ABC (2020) 'Archie Roach Stolen Generations education resources teach a history shared by all Australians' <https://education.abc.net.au/newsandarticles/blog/-/b/3717451/archie-roach-stolen-generations-education-resources-teach-a-history-shared-by-all-australians>

4.0 Intergenerational impacts of forced removal

4.1 What is intergenerational trauma?

Adverse experiences in childhood can have lifelong effects. Traumatic childhood experiences, such as those of Stolen Generations survivors, may affect following generations through biological changes in stress responses and by undermining the ability to parent and love freely without fear.^{174,175}

These traumatic experiences:

"... can be transferred from the first generation of survivors that have experienced (or witnessed) it directly in the past to the second and further generations of descendants of the survivors ... [this] intergenerational trauma ... is defined as the subjective experiencing and remembering of events in the mind of an individual or the life of a community, passed from adults to children in cyclic processes as 'cumulative emotional and psychological wounding'".¹⁷⁶

Trauma-informed services and trauma-specific care for Indigenous Australian children

The consequences of removal – poor physical, social and emotional wellbeing, a loss of identity, greater susceptibility to addiction, diminished capacity to gain employment and earn a reasonable living – create environments of disadvantage for descendants that many Stolen Generations survivors struggle to address through their lives.

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, trauma is an ongoing experience because the discriminatory practices continue, and/or because they live in families and communities where others have been subject to such practices and the trauma is passed on. Intergenerational trauma is therefore a significant driver of some of the most serious social and wellbeing issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today.

174 Van Der Kolk B (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, Penguin, New York.

175 See for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation reports: *Voices from the Campfire* (2009) https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/07_2012/healingfoundationreport09.pdf; Healing Centres Final Report (2012) <https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/healthinfonet/getContent.php?linkid=555518&title=National+Gathering+of+Healing+Centres+Final+Report>; Growing Our Children Up Strong and Deadly Final Report (2013) <https://www.healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2017/02/Growing-our-Children-up-SINGLES-updated-2015.pdf>

176 Atkinson J (2013) *Trauma-informed services and trauma-specific care for Indigenous Australian children*, Canberra/Melbourne, AIHW and Australian Institute of Family Studies <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/e322914f-ac63-44f1-8c2f-4d84938fcd41/ctg-rs21.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

"It is also important to understand the impacts of collective trauma as opposed to individual trauma. Research demonstrates that significant events that impact whole communities can lead to community breakdown. Disconnection from country, culture, family and community have had a devastating impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing. As a result, many communities prefer to engage in collective healing responses rather than individual treatment interventions."¹⁷⁷

The testimonies and experience of Stolen Generations survivors and their families powerfully document the effects of intergenerational trauma. Many identified the impact of growing up without the love of their families and without learning parenting skills themselves. The intergenerational effects of trauma and abuse on descendants has created a deep burden of guilt for many Stolen Generations survivors:

"I passed [my trauma] on to my children—not knowingly or deliberately. Those are the things we want to start talking about, and the incidence of family violence and incarcerations. We can lead it back to accounts of trauma. It is scientifically proven now."¹⁷⁸

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

Stolen Generations descendants report feeling disconnected from family and community. Intergenerational trauma can be linked to family violence, substance abuse and general dysfunction:

"[The families'] trauma has been the result of trying to support the Kinchela Boys Home and yet being the victims of the behaviours instilled during their time at Kinchela Boys Home, including alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence and social and emotional disconnection."¹⁷⁹

Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales – Unfinished Business report

177 The Healing Foundation with Social Compass and the Institute for Human Security and Social Change (2018) *A Theory of Change for Healing* https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2019/04/HF_Theory_of_Change_A4_Mar2019_WEB.pdf p5.

178 Hocking B quoted in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 34

179 Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation submission to New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> cited in McCausland R, Nettheim, A, and Kang C (2021) *The Contemporary Experiences and Needs of Stolen Generations survivors; qualitative analysis*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation

The Marumali Program review¹⁸⁰ stressed the need to consider second and third generations, as descendants of the Stolen Generations, as victims who were deprived of 'community ties, culture and language and entitlements to traditional land.' It notes that these people may:

- Live with traumatised parents who require support.
- Live isolated from other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Come from families reluctant to engage with government agencies or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.
- Have trouble meeting the requirements for Proof of Aboriginality.

4.2 The extent of intergenerational impacts of removal

The extent of the intergenerational effects of removal described by Stolen Generations survivors and their families is evident in the AIHW analysis.¹⁸¹ After controlling for other potential influences on outcomes, it found that in 2014–15:

- Almost half of adult Stolen Generations descendants (48%) reported having felt discriminated against in the previous year (two times as likely as other adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).
- Adult Stolen Generations descendants were significantly (1.9 times) as likely as other adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have experienced or been threatened by physical violence in the previous year.
- More than a third (29%) of adult Stolen Generations descendants reported problems accessing services in the previous year (1.5 times as likely as other adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).
- Two in five adult Stolen Generations descendants (41%) reported ever being charged by police (1.4 times as likely as other adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).
- Adult Stolen Generations descendants had significantly poorer health, being 1.6 times as likely to not have good health, and 1.3 times as likely to report poor mental health, than other adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

180 Peeters L, Hamann S, and Kelly K (2010) The Marumali Program: Healing for Stolen Generations. In P Dudgeon, H Milroy and R Walker, eds., *Working Together. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice*. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing, p. 503 <https://www.telethonkids.org.au/globalassets/media/documents/aboriginal-health/working-together-second-edition/wt-part-6-chapt-29-final.pdf> cited in McCausland R, Nettheim A, and Kang C (2021) *The Contemporary Experiences and Needs of Stolen Generations survivors; qualitative analysis*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation

181 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*, Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Table 4.1, Figure 5.2

Impact of being a Stolen Generations descendant on the likelihood of adverse outcomes: 2014–15¹⁸²

The results for Stolen Generations descendants show significantly higher odds of adverse outcomes in 11 of 20 outcomes. However, descendants differ slightly to Stolen Generations survivors in which outcomes they have the greatest adversity. Compared with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, adult descendants of Stolen Generations survivors were:

- 2 times** as likely to feel discriminated against in the last 12 months
- 2 times** as likely not to speak an Indigenous language
- 1.9 times** as likely to be a victim of threatened or physical violence in the last 12 months
- 1.6 times** as likely to not have good health (based on a composite health measure)
- 1.5 times** as likely to have a problem accessing services in the last 12 months
- 1.5 times** as likely to have been arrested in the last five years
- 1.4 times** as likely to have a low level of trust in the general community
- 1.4 times** as likely to have ever been formally charged by police
- 1.4 times** as likely to have poor self-assessed health
- 1.4 times** as likely to have a low level of satisfaction with their lives
- 1.3 times** as likely to have poor mental health (high Kessler score).

For two of the outcomes, Stolen Generations descendants were significantly less likely to:

- Live in households with income in the bottom 30% (**0.7 times**)
- Have government payments as the main source of income (**0.6 times**).

For the remaining seven outcomes – incarcerated in the last five years, experienced homelessness in the last 10 years, used a substance in the last 12 months, being a current smoker, not owning a home, currently unemployed, and not completing Year 12 or equivalent—there was no significant effect of being a descendant relative to the reference group.

■ Denotes the OR is significantly different from 1 at the conventional 5% level, consistent with a 95% confidence interval.

Adult descendants of Stolen Generations survivors were less likely than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults to have household incomes in the bottom 30% or rely on government payments as their main source of income, and there was no significant difference in Year 12 attainment between descendants and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults.

Stolen Generations survivors explain the better material life for their children on the basis of their own determination to ensure their children did not experience the trauma and disadvantage they suffered.¹⁸³

182 AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*, Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 5.2

183 The Healing Foundation, 'Stolen Generations Reference Group meeting' [meeting], 12 December 2018

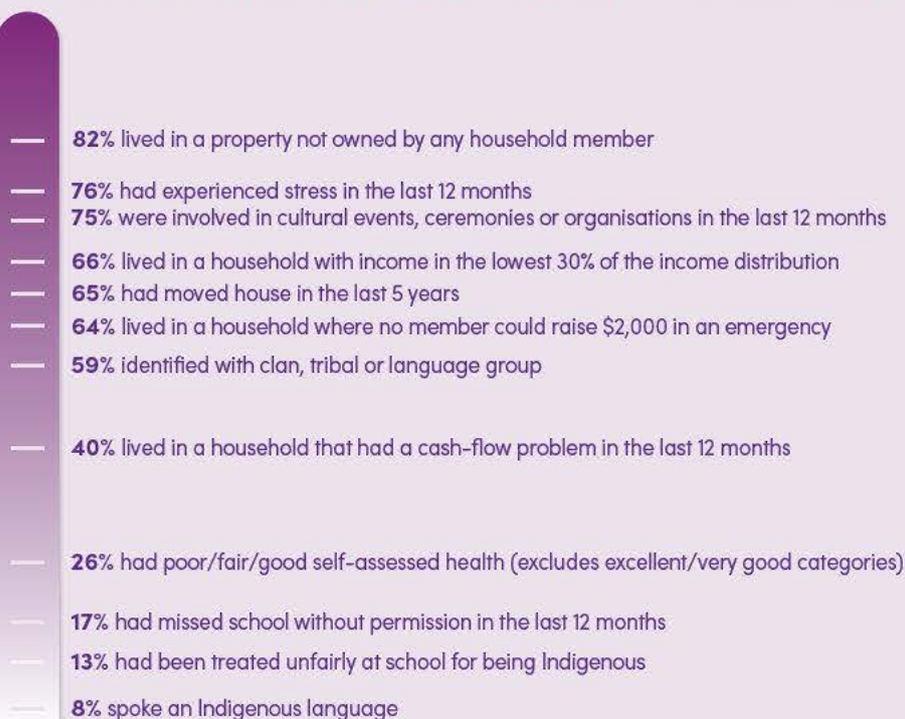
4.3 Children living in households with Stolen Generations adults

The AIHW analysed outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged under 15 who live in households with Stolen Generations adults to uncover direct evidence of the intergenerational effects of removal.¹⁸⁴ This is the first time data has been used to connect children with adults in their households who were removed from their families.

The report looked at outcomes for children across health, life stressors, school attendance, language and culture, and some household measures. It found outcomes that were broadly similar to those experienced by adult descendants of Stolen Generations.

Children living in Stolen Generations households were more likely to experience adverse outcomes in 7 of the 20 outcomes compared to children of the same age who did not live in households with Stolen Generations survivors. For two other outcomes (identify with clan/tribal/language group and recognise a homeland), children living in households with Stolen Generations survivors were shown to be relatively more advantaged. One outcome showed a marginally significant negative effect related to no household members being able to raise \$2,000 in an emergency. For the remaining 10 outcomes, there were no statistically significant differences between children living in Stolen Generations households and other children.

Among the children living in Stolen Generations households:¹⁸⁵



Estimates of the effects on children living in a household with Stolen Generations

184 AIHW (2019) *Children living in households with members of the Stolen Generations*, Cat. no. IHW 214. Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/children-living-in-households-with-members-of-the/contents/table-of-contents>

185 AIHW (2019) *Children living in households with members of the Stolen Generations*, Cat. no. IHW 214. Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/children-living-in-households-with-members-of-the/contents/table-of-contents> p. 8

survivors (in the cohort born before 1972), on 20 selected outcomes, odds ratio results from 2008 and 2014–15 NATSISS combined data:¹⁸⁶

- 4.5 times** as likely to have missed school without permission in last 12 months (aged 4–14)
- 2.0 times** as likely to identify with clan/tribal/language group (aged 3–14)
- 2.0 times** as likely to recognise a homeland (aged 3–14)
- 1.9 times** as likely to have been treated unfairly at school for being Indigenous (aged 2–14)
- 1.8 times** as likely to have experienced stress in last 12 months (aged 4–14)
- 1.7 times** as likely to have moved house in last 5 years
- 1.6 times** as likely to have poor self-assessed health
- 1.6 times** as likely to live in a household with cash-flow problems in last 12 months
- 0.4 times** as likely to live in a home owned by a household member
- 1.5 times** as likely to live in a household with no member able to raise \$2,000 in an emergency
- 1.5 times** as likely to have health issues leading to concerns on child’s learning (aged 1–14)
- 1.4 times** as likely to have participated in cultural activities in last 12 months (aged 3–14)
- 1.2 times** as likely to be involved in cultural events, ceremonies or organisations in last 12 months (aged 3–14)
- 1.0 times** as likely to have problems sleeping in last 4 weeks
- 1.0 times** as likely to have stayed overnight somewhere else due to family crises in last 6 months
- 1.0 times** as likely to have stayed overnight somewhere else due to family crises in last 12 months
- 1.0 times** as likely to speak an Indigenous language (aged 3–14)
- 0.9 times** as likely to live in a household with income in the lowest 30%
- 0.9 times** as likely to live with household members who ran out of money for basic living expenses in last 12 months
- 0.5 times** as likely to usually attend school, preschool or kindergarten (aged 4–14)

NOTE: The colour scheme indicates whether the estimated odds ratio (OR) is statistically different from 1 at the 5% and 10% test levels.

- Denotes the OR is significantly different from 1 at the conventional 5% level, consistent with a 95% confidence interval.
 - Denotes the OR is significantly different from 1 at the 10% level, consistent with a wider 90% confidence interval.
 - Denotes the estimated OR is not significantly different from 1 (meaning the outcome does not vary significantly between children in Stolen Generations households and the reference group of children).
-

186 AIHW (2019) *Children living in households with members of the Stolen Generations*, Cat. no. IHW 214. Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/children-living-in-households-with-members-of-the-stolen-generations/table-of-contents> Figure 2, p. 14

4.4 Keeping kids and families safe

“Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.”¹⁸⁷

Uluru Statement from the Heart

Out-of-home care

Stolen Generations survivors are very concerned about the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care and the likely adverse impacts for those children arising from their disconnection from families and communities.¹⁸⁸

For example, a consistent message at Coota Girls regional forums held in 2019 was that the ongoing removal of children from their families must stop. Families need support to address the issues they are facing, before any decisions are made to remove their children.¹⁸⁹

“Taking them away breaks down culture and community. We are trying to build those up.”¹⁹⁰

Stolen Generations survivor

The grief, suffering and loss experienced by those who have experienced forced removal can impact parenting skills and abilities and can contribute to entrenched disadvantage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

“...children who are removed as a result of family violence are often also removed from their kinship groups, community, culture and land. These are all factors that are integral to building a child’s resilience and healing trauma.”¹⁹¹

Always was, always will be Koori children report

187 Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017) <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement>

188 For example, Kang C and Nettheim A, (2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation (unpublished)

189 See for example, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation (2019) ‘Dubbo Members Forum and Stolen Generations Discussions panel 2019’ <https://www.cootagirls.org.au/post/dubbo-members-forum-and-stolen-generations-panel-of-discussions>

190 Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation (2019) ‘Redfern Members Forum and Stolen Generations Discussion Panel 2019’ <https://www.cootagirls.org.au/post/redfern-members-forum-and-stolen-generations-discussion-panel-2019>

191 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence cited in Commission for Children and Young People (2016) *Always was, always will be Koori children: systemic inquiry into services provided to Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria, Melbourne: Commission for Children and Young People*, <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/Publications-inquiries/always-was-always-will-be-koori-children-inquiry-report-oct16.pdf> p. 48

The links between intergenerational trauma and contemporary removals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families are indisputable.¹⁹²

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are removed from their families and communities – and who had parents and grandparents removed – face a greater risk of abuse following removal, as well as a range of other negative impacts.

“Due to the impacts of past policies and practices, as well as the ongoing experiences of structural and institutionalised racism, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are disproportionately placed in out-of-home care and juvenile detention. The closed nature of these institutions means they carry higher situational risk for child sexual abuse, relative to other types of institutions where potential perpetrators do not routinely have unfettered access to vulnerable children.”¹⁹³

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Victorian Commission for Children and Young People identified issues with children who for various reasons were not identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in a timely manner and thus did not receive appropriate support and protection either prior to or following their removal.¹⁹⁴

“In cases where the child did not have a Certificate of Aboriginality this was often a result of the child’s parents and forebears being members of the Stolen Generations”¹⁹⁵

Always was, always will be Koori children report

192 Atkinson J, Nelson J, Brooks R, Atkinson C and Ryan K (2014) 'Addressing Individual and Community Transgenerational Trauma' in *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice* (2nd Edition), Dudgeon P, Milroy H, and Walker R, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia <https://www.telethonkids.org.au/globalassets/media/documents/aboriginal-health/working-together-second-edition/wt-part-4-chapt-17-final.pdf>

193 Anderson P, Bamblett M, Bessarab D, Bromfield L, Chan S, Maddock G, Menzies K, O'Connell M, Pearson G, Walker R and Wright M (2017) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and child sexual abuse in institutional settings: Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Sydney, Telethon Kids Institute https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/research_report_-_aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_children_and_child_sexual_abuse_in_institutional_contexts_-_causes.pdf p. 43

194 Commission for Children and Young People (2016) *Always was, always will be Koori children: systemic inquiry into services provided to Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria*, Melbourne: Commission for Children and Young People, <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/Publications-inquiries/always-was-always-will-be-koori-children-inquiry-report-oct16.pdf> p. 82

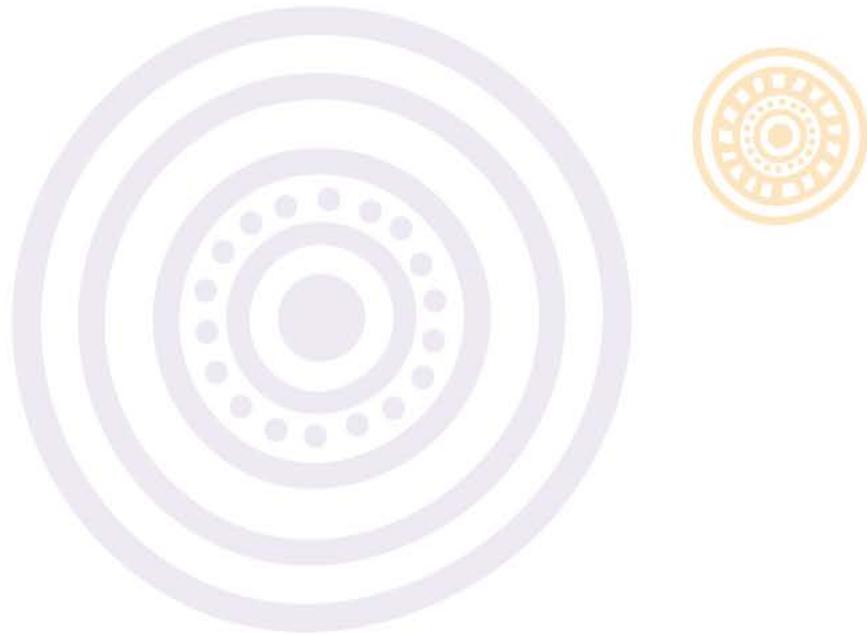
195 Commission for Children and Young People (2016) *Always was, always will be Koori children: systemic inquiry into services provided to Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria*, Melbourne: Commission for Children and Young People, <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/Publications-inquiries/always-was-always-will-be-koori-children-inquiry-report-oct16.pdf> p. 60

Initiatives to support children's wellbeing

In August 2019, the Commonwealth Minister for Health announced the development of a National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy to be led by the National Mental Health Commission.¹⁹⁶ The strategy is intended to provide long-term vision for how Australia should support the mental health and wellbeing of all children. The focus is specifically on the needs of children from conception through to 12 years of age, with an emphasis on preventing mental illness, where possible, and improving treatment outcomes of mental illness through evidence-based care.

The Healing Foundation has partnered with Emerging Minds (which leads the National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health) to develop resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers working with children and families. The material was developed through a co-design process involving two knowledge circles and further research.¹⁹⁷

Stopping the flow of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children into out-of-home care will serve to heal both Stolen Generations survivors and help to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma.



¹⁹⁶ Australian Government, National Mental Health Commission, *National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/Mental-health-Reform/Childrens-Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy>

¹⁹⁷ Healing Foundation (2020) *Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children* https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2020/07/Children_Report_Jun2020_FINAL.pdf

Over-representation in the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice systems

The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems has been a recurring theme in the testimony of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants. This stems from the *'cycle of disadvantage and poverty experienced in Aboriginal families, influenced largely by the effects of past forced removal policies and practice.'*¹⁹⁸

Descendants of Stolen Generations survivors are 1.5 times more likely to have been arrested in the last five years and 1.4 times more likely to have been charged by police than those not descended from Stolen Generations survivors.¹⁹⁹

Stolen Generations survivors raise over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system, both youth and adult, as a problem likely to endure unless communities are adequately supported to deal with legal issues, and there is investment in programs to address the rate of over-representation.²⁰⁰

Over-representation in the justice system

Despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 10–17 comprising 6% of young people in Australia, on an average day in 2018–19 they comprised half (50%) of those under community supervision or in detention because of involvement or alleged involvement in crime. On average, young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples entered youth justice supervision at a younger age than non-Indigenous young people.²⁰¹

Similarly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults comprise approximately 3% of the total Australian adult population; however, they made up 29% of all sentenced and unsentenced prisoners in 2019–20, and 79% had experienced prior imprisonment.²⁰²

198. New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales, Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 145

199. AIHW (2018) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes*, Cat. no. IHW 195, Canberra: AIHW <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/related-material> Figure 5.2

200. See for example, Kang C and Nettheim A, (March 2018) *Action Plan for Healing Knowledge Circles*, Research Paper for The Healing Foundation, (unpublished)

201. AIHW (2020) *Youth Justice in Australia 2018–19*. Cat. no. JUV 132. Canberra: AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-justice-in-australia-2018-19/contents/summary>

202. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners*, Prisoners in Australia, 3 December 2020, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/prisoners-australia/latest-release#aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-prisoners>

5.0 *Make Healing Happen* – healing and meeting urgent needs

Stolen Generations survivors have endured a lifetime of trauma, grief and loss, and as a result they experience a significant burden of health, wellbeing, social and economic disadvantages. They are growing older, and many live with disabilities and/or complex health problems, including poor mental health. They have increasingly complex and overlapping needs yet face personal and systemic barriers to accessing services. They are worried about the future of their families.

The trauma caused by the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been passed on to subsequent generations. It is reflected in the higher levels of disadvantage borne by descendants of the Stolen Generations and in the dangerous levels of child removal and incarceration suffered by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities today.

Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants carry higher levels of disadvantage compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The evidence presented in this report demonstrates that their needs are complex, intersectional and require urgent attention.

Healing is fundamental to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples reaching their full personal, cultural, social, educational and economic potential. Healing is about restoring the wellbeing, strength of spirit, family connections, and lore that has made Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures the oldest living cultures on earth.

Healing enables people to address their personal distress, overcome trauma and restore wellbeing. It allows people to act from a place of strength rather than a place of distress. Effective ways to support healing include reconnecting with culture, strengthening identity, restoring safe and enduring relationships, supporting communities to understand the impacts of their experiences on behaviour, and supporting communities to create and lead change. For Stolen Generations survivors, healing also means keeping children safe with family and addressing the rates of out-of-home care and juvenile detention. Healing projects incorporate a broad range of social and cultural activities as well as individual counselling, intergenerational healing strategies, collective healing approaches such as healing camps and on-country programs, and healing centres for Stolen Generations survivors.²⁰³

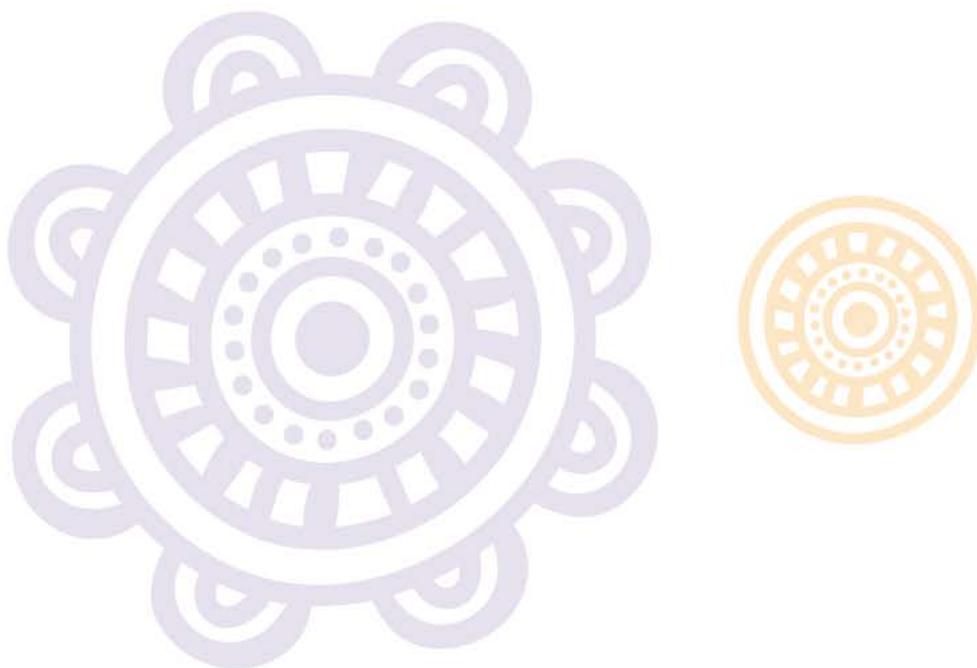
203 Kinchela Boys cited in New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 59

Research has demonstrated the economic benefits associated with trauma-aware, healing-informed strategies and programs. Several independent assessments of The Healing Foundation's programs have identified significant cost benefits associated with healing activities²⁰⁴ and healing centres.²⁰⁵

However, to date there has been no systematic, nation-wide response to the needs and rights of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants. There is a compelling case for national leadership to address the needs of survivors and their descendants.

Urgent action is required for healing through:

- **Establishing a national scheme for redress for Stolen Generations survivors and their families.**
- **Meeting the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors, including in the domains of aged care, disability, health and housing.**
- **Healing intergenerational trauma and preventing new harm.**



204 Deloitte Access Economics (2017) *Cost Benefit Analysis of the Murri School Healing Program: Report prepared for The Healing Foundation*, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-cost-benefit-analysis-murri-school-healing-program-061017.pdf> The evaluation found that for a cost of \$3,190 per student, the benefit was \$28,248 per student and the total economic benefit attributed to the Murri School was \$6.5 million; and that for every dollar invested in the school healing program, there was an \$8.85 return in savings. These economic benefits were drawn from positive outcomes including improved educational attainment, improved mental health and less contact with the child protection and criminal justice systems.

205 The Healing Foundation (2014) *Prospective cost benefit analysis of healing centres*, Canberra, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, <https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2017/01/CBA-final-SINGLES-for-screen.pdf>. Investments in Healing Centres to address intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were found to return an average benefit to cost ratio of over 4 to 1

5.1 Principles for progress

Effective responses to the needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants require a commitment to the following principles:

- **Urgent action.** More than 80% of the Stolen Generations were aged 50 and over in 2018–19, and all survivors will be aged 50 and over, and eligible for aged care, in 2022. Many are in poor health. Each year, more Stolen Generations Elders are lost, and the survivors suffer significant distress. There is thus an urgent need for redress and for the provision of meaningful support. Similarly, the worsening rates of contemporary child removals²⁰⁶ and family violence,²⁰⁷ and the extraordinarily high levels of youth incarceration,²⁰⁸ all emphasise the urgent need to address the intergenerational effects of removal.
- **Holistic approaches** in recognition of the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors, whose testimony to national and state-based inquiries illustrates the intersecting and compounding impact of trauma, health and wellbeing, and social and economic factors on survivors and descendants. Responses must therefore be holistic and multifaceted rather than single focus and portfolio-based.
- **Stolen Generations-led and centred responses.** Initiatives to address the needs of survivors must be led by survivors. Services that address the impacts of removal need to be designed, provided and controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples themselves – in this case by Stolen Generations survivors specifically, as only they can fully comprehend the effects of removal policies.
- **Self-determination.** As recognised in the *Bringing them Home* report, and through more recent testimony from Stolen Generations survivors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be able to exercise self-determination in relation to policies and decisions that impact them. This means being treated as an equal negotiating partner in determining services and policies, rather than the more common ‘consultation’. It also means ensuring funding and resources are directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations rather than non-Indigenous, non-government organisations and government departments.
- **Trauma-aware, healing-informed practice.** This is a strengths-based approach to healing based on an understanding of, and responsiveness to, the impacts of trauma. Trauma-aware, healing-informed approaches are essential to preventing re-traumatisation. They are based on an understanding of trauma and its impacts; are physically, emotionally and culturally safe; support trauma survivors to regain a sense of control over their lives; integrate care; and build safe relationships.²⁰⁹
- **Evidence-informed programs and services.** Design of programs and services needs to take account of the evidence – including that provided through the experiences of Stolen Generations survivors themselves – of what works to address the consequences of forced removal.

206 AIHW (2020) *Child protection Australia 2018–19*, Child welfare series no. 72. Cat. no. CWS 74. Canberra: AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/child-protection-australia-2018-19/summary>

207 AIHW (2019) *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019*, Cat. no. FDV 3. Canberra: AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-australia-2019/contents/table-of-contents>

208 AIHW (2020) *Youth Justice in Australia 2018–19*, Cat. no. JUV 132. Canberra: AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-justice-in-australia-2018-19/contents/summary>

209 Atkinson J (2013) *Trauma-informed services and trauma-specific care for Indigenous Australian children*. Canberra/Melbourne, AIHW and Australian Institute of Family Studies <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/e322914f-ac63-44f1-8c2f-4d84938fcd41/ctg-rs21.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

5.2 Make Healing Happen – urgent action for healing

Healing is a journey, a process and a way forward that allows communities, families and individuals to come to terms with trauma and move beyond it. It is about knowing and understanding the truth, and looking back in order to move forward.

ACTION 1. Redress for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants

Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants should have access to a comprehensive redress scheme. Such redress is justified as:

- An acknowledgement of past wrongs inflicted upon them, and the resulting lifelong experience of trauma and grief.
- Redress for the lifelong disadvantage resulting from forced removal from their families, which produced multiple, overlapping issues of poor health and wellbeing.
- Financial assistance to help address the economic effects of removal, including unemployment, poverty and low rates of home ownership, as well as higher healthcare and other service costs.
- An acknowledgement that reforms related to land such as native title and statutory land rights schemes have not benefited Stolen Generations survivors, due to their removal from country.

The *Bringing them Home* report made monetary compensation a central component of reparations for Stolen Generations survivors. The Senate Committee responded by recommending *'the establishment of a reparations tribunal to address the need for an effective process of reparation, including the provision of individual monetary compensation'*.²¹⁰ However, the then Howard Government explicitly ruled out establishing a compensation scheme.²¹¹

More recently, four state governments – Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria – have accepted responsibility for the harm caused to Stolen Generations survivors by establishing reparations schemes that include ex gratia payments to survivors, as well as community reparations to promote healing. The Northern Territory Government announced a scheme in February 2018 but has not made further progress. More than half the estimated Stolen Generations population – from Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and ACT – do not have access to redress schemes. More details about the state schemes can be found in Appendix B.

210 Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (2010) 'Review of Government Compensation Payments' Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Completed_inquiries/2010-13/govtcomp/report/index p. 37-54; Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee (2000) *Healing: A Legacy of Generations – The report of the inquiry into the federal government's implementation of recommendations made by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 'Bringing them Home'*, Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia. https://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/senate/legal_and_constitutional_affairs/completed_inquiries/1999-02/stolen/report/index

211 Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Senate Hansard*, 28 June 2001, p. 25401. https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/chamber/hansards/2001-06-28/toc_pdf/1387-96.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%222000s%202001%2006%22

To date, monetary payments to individuals have been ex gratia payments acknowledging the harm inflicted on people when they were children. As such they do not require legal proceedings, or for claims to be proved to the standard required in civil litigation. The trade-off is that payments are capped. They are not considered compensation in the legal sense, i.e., they do not seek to provide for the full extent and impact of harm for each individual.²¹²

“The reality is that many of those directly affected are getting old, getting dementia, and we’re losing them.”²¹³

The Hon. Linda Burney MP

Some Stolen Generations survivors are also eligible for redress under the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Royal Commission recommended a maximum payment of \$200,000 for those suffering the most severe abuse, a minimum of \$10,000, and an average of \$65,000.²¹⁴ The National Redress Scheme, as implemented, provides eligible survivors with redress in the form of a monetary payment up to \$150,000 and the opportunity to access counselling and psychological services. If they wish, survivors also have the opportunity to receive personal acknowledgement of the sexual abuse they suffered from the responsible government or institution.

The Royal Commission reported that 14.3% of survivors who attended a private session identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with three quarters reporting they were sexually abused in out-of-home care, largely in historical residential institutions (operating before 1990), such as mission dormitories or children’s homes.²¹⁵ In 2019–20, 34% of applicants to the National Redress Scheme identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.²¹⁶ A high proportion are likely to be Stolen Generations survivors.

The Healing Foundation and Link-Up services in larger states have been funded to provide redress support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with focused support for Stolen Generations survivors. Nonetheless, various shortcomings specifically related to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants, including Stolen Generations survivors, have been identified.²¹⁷ They are considered in more detail in Appendix B.

A universal, safe and culturally appropriate scheme for redress for Stolen Generations survivors is needed to overcome the fragmented and unequal access to redress through existing schemes.

212 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2015) *Redress and Civil Litigation Report, Chapter 7 Monetary Payments* https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/final_report_-_redress_and_civil_litigation.pdf

213 Linda Burney, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians (2020) ‘Northern Territory Stolen Generations compensation calls grow ahead of possible class action’ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-07/nt-stolen-generations-compensation-class-action/12736890>

214 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) *Final Report Recommendations* https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_recommendations.pdf p. 78

215 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) *A brief guide to the Final Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities* https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/a_brief_guide_to_the_final_report_-_aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_communities.pdf

216 National Redress Scheme (2020) Strategic Success Measures, <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020-11/d20-1438397-national-redress-scheme-strategic-success-measures-report-oct-2020.pdf>

217 The Healing Foundation (2020) Parliament of Australia, Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme Submission 22 June 2020; Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (2020) Joint Select Committee on oversight of the implementation of redress related recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Submission 2; Knowmore (2020) Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme, 28 April 2020. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Redress_Scheme

Establishing a redress scheme requires:

- National leadership to ensure all governments and other responsible organisations participate.
- Recognition that the forced removal of Stolen Generations survivors was explicitly designed to destroy the child's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity,²¹⁸ and was therefore inherently and profoundly abusive.
- An appropriate level of individual redress be made available to Stolen Generations survivors and descendants, in acknowledgement of the greater burden of disadvantage they carry, as reflected in the AIHW findings.
- Expert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander input to ensure all processes are culturally safe, trauma-aware and healing-informed.

PRIORITY 1:

All Australian governments, in collaboration with Stolen Generations survivors, co-design a universal, safe and culturally appropriate redress scheme for living and deceased Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

PRIORITY 2:

The Australian Government urgently addresses reparations for Stolen Generations survivors removed in Commonwealth territories (Northern Territory, ACT, Jervis Bay).

Investing in collective healing

Healing programs and reunions, in particular collective healing, are identified as a significant need of Stolen Generations survivors, and an important component of reparations. Submissions to the New South Wales Reparations Inquiry²¹⁹ expressed the need for a holistic interpretation of healing that involves families, communities, and individuals, and that incorporates a broad range of social and cultural activities. Many individuals talked about the advantages of collective healing.

Collective healing has been found to increase protective factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in institutions.

218 Tatz C (2017) *Australia's Unthinkable Genocide*, Bloomington, Illinois, Xlibris.; Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) Final Report Volume 2: Nature and cause, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/nature-and-cause> pp. 233-234

219 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%202023%20June%202016.pdf>

“The extent of collective trauma, the continuing loss and grief in communities, and emerging evidence showing that strong culture is associated with health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, suggests that collective healing approaches, culturally safe health services, alongside other supports for cultural revitalisation, should also be explored as a means to increase the protective factors available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in institutional settings.”²²⁰

Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Yarning circles are an example of a culturally specific program that has been successfully used in collective healing projects, with benefits experienced by participants, their families and communities.

“Projects reported that a great sense of healing was experienced by yarning circle participants. Their sense of isolation decreased, and they gained strength and insight from discovering avenues for healing. In many cases the experience of sharing stories within the safety of the group was the catalyst for sharing their stories with family and support workers. In this way the healing continued beyond the space of the yarning circle and rippled out into participants’ families and communities.”²²¹

Healing for our Stolen Generations: Sharing Our Stories report

The Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation²²² identified a need for culturally appropriate therapeutic services for its clients and recommended that ‘services should be funded to include healing camps and getting back to country to let the country heal within. There are examples for the success of these forums across many Indigenous nations internationally.’ Many other submissions suggested programs on country as a means of healing trauma and promoting cultural identity.

220 Anderson P, Bamblett M, Bessarab D, Bromfield L, Chan S, Maddock G, Menzies K, O’Connell M, Pearson G, Walker R and Wright M (2017) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and child sexual abuse in institutional settings: Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Sydney, Telethon Kids Institute https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/research_report_-_aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_children_and_child_sexual_abuse_in_institutional_contexts_-_causes.pdf p. 44

221 The Healing Foundation (2016) *Healing for our Stolen Generations: Sharing Our Stories*, <https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2017/02/Healing-for-Our-Stolen-Generations-Sharing-Our-Stories-2.pdf> p. 10

222 Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (2015) Submission to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/Consultation%20Paper%20-%20Redress%20and%20Civil%20litigation%20-%20Submission%20-%2020159%20Northern%20Territory%20Stolen%20Generations%20Aboriginal%20Corporation.pdf>

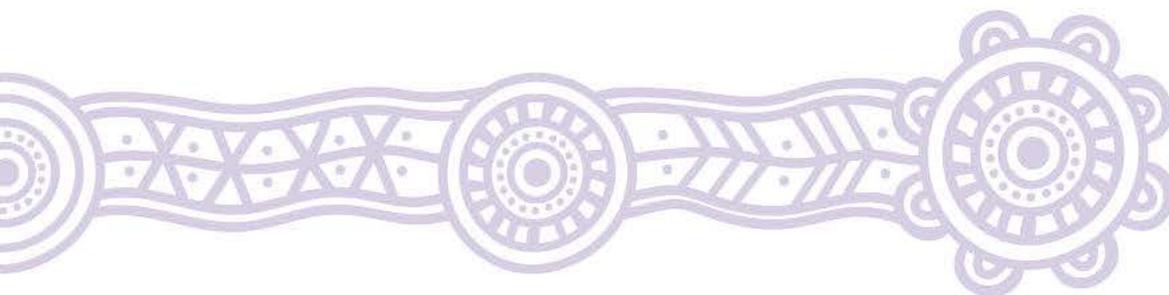
"I strongly believe that the biggest 'gap' for the Stolen Generations is healing programs. Funding could be provided for camps for the Stolen Generations, trips to the Outback to learn more about traditional culture, healing medicines and specific healing programs for people to work through their grief and loss are required."²²³

Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations

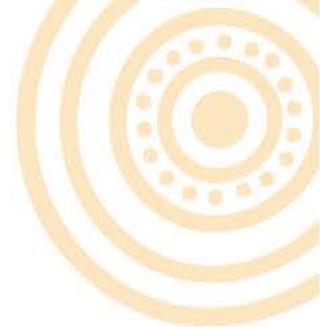
PRIORITY 3:

The Australian Government, with contributions from all jurisdictions, establishes a funding stream for investing in healing. The funds will be used to expand support and resources for Stolen Generations organisations, and other organisations nominated by Stolen Generations survivors, to deliver co-designed healing programs focused on the specific needs of survivors and their families. This includes:

- Collective healing approaches (Stolen Generations healing camps, peer support groups, healing gatherings and commemorations).
- Counselling and family history/reunion programs in regional areas as well as capital cities.
- Enhanced cultural reconnection programs, including in urban and regional areas – acknowledging that getting back to country and being buried on country is very important for some elderly survivors and their families.



223 South Australian Department of State Development (2017) *South Australia Stolen Generations Community Reparations Fund: Summary of Consultations*, Adelaide: South Australian Department of State Development https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34510/Summary-of-Consultations.pdf p. 6



ACTION 2. Meeting the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors

Stolen Generations survivors have complex needs and are disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of government policies of forced removal of children. There is a clear and compelling case for **urgent** action to ensure the needs of ageing Stolen Generations survivors are met. It is important that this action acknowledges the legacy of social and economic disadvantage, and that it ensures the journey into ageing is not unnecessarily painful or burdensome.

Addressing the complex, intersectional needs of Stolen Generations survivors requires considerable effort at all levels of government and community to co-design policies and programs that are trauma-aware and healing-informed, and that enable Stolen Generations survivors to live with dignity and respect, and in the knowledge their families will thrive into the future.

“The system isn’t designed to look after those who need the most.”²²⁴

Stolen Generations aged care forum

As a matter of urgency Australian governments should:

- Resource a series of national and regional forums where Stolen Generations survivors, their organisations, and advisors work with policy and program makers across portfolio areas to co-design services that meet the priorities and needs of survivors.
- Recognise that Stolen Generations survivors are vulnerable people experiencing disproportionate disadvantage and complex needs, which are best addressed through wrap-around and specific support services co-designed with the individual in mind.
 - » Resource wrap-around support, such as case management, to assist Stolen Generations survivors navigate service systems. This can be done by providing information and appropriate referrals. See, for example, the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice staff placement with Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation.
 - » Provide additional resources to Link-Up organisations to expand geographical reach and number of people assisted, and to ensure funding agreements enable resources to be used flexibly to meet the needs of Stolen Generations survivors.
 - » Provide incentives to ensure services will (and can) address the more complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors (for example, by resourcing additional time for delivering services to survivors). Recognise that standard program provisions will result in market failure for clients with high needs.
- Develop models of non-institutionalised aged care that include options for financing, and that provide additional funding to engage Stolen Generations organisations, aged care providers, housing providers, investors and other experts in developing and testing the models. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan prepared under the Aged Care Diversity Framework provides a strong foundation for supporting Stolen Generations survivors as they grow older.

²²⁴ The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

- Require organisations that support and provide services to Stolen Generations survivors to adopt trauma-aware, healing-informed and culturally competent approaches at all levels, including in their underlying policies and systems. Ensure that government and non-government service providers historically associated with child removals are not funded to provide these services.
- Improve system capability for delivering services to Stolen Generations survivors by delivering resources and training for trauma-aware, healing-informed policies and practices across key government and non-government organisations, and by resourcing service providers to build these skills, particularly in areas with large Stolen Generations populations.

Recommendations: The Healing Foundation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group (ATSIAAG) Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, June 2019²²⁵

The Healing Foundation and the Australian Association of Gerontology's ATSIAAG recommend:

- Government(s) urgently fund trusted Stolen Generations organisations to expand capacity to support older Stolen Generations survivors and their families/carers to access appropriate aged care/wrap-around services.
- Government(s) urgently fund specialist Stolen Generations Advocacy Services. Evidence and demographic data should inform a place-based approach to prioritising where resources are most needed. Where possible, advocates should be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and have existing links to targeted communities to enable trust and swift results.
- Government(s) urgently consider investment in incentives for existing Aged Care Service Providers to improve capacity and willingness to service Stolen Generations survivors. Incentives would enable service providers to invest in tailoring their service delivery models and ensuring delivery of culturally responsive and trauma-aware, healing-informed service models.
- The Aged Care Assessment process for Stolen Generations survivors needs to be reviewed and urgently modified to avoid retriggering or exacerbating trauma for vulnerable clients. This should be undertaken via a genuine process of co-design with Stolen Generations survivors and should include minimum standards that can be tracked and measured to ensure compliance.
- Governance mechanisms be established that provide Stolen Generations survivors with a strong voice and opportunity to provide ongoing strategic advice to government in relation to aged care policy, program and service delivery models.

²²⁵ The Healing Foundation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to the Australian Association of Gerontology (ATSIAAG) unpublished report, Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum, Melbourne, 5 June 2019

PRIORITY 4:

All governments resource programs and policies across Australia that are co-designed with Stolen Generations survivors to holistically address their specific needs, prioritising aged care, disability, health (especially mental health) and housing.

ACTION 3. Healing intergenerational trauma and preventing new harm

The effects of unresolved intergenerational trauma stemming from forced removal have been courageously and eloquently expressed by Stolen Generations survivors, with clear evidence of disadvantage experienced by Stolen Generations descendants as a result of the forced removal of their older relatives.

"We do not want this hate to go to our children or to our grandchildren and great grandchildren. Our children need to be connected to this healing process too. Our journey's almost over, our children's journeys are only just beginning."²²⁶

Stolen Generations survivor Uncle Michael Welsh

The forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children took place within a broader context of colonisation that included policies of genocide and racial assimilation, socially sanctioned racism and violence, and the loss of land and culture. In many cases, these traumatic experiences have remained unrecognised and unresolved: mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse, violence and self-harm often start as attempts to cope with emotions that have become unbearable because of a lack of adequate support. Institutions that deal with traumatised individuals too often bypass the emotional engagement system that is at the foundation of who we are, and instead focus on 'faulty thinking' and subduing unpleasant emotions and troublesome behaviours.²²⁷

The failure to develop appropriate strategies to address this trauma creates a barrier to achieving the 'Close the Gap' goals of better health, education, employment and other outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Ultimately, this creates a significant and ongoing cost burden for all Australian governments, particularly through expenditure on child protection, family violence remediation, youth justice, prisons and social welfare.

While the evidence about intergenerational trauma is clear and disturbing, governments, service providers and many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities themselves are ill-equipped to deal with it. The current default approach is fragmented, with the siloed nature of service delivery resulting in many agencies failing to deal adequately with people who have multiple, overlapping, complex needs. This poses a significant barrier for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants accessing the services they need.

²²⁶ Uncle Michael Welsh in The Healing Foundation (2017) *Bringing them Home 20 years On* <http://healingfoundation.org.au//app/uploads/2017/05/Bringing-Them-Home-20-years-on-FINAL-SCREEN-1.pdf> p. 41

²²⁷ Van Der Kolk B (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, New York, Penguin

Adequate funding and appropriate programs are required to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – including Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants – to address intergenerational trauma and achieve healing.

The complex nature of intergenerational trauma requires a concerted and coordinated cross-sector approach that can respond to the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and families experiencing trauma.

A national strategy for intergenerational healing

PRIORITY 5:

All governments resource and implement a national intergenerational healing strategy for addressing intergenerational trauma, developed with Stolen Generations survivors and descendants.

The intergenerational healing strategy should include investments in:

- An overarching enabling framework that encompasses truth telling, self-determination, healing through culture, systems reform and improvements at policy, program and workforce levels.
- Community-led services and programs.
- Capacity building for communities and other stakeholders to recognise and address trauma.
- Collective and family healing.
- Continuing reform in access to records by Stolen Generations survivors and descendants.
- Consolidation, application and building of an evidence base.

In order to address the legacy of trauma and support healing, Australian governments and service providers should resource the co-development of a comprehensive, long-term, national intergenerational healing strategy. The strategy must include a specific focus on Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

A national strategy for addressing intergenerational healing will provide high-level, strategic direction and guidance for Australian governments and service providers specifically relating to the design and operation of programs and services that meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The strategy must link to and complement existing national strategies, such as the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children,²²⁸ the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children,²²⁹ the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing,²³⁰ and the new National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.²³¹

228 Commonwealth of Australia (2009) Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020 https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/child_protection_framework.pdf

229 Council of Australian Governments (2010) National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2014/national_plan1.pdf

230 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2017) *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023* <https://www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/national-strategic-framework-mental-health-social-emotional-wellbeing-2017-23>

231 National Mental Health Commission (undated) *National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/Mental-health-Reform/Childrens-Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy>

Healing and recovery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples generally, and Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants in particular, must address the impacts of collective trauma through multi-level approaches. A national strategy will provide a framework for coordinating evidence and action, and will form the basis for empowering key stakeholders to understand and take responsibility for addressing intergenerational healing.

“Based on what I have heard from women and girls, trauma is generationally endemic in our society, and it must be overcome to address the impacts on future generations. We must rapidly scale up the trauma and healing work that exists at a community level so principles and practices that we know work can be applied more broadly.

I believe there is a need to develop a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander framework to embed healing and trauma-informed practices and models within all services and institutions responding to trauma related issues and harms in our communities.

The framework should also ensure trauma-informed practice and policy is embedded across all government levels and portfolios.”²³²

Australian Human Rights Commission *Wiyi Yani U Thangani* report

It will provide a comprehensive, long-term approach where governments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and key partners work together to co-design methods of intergenerational healing.

It is also essential that a national strategy takes into account that healing is a lifelong process that must be integrated across the broad spectrum of laws, policies and services that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Trauma-aware, healing-informed approaches must therefore be embedded in all aspects of systems that engage with, and impact on, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A national strategy requires coordinated action across four core elements:

1. Creating an overarching enabling framework that promotes integration of healing approaches across sectors – including health, justice, children and family services, education and employment – and that encompasses truth telling, self-determination, healing through culture, and systems reform at the policy, program and workforce levels.
2. Investing in community-led services and programs.
3. Building capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, government and key stakeholders to recognise and address trauma, including building the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and the healing competence of non-Indigenous workforces, including policymakers.

²³² Australian Human Rights Commission (2020) *Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices): Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report* <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/wiyi-yan-i-u-thangani> p. 72

4. Consolidating and applying a strong evidence base, with embedded monitoring and assessment of the impact of healing approaches, and a capacity to commission and apply research.

The national strategy must include a sustainable and robust monitoring and accountability process.

Leading our own healing programs

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, addressing intergenerational trauma and healing is an ongoing process that needs to be approached holistically and involve families and communities, as well as individuals. It requires the availability of specific services and support to heal the ongoing impacts of trauma resulting from past policies and practices, including the forced removal of children from their families.

Collective healing is an essential element of addressing intergenerational trauma and is likely to be a protective factor for children in institutional settings.

*"We suffered collectively and we need to heal collectively."*²³³

Stolen Generations survivor Aunty Lorraine Peeters

*"The extent of collective trauma, the continuing loss and grief in communities, and emerging evidence showing that strong culture is associated with health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, suggests that collective healing approaches, culturally safe health services, alongside other supports for cultural revitalisation, should also be explored as a means to increase the protective factors available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in institutional settings."*²³⁴

Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Collective healing programs will strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through holistic, trauma-aware, healing-informed approaches that are evidence-based, community-led, and that empower and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to create a better future.

These programs are a core component for implementing a strategy for intergenerational healing. The scale of trauma in our communities requires new investment to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to understand intergenerational trauma and its impacts, and respond by developing and implementing localised trauma-aware, healing-informed strategies.

233 New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 55

234 Anderson P, Bamblett M, Bessarab D, Bromfield L, Chan S, Maddock G, Menzies K, O'Connell M, Pearson G, Walker R and Wright M (2017) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and child sexual abuse in institutional settings: Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Sydney, Telethon Kids Institute https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/research_report_-_aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_children_and_child_sexual_abuse_in_institutional_contexts_-_causes.pdf p. 44

The program model (see Figure 8) is based on trusted third-party facilitating partners with credibility, expertise and capacity supporting local communities to lead their own healing; assisting to monitor and assess the impact of healing activities; and disseminating findings for wider application. The model is adapted to meet the requirements of each location, but will entail:

- Co-design with local communities informed by evidence of what works and individual community strengths and priorities.
- Application of evidence-based strategies and programs.
- Increasing scale and impact by working across different communities and facilitating linkages and networks.
- Continuing to build the evidence base and ecosystem to support more healing programs.

Figure 7: The Healing Foundation's community approach

Building healing programs and trauma-aware, healing-informed services in Western Australia and South Australia



High proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are descended from Stolen Generations survivors in Western Australia (56%) and in South Australia (48%).²³⁵ In recognition of these high proportions, and the significant disadvantages descendants face, additional measures are needed in these jurisdictions.

PRIORITY 6:

That collective healing programs co-developed with local Stolen Generations organisations are established in Western Australia and South Australia as a high priority. This recognises the high proportion of adult Stolen Generations descendants in Western Australia and South Australia, who experience disproportionate levels of disadvantage.

ACTION 4. Sustainable and robust monitoring and accountability

The *Bringing them Home* report recommended establishing a national process for implementing its recommendations, with annual audits by states and territories. However, *'there is still no systematic process for monitoring the implementation of the [report's] recommendations or for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the outcomes.'*²³⁶ The New South Wales Ombudsman has specific, legislated powers to monitor and assess the delivery of designated Aboriginal programs, including the OCHRE plan, which includes programs for supporting Stolen Generations survivors.²³⁷

In order to 'close the gap within the gap' and track progress in redressing the enormous wrongs that have been committed, a formal national accountability mechanism is required.

There are a number of mechanisms that could be used. Options include establishing a specific-purpose entity similar to the National Office for Child Safety – which was set up to implement national priorities recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse²³⁸ – or assigning responsibility and resources to an independent agency such as the Productivity Commission or the Australian Human Rights Commission, potentially through a legislated requirement similar to that in New South Wales.²³⁹

Any national accountability framework should include:

- Annual reporting to parliament on the outcomes of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.
- Funding to establish a web-based monitoring and reporting tool for tracking commitments to improving the wellbeing of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

²³⁵ AIHW (2021) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over: updated analyses for 2018–19*, Table 6

²³⁶ New South Wales Parliament (2016) *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in New South Wales: Unfinished Business*, Sydney, Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, Report No 34 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/inquiries/1645/Reparations%20for%20the%20Stolen%20Generations%20in%20NSW%20-%20Report%2034%20-%2023%20June%202016.pdf> p. 31

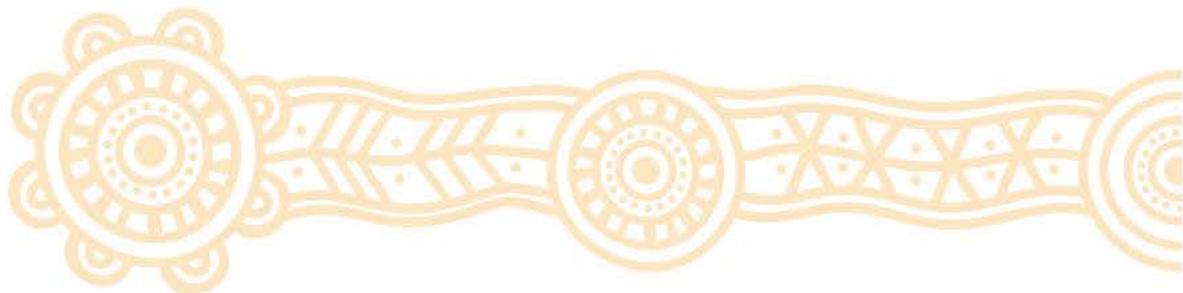
²³⁷ Ombudsman NSW (October 2019) *OCHRE Review Report* https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/74183/OCHRE-Report_October-2019.pdf

²³⁸ See Australian Government, National Office for Child Safety, 'Providing national leadership to strengthen children's safety and reduce future harm to children' (2021) <https://pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/national-office-child-safety>

²³⁹ The NSW Ombudsman has specific, legislated powers to monitor and assess the delivery of designated Aboriginal programs, including the OCHRE plan, which includes programs for supporting Stolen Generations. Ombudsman NSW, *OCHRE Review Report* (October 2019) https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/74183/OCHRE-Report_October-2019.pdf

PRIORITY 7:

The Australian Government resources a national accountability framework to monitor and report progress towards achieving better outcomes for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, including annual/biennial reporting to parliament, and the establishment of a web-based monitoring and reporting tool.



5.3 *Make Healing Happen* – Summary of priorities for action

This report demonstrates that urgent action is needed to address the disproportionate disadvantage faced by Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, and to heal past and continuing trauma, through the following priorities:

Healing for Stolen Generations survivors

ACTION 1: *Redress for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.*

Priority 1: All Australian governments, in collaboration with Stolen Generations survivors, co-design a universal, safe and culturally appropriate redress scheme for living and deceased Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants.

Priority 2: The Australian Government urgently addresses reparations for Stolen Generations survivors removed in Commonwealth territories (Northern Territory, ACT, Jervis Bay).

Priority 3: The Australian Government, with contributions from all jurisdictions, establishes a funding stream for investing in healing. The funds will be used to expand support and resources for Stolen Generations organisations, and other organisations nominated by Stolen Generations survivors, to deliver co-designed healing programs focused on the specific needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their families.

ACTION 2: *Meeting the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors.*

Priority 4: All governments resource programs and policies across Australia that are co-designed with Stolen Generations survivors to holistically address their specific needs, prioritising aged care, disability, health (especially mental health) and housing.

National Intergenerational Healing Strategy

ACTION 3: *Healing intergenerational trauma and preventing new harm.*

Priority 5: All governments resource and implement a national intergenerational healing strategy for addressing intergenerational trauma, developed with Stolen Generations survivors and descendants. The intergenerational healing strategy should include investments in:

- An overarching enabling framework that encompasses truth telling, self-determination, healing through culture, systems reform, and improvements at policy, program and workforce levels.
- Community-led services and programs.
- Capacity building for communities and other stakeholders to recognise and address trauma.
- Collective and family healing.
- Continued reform in access to records by Stolen Generations survivors and descendants.
- Consolidation, application and building of an evidence base.

Priority 6: That collective healing programs co-developed with local Stolen Generations organisations are established in Western Australia and South Australia as a high priority. This recognises the high proportion of adult Stolen Generations descendants in Western Australia and South Australia, who experience disproportionate levels of disadvantage.

Monitoring and accountability

ACTION 4: *Sustainable and robust monitoring and accountability.*

Priority 7: The Australian Government resources a national accountability framework to monitor and report progress towards achieving better outcomes for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, including annual/biennial reporting to parliament and the establishment of a web-based monitoring and reporting tool.

Appendices

Appendix A: Institutional Mapping Report

Research report for The Healing Foundation July 2018, Dr Ruth McCausland (UNSW), Dr Anna Nettheim, Cassie Kang

Due to the large number of children removed from their families and communities and placed in a variety of institutions over a considerable period, across each state and territory, the available information is not exhaustive. Further input from Stolen Generations survivors, Stolen Generations organisations and/or additional research is likely to result in some institutions being added to the list and some moving into a different category.

The analysis identified four categories of institutions.

Description	NSW	VIC	NT	TAS	SA	WA	QLD	TOTAL
Category 1: Larger numbers Well-documented institutions and reserves/missions/mission stations that were identified in the <i>Bringing them Home</i> Report, the Find & Connect entry, key Stolen Generations documents and/or multiple personal testimonies as having accommodated Stolen Generations children.	16	15	12	-	15	21	7	86
Category 2: Smaller numbers Institutions and reserves/missions/mission stations that came up in the initial keyword searches and that a brief additional search revealed had at least one Stolen Generations child resident there.	12	7	4	28	21	18	7	97
Subtotal of institutions known to house Stolen Generations children.	28	22	16	28	36	39	14	183
Category 3: unknown numbers Reserves/missions/mission stations known to have had dormitories, on the basis that the dormitory system was predicated on the separation of children from their families.	-	4	14	-	10	15	13	56
Category 4: unknown numbers Institutions and reserves/missions/mission stations that came up in the initial keyword searches but that neither the key sources nor a brief additional search were able to identify as having either Stolen Generations residents or dormitories.	22	-	31	1	38	134	18	244
TOTAL	50	26	61	29	84	188	45	483

Methodology

A search of the Find & Connect website and of lists of related organisations supplied by Find & Connect was undertaken using search the terms 'Stolen Generations', 'Aboriginal' and 'Indigenous'.

A search of the AIATSIS family history list for missions and reserves was undertaken using search terms: 'Stolen Generations', 'Aboriginal' and 'Indigenous'.

Bringing them Home report sections on individual jurisdictions were checked for references to institutions in each jurisdiction.

The sources cited in the 2005 National Native Title Tribunal list of Western Australia institutions housing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were examined.

Additional sources were identified through Google, searching jurisdictions for information about Stolen Generations residents.

Additional evidence of Stolen Generations survivors having resided in particular institutions was identified by searching the name/s of the individual institutions along with search terms: 'Stolen Generations', 'Aboriginal' and 'Indigenous'.

If in approximately 10 minutes a search did not reveal any sources that clarified whether or not Stolen Generations survivors resided at an institution, or whether or not reserves/missions/mission stations had dormitories, and it became clear that further research or additional information from Stolen Generations survivors/organisations would be required to determine this, institutions were coded as Category 4 (unknown numbers).

Any entries for institutions that operated before 1900 and after 1980 were excluded to provide methodological boundaries to the search. However, the researchers acknowledge that it is possible Stolen Generations survivors who were removed at a young age to one institution may have ended up in a more contemporary institution at a later point in their lives.

Appendix B: Australian redress schemes

This appendix provides an overview of Australian redress schemes, to the extent that they have provided monetary payments to individuals/families for abuse and suffering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. It does not describe associated initiatives such as collective healing and funeral funds. Nor does it describe state-based stolen wages programs.

To date, monetary payments to individuals have been ex gratia payments acknowledging the harm inflicted on people when they were children. As such, they do not require legal proceedings, or for claims to be proved to the standard required in civil litigation. The trade-off is that payments are capped. They are not considered compensation in the legal sense, i.e., they do not seek to provide for the full extent and impact of harm for each individual.²⁴⁰

The 1997 *Bringing them Home* report made monetary compensation a central component of making reparation to Stolen Generations survivors. The Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's inquiry also recommended 'the establishment of a reparations tribunal to address the need for an effective process of reparation, including the provision of individual monetary compensation.'²⁴¹ In response, the then Howard Government explicitly ruled out establishing a compensation scheme.²⁴²

State redress schemes

Four state governments—Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria — have accepted responsibility for the harm caused to Stolen Generations survivors by establishing reparations schemes that include ex gratia payments to survivors, as well as community reparations to promote healing. The Northern Territory Government announced a scheme in February 2018 but has not made further progress. More than half the estimated Stolen Generations population — from Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and ACT — do not have access to redress schemes.

The existing state schemes are also limited:

- As of 30 June 2018 the New South Wales Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme had received 1,100 applications (out of more than 8,400 estimated Stolen Generations survivors in the state).²⁴³ To date, \$31.8 million in reparations payments had been made to 441 survivors removed by or committed to the Aborigines Welfare Board; \$2.9 million was provided in Funeral Assistance Fund payments; and the Government has apologised in writing to each Stolen Generations survivor who received a payment, in recognition of the harm and trauma they experienced as a result of past government policies.²⁴⁴ The scheme excludes a large number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

240 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2015) *Redress and Civil Litigation Report*, 'Chapter 7 Monetary Payments' https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/final_report_-_redress_and_civil_litigation.pdf

241 Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (2010) *Review of Government Compensation Payments* Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia. pages 37-54; and Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee (2000) *Healing: A Legacy of Generations: the report of the inquiry into the federal government's implementation of recommendations made by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 'Bringing them home'*. Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia.

242 Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Senate Hansard*, 28 June 2001 https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlinfo/download/chamber/hansards/2001-06-28/toc_pdf/1387-96.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%222000s%202001%2006%22 p. 25401

243 NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs (2018) *Unfinished Business Progress Report to Parliament*, Sydney, <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/healing-and-reparations/stolen-generations/Unfinished-Business-Digital-Version.pdf>

244 Ombudsman NSW (October 2019) *OCHRE Review Report* https://www.omb.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/74183/OCHRE-Report_October-2019.pdf

Islanders peoples who were removed from their families under assimilationist policies and practices by state entities such as the Child Welfare Department, or by police or other people.

- In 2017, the South Australian Government allocated \$6 million for individual reparations. Of 449 applicants, 343 were found eligible by the Scheme's Independent Assessor, including 28 who were removed from the Northern Territory and brought to South Australia.²⁴⁵ The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs initially awarded 312 people ex gratia payments of \$20,000 in 2018, with each awarded a further \$10,000 in 2019 when \$3 million of unspent community-project funding was diverted.²⁴⁶
- Tasmania implemented a reparations process in 2007–2008, based solely on individual compensation. Eighty-four Stolen Generations survivors received a little over \$58,000 each and 22 eligible children received between \$4,000 to \$5,000.²⁴⁷
- In March 2020, Victoria announced it would establish a Stolen Generations Redress Scheme, which is expected to commence in 2021 and include \$10 million for counselling services, a funeral expenses fund, and ex gratia payments.²⁴⁸ At the time of writing, further details of the Scheme have not been announced.
- In April 2021, Shine Lawyers launched a class action for compensation for Northern Territory Stolen Generations survivors, covering those forcibly removed before 30 June 1978 who resided, or whose family resided, in the Northern Territory at the time of removal.²⁴⁹

The Western Australian Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation, Yokai, continues to advocate for reparations for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants as the Western Australian Government has still not implemented a reparations scheme.²⁵⁰

The National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

In 2018, the National Redress Scheme (NRS) for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse was established in response to recommendations by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission). Redress can only be provided where institutions 'opt in'. To date, the Commonwealth, all state and territory governments, and 303 non-government institutions covering approximately 53,300 sites across Australia (churches, schools, homes, charities and community groups) were participating. Further to this, 158 non-government institutions committed to join and finalise onboarding by no later than 31 December 2020.²⁵¹

245 Department of Premier and Cabinet, Independent Assessor (2018) *Report of the South Australian Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme* https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/...data/assets/pdf_file/0020/45704/Report-of-the-south-australian-stolen-generations-reparations-scheme.pdf

246 Government of South Australia (undated) 'Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme' <https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/aboriginal-affairs-and-reconciliation/reconciliation/stolen-generations-reparations-scheme>

247 Department of Premier and Cabinet Office of the Stolen Generations Assessor (2008) *Report of the Stolen Generations Assessor: Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Act 2006*, Hobart, http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/...data/assets/pdf_file/0020/306191/Stolen_Generations_Assessor_final_report.pdf

248 Premier of Victoria (2020) *Righting Past Wrongs with Stolen Generations Redress* <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/righting-past-wrongs-stolen-generations-redress>

249 Shine Lawyers, 'Northern Territory Stolen Generations Class Action', *Shine Lawyers*, (April 2021) <https://www.shine.com.au/service/class-actions/northern-territory-stolen-generations-class-action>

250 Yokai (2020) 'National Sorry Day and the 23rd Anniversary of the Bringing them Home Report' <https://yokai.com.au/press-releases/national-sorry-day-and-the-23rd-anniversary-of-the-bringing-them-home-report/>

251 National Redress Scheme (November 2020) 'Update' <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/about/updates/1246>

The Royal Commission recommended a maximum payment of \$200,000 for those suffering the most severe abuse, a minimum of \$10,000 and an average of \$65,000.²⁵² The Scheme as implemented currently provides eligible survivors with redress in the form of a monetary payment of up to \$150,000, and the opportunity to access counselling and psychological services to address impacts of their experience to the value of \$5000. If they wish, survivors have the opportunity to receive a direct and personal acknowledgement of the abuse they have suffered from the responsible government or institution.

The Royal Commission reported that 14.3% of all survivors who attended a private session identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, with three quarters reporting that they were sexually abused in out-of-home care, largely in historical residential institutions (operating before 1990), such as a mission dormitory or children's home.²⁵³ The actual numbers are likely to be much higher. In 2019–20, 34% of applicants to the National Redress Scheme identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.²⁵⁴ A high proportion are likely to be Stolen Generations survivors.

Elderly Stolen Generations claimants – particularly those who resided in now-defunct institutions such as Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home in New South Wales – who are facing difficulties having their claims processed are at risk of missing out unless an alternative pathway for claims is established quickly.²⁵⁵ The National Redress Scheme has identified this as an urgent issue for immediate consideration, along with awareness and access to the Scheme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of specialised redress support services.²⁵⁶



252 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) *Final Report Recommendations* https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_recommendations.pdf p. 78

253 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) *A brief guide to the Final Report: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities* https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/a_brief_guide_to_the_final_report_-_aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_communities.pdf

254 National Redress Scheme (2020) *Strategic Success Measures* <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020-11/d20-1438397-national-redress-scheme-strategic-success-measures-report-oct-2020.pdf>

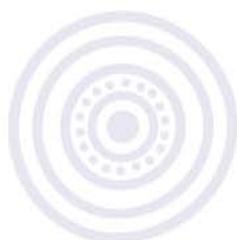
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The Healing Foundation and Link-Up services in larger states have been funded to provide redress support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with focused support for Stolen Generations survivors. Nonetheless, various shortcomings that relate specifically to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants, including Stolen Generations survivors, have been identified in submissions about implementing the National Redress Scheme²⁵⁷. These include a need for:

- Greater cultural safety and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors.
- A greater understanding of, and regard for, the nature and ongoing impacts of institutional child sexual abuse for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survivors, and of the cultural needs of those survivors.
- Greater representation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples among NRS staff, including among independent decision makers and case coordinators.
- More training aimed at ensuring better staff awareness of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture and of the causes, nature and impacts of institutional child sexual abuse for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survivors, as well as the impact of collective and intergenerational trauma.
- Better and more culturally safe and appropriate communication strategies that are trauma-aware and healing-informed.
- Better culturally tailored support and review processes.

Knowmore, the legal service supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants to the National Redress Scheme, has also expressed concern about the availability of appropriate support for survivors in regional, rural and remote communities, where it can be far more difficult to access free, high-quality, trauma-aware, healing-informed counselling, and mental health and psychology services for survivors of child sexual abuse.²⁵⁸ These problems disproportionately affect Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survivors, who already face difficulties in accessing culturally appropriate services and treatment options. They also identified a need for greater acknowledgement of, and funding for, cultural healing approaches for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander survivors, including healing circles, family work, community-focused healing and connection to culture.



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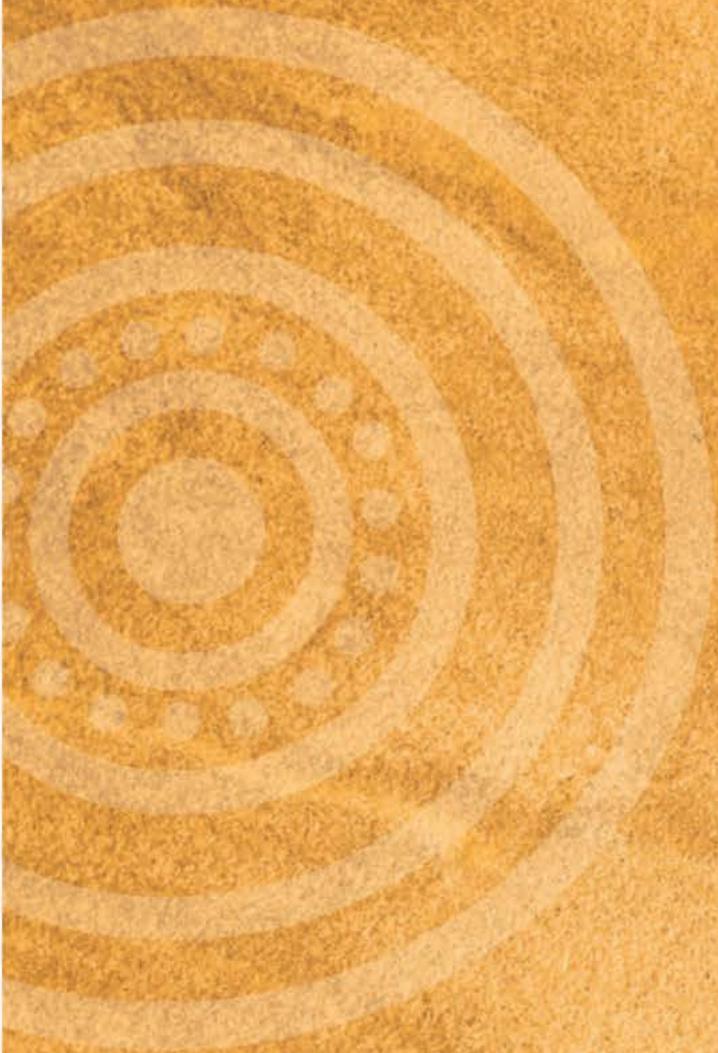
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Part two





The contemporary experiences and needs of Stolen Generations survivors

Qualitative analysis

Dr Ruth McCausland, Dr Anna Nettheim, Cassie Kang



Acknowledgements

This report on the contemporary experiences and needs of Stolen Generations survivors was initially commissioned by The Healing Foundation in 2017 to inform internal strategy and planning. The Healing Foundation then commissioned an update of that research in a report for publication with the intention of reaching a broader audience. We thank all those at The Healing Foundation who supported this work.

We acknowledge the extraordinary strength and resilience of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants and carers, and the ongoing and devastating legacy of forced removal. We hope you see the healing, justice and reparations you so deeply deserve.

Summary

In 2017, The Healing Foundation commissioned a qualitative analysis of publications documenting the contemporary experiences and needs of Stolen Generations survivors since 2007, two decades on from the release of the *Bringing them Home* report. The aim was to review and distil the extensive and rich data on the perspectives of Stolen Generations survivors into key themes and findings, complementing analysis of quantitative data being undertaken by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. At that time, the research was intended for an internal report to inform strategy and planning around The Healing Foundation's *Make Healing Happen* report.

This report contains the updated findings of that research, published to reach a broader audience. It is a summary of the qualitative evidence on the contemporary experiences and needs of Stolen Generations survivors that makes a compelling case for urgent action, given the devastating legacy of forced removal, and responses led by survivors themselves.

The following key themes were identified from the comprehensive review of documentation on the contemporary experiences of Stolen Generations survivors:

- **Trauma, grief and loss** resulting from forced removal and its impacts are deep and intergenerational.
- **Poor physical and mental health and wellbeing** are chronic and widespread amongst survivors.
- **Social and economic disadvantage** is a common legacy of forced removal for survivors and descendants, including in relation to housing, education, and employment.
- **Complexity of needs** relating to health, wellbeing, and socio-economic disadvantage for survivors are intersecting and compounding and rarely supported by policy or service providers.
- **Ageing** presents specific concerns and urgency around the need for improved support and systemic responses.
- **Intergenerational impacts on descendants and carers** who share the trauma, grief, and loss of survivors are significant and exacerbated by a lack of understanding and support.
- **Over-representation in child protection, youth justice, and adult criminal justice systems** is systemic, devastating, and a direct legacy of forced removals.

The more recent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on survivors, including isolation and the retriggering of trauma, are also outlined.

The report details the areas of outstanding and ongoing need for Stolen Generations survivors that were identified as part of the review:

- **Reparations** remain urgent and crucial, despite some state-based schemes. The areas of need identified below could be understood as components of a comprehensive reparations response.
- **Justice through the legal system** in the form of criminal and/or civil litigation is viewed as an important avenue for redress.
- **The National Redress Scheme** for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse has highlighted the importance of culturally safe support and healing responses for Stolen Generations survivors.
- **Acknowledgement, memorials, and education** are critically important to ensure broad understanding of the true history of the Stolen Generations and the ongoing impacts on families and communities.
- **Cultural competency of public sector and service organisations** remains lacking and requires greater accountability and resourcing.
- **Reunion** is an essential element of healing for survivors.
- **Counselling** that is culturally sensitive, trauma-aware, and healing-informed is critical for survivors and descendants but rarely accessible, in particular for those in regional and remote areas.
- **Healing** is a holistic concept and ongoing process that requires a range of responses, including programs focused on collective healing and resourcing of healing centres.
- **Culture and language renewal** as part of cultural reconnection for survivors is important, particularly programs supporting returning to country.
- A range of **trauma-aware, healing-informed services and initiatives** is needed, including:
 - » oral and family history services
 - » aged care services
 - » social and emotional wellbeing services
 - » health services
 - » intergenerational services
 - » records preservation, management, and access
 - » long-term secure funding
 - » improved data, monitoring, and evaluation.



Three core principles were critical to underpinning any response to the needs identified:

- Self-determination is viewed by Stolen Generations survivors as an essential part of the process of reparations and an effective policy and program response.
- Any initiatives to address the unmet and ongoing needs must be led by Stolen Generations survivors and centred on the priorities they have identified.
- There is an urgent need for action around reparations and other support for survivors, and to address the compounding intergenerational impacts of forced removal.

Further consultation and research is required for the following areas:

- The specific experiences and support needs of **Stolen Generations survivors with disability**, in particular mental and cognitive disability, including access to the NDIS.
- The **needs of carers and descendants** of Stolen Generations survivors.
- The experiences of **survivors not connected to Stolen Generations organisations**.



Aim of research

The aim of this research was to review, analyse and summarise the extensive written documentation of the contemporary experience and needs of Stolen Generations survivors in reports published since 2007, two decades on from the release of the *Bringing them Home* report.

1.0 Research method and process

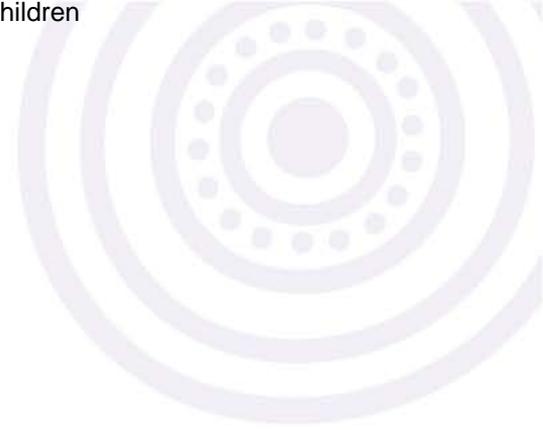
The qualitative research method engaged for this research paper involved the following elements:

- A detailed review of publications set out in the research brief, and identification of jurisdictional and content gaps.
- Sourcing and review of further relevant publications identified by the researchers and The Healing Foundation.
- Thematic analysis of all publications, including development of a coding frame with key categories, nodes, and sub-nodes relating to the contemporary experiences and met and unmet needs of Stolen Generations survivors.
- From the process of coding, the identification, synthesis, and summary of critical and emerging needs, themes, and outcomes for Stolen Generations survivors.
- An outline of the draft structure based on this process was reviewed by The Healing Foundation, and certain gaps in understanding and need in the data identified for further analysis and/or identification as an area requiring further qualitative interviewing of Stolen Generations survivors.
- A detailed draft prepared including all relevant quotes and analysis, which was then edited down for length. Key quotes representing shared and distinct experiences and needs were selected to provide a spread of jurisdictional, personal, and organisational perspectives.

In December 2020, additional research was undertaken to determine what had changed or progressed in relation to the previously identified needs that included:

- Sourcing and review of further relevant publications identified by the researchers and The Healing Foundation.
- Analysis of publications to determine whether anything had changed or progressed in relation to previously identified needs.
- Incorporation of relevant new material.





2.0 Findings

2.1 Contemporary experiences

The ongoing impact of past forced removal policies and practices was a primary theme in all the reports reviewed, with the failure to implement the *Bringing them Home* recommendations identified as compounding a range of negative outcomes.

Trauma, grief, and loss

In the reviewed reports, the trauma, grief, and loss experienced by Stolen Generations survivors, their families, and communities from forced removal and its impacts, were identified as significant issues that need to be addressed. The scale and depth of this trauma, grief, and loss was emphasised. For example, the Scorecard Report found that, while there is widespread recognition of the trauma, loss, and grief suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and in particular Stolen Generations survivors, there is still a lack of understanding of:

“The scope of the trauma, loss, and grief of Stolen Generations survivors, the impacts on all domains of wellbeing, and thus on all aspects of the health and wellbeing of the Stolen Generations;

The ways this trauma, loss, and grief affect the Stolen Generations’ families and communities;

The additional trauma, loss, and grief which occur as the Stolen Generations witness the intergenerational impacts of forced separations” (Rule and Rice 2015:33).

Stolen Generations survivors who made submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry expressed ‘*continuing feelings of grief, loss, and not belonging, which are lifelong consequences from being removed and disconnected from family, community, culture, and Country*’ (NSW PLC 2016:27). Submissions by Link-Up, The Healing Foundation, and other groups testified to the lasting impact of removal and the ongoing trauma experienced by individuals and communities, including lack of identity, feelings of not being wanted, and of not belonging.

Reports examined over the course of this research indicated that there is widespread concern among Stolen Generations survivors that the trauma resulting from their experience of forced removal is being transmitted to their extended families, along with all the negative outcomes associated with such trauma. For example, a large number of submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry spoke about the effects of intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and identified the need to break this cycle (including submissions by AbSec, Kingsford Legal Centre, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, the Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs the Hon Linda Burney MP, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, Link-Up NSW, Aboriginal Mental Health, Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat, as well as numerous others).

Addressing trauma was also identified as a pressing need in other jurisdictions. For example, Jim Morrison, co-convener of The Bringing Them Home Committee (WA), recently stated:

“As the representative body for Stolen Generations survivors and their families in WA, we ask in particular for a focus on the ongoing trauma being suffered by the Aboriginal community as a result of the past policies of removing Aboriginal children from their families” (Yokai n.d.).

Poor physical and mental health and wellbeing

A significant number of reports identified physical and mental health and wellbeing issues as being of concern to Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, who frequently suffer from such issues (see Rule and Rice 2015; NSW PLC 2016; Peeters et al. 2014; The Healing Foundation 2016, 2017). For example, the Marumali Program Review emphasised that:

“the consequences of forcible removal on health and wellbeing are far-reaching as a consequence of being disconnected from sources of Aboriginal identity and social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing” (Peeters et al. 2014:497).

Many submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry (for example, from NSW Health, Coota Girls Corporation, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation, Winangali Marumali, National Sorry Day Committee, and several submissions by individuals) gave evidence concerning the health impacts of forced removal on survivors and their descendants. These submissions indicated that: Aboriginal people have poorer health than non-Aboriginal people, in part due to intergenerational trauma as a result of removal, and that Stolen Generations survivors have worse health and higher rates of involvement in risky health behaviours such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and consuming illicit substances than Aboriginal people who weren't removed. Evidence was provided that health impacts such as chronic disease were even worse for those who had been in institutions (NSW PLC 2016).

Submissions to the South Australia Consultations were also concerned about the ongoing health issues experienced by Stolen Generations survivors. One submission stated:

“Stolen Generations survivors/members often suffer from complex and a multitude of diagnosed and undiagnosed disorders, stressors and or other physical or mental health related issues. There needs to be a focus on understanding this and addressing it” (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:7).

Aboriginal co-convener of the Bringing Them Home Committee (WA), Jim Morrison, expressed concern about the ‘additional gap in health and wellbeing outcomes between the Stolen Generations and their families and the broader Aboriginal community’. He cites research by Associate Professor Michael Dockery from Curtin University which identified that the legacy of the removal of Aboriginal children from their families ‘is still apparent in significantly worse health status and higher incidences of arrest and alcohol abuse’ (BTHWA 2015).

Social and economic disadvantage

Several of the reports reviewed document the social and economic disadvantage associated with forced removal and its ongoing impact, which have effectively rendered Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants one of the most disadvantaged groups in Australia. The Scorecard Report found that in general Stolen Generations survivors suffer greater disadvantage than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were not removed from their families and communities, as evidenced in numerous reports. This is sometimes described as the 'gap within the gap' (Rule and Rice 2015). A submission to the NSW Reparations Inquiry asserted that:

"Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their families and raised in non-Indigenous settings did not end up healthier, better educated or more likely to get jobs than those who were raised in Aboriginal communities. Rather, forced removal led to a cycle of poverty, ill-health, discrimination and incarceration.

As a result, the Stolen Generations are one of the most disadvantaged groups within the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population" (Coota Girls Corporation cited in NSW PLC 2016:131).

A submission from Link-Up NSW reviewed the lasting impact of past forced removal policies and practices and the subsequent dispersal and breakdown of families, including 'cycles of alcoholism, loss of identity and culture, over-representation in the judicial system, and the further disintegration of family units and community support' (NSW PLC 2016:27). It also pointed to the devastating socio-economic impact of unresolved intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Telethon Report also raised this issue. It cited the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey from 2005, which found that children of Stolen Generations survivors were more than twice as likely to be at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties, and that they had levels of both alcohol and other drug use that were approximately twice as high as children whose Aboriginal primary carer had not been forcibly separated from their natural family (Anderson et al. 2017).

The NSW Reparations Report acknowledged 'the clear disadvantage seen across social and economic outcomes, including education, employment, housing, health, and the criminal justice system, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly Stolen Generation survivors and their families'. It found that 'for Stolen Generation survivors and their families, this disadvantage is even more deep-rooted, heightened by the isolation and disconnection individuals have experienced from their community, Country, and culture' (NSW PLC 2016: 131).

The Scorecard Report found that the Council of Australian Governments reports on long-term targets for closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in terms of health, early childhood development, education, housing, economic outcomes and, more recently, school attendance, do not refer to the Stolen Generations and neither does the Closing the Gap statement made by the Prime Minister at the start of the parliamentary year. This invisibility in data and targets was viewed as compounding the disadvantage faced by Stolen Generations survivors (Rule and Rice 2015).

In February 2017, BTHWA reiterated its call for Commonwealth and State Governments to implement the recommendations of the *Bringing them Home* report. Co-convenor, Jim Morrison stated:

"The ongoing intergenerational trauma as a consequence of the practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families impacts on a vast majority of the Aboriginal community. Until this is acknowledged and programs put in place to tell the truth, provide justice and reparation and heal those impacted, the Close the Gap Report will continue to record negative trends" (Bringing Them Home WA 2017).

Housing

Housing was identified in multiple sources as a key area of concern in addressing the legacy of social and economic disadvantage experienced by Stolen Generations survivors. The NSW Reparations Report identified a need for priority access to affordable housing for Stolen Generations survivors, after finding that they 'may experience additional difficulties in accessing housing, particularly against the backdrop of an ever-increasing shortage of homes and high rates of homelessness for Aboriginal people' (NSW PLC 2016:139). Several submissions focused on this issue (for example from Gurehlgam Corporation Limited, Community Restorative Centre, Legal Aid NSW, Civil Liberties Australia, Dharriwaa Elders Group, and individuals), and some action has been taken, for example:

"The Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation has commenced providing housing support and assistance to Stolen Generation survivors with the help of the New South Wales Aboriginal Housing Office and Wentworth Housing. The corporation has successfully established a Community House in Western Sydney for the Kinchela men and will be looking at developing more houses across New South Wales and becoming a registered Aboriginal Community Housing provider" (NSW PLC 2016:139).

The NSW Reparations Report recommended consideration of a card to assist Stolen Generations survivors to access state services, such as housing and transport (NSW PLC 2016).

The Queensland Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce identified the provision of suitable housing as an important part of reparations, and submissions to the South Australia Consultations also singled out housing assistance as important, with one participant stating:

"A physical space that Stolen Generations survivors own and can go to be with their families would be a wonderful use of this fund ... don't forget these people have no place to call home most of them as they were removed from their homes!" (Queensland Report 2017:12).

Education

Education was an area identified in several reports as being impacted by past forced removal policies and practices in ways that have contributed to the ongoing socio-economic disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In addition, the trauma experienced by Stolen Generations survivors has affected their ability to access education later in life. Several South Australia Consultations submissions supported access to educational awards and scholarships, with one person stating:

"1st, 2nd, 3rd Stolen Generation members and their families should be supported around Educational awards & Scholarships to help in their quests to gain relevant education and professional development"
(South Australian Department of State Development 2017:11).

The NSW Reparations Inquiry received numerous submissions, which identified a need for measures to address educational disadvantage (Coota Girls Corporation, Civil Liberties Australia, Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre) and in response, the NSW Reparations Report recommended a Stolen Generations Scholarship Scheme, along with *'support for costs related to study materials, relocation, accommodation and transport under this scheme'* (NSW PLC 2016:135).

Employment

There were specific issues relating to employment identified as part of the legacy of socio-economic disadvantage faced by Stolen Generations survivors. The NSW Reparations Report pointed to evidence of *'a widening employment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, which is worse for Stolen Generation survivors and their descendants'* (NSW PLC 2016:135). It found that most of the Closing the Gap employment initiatives have been unsuccessful. However, there are other schemes, such as the NSW Government's Aboriginal Employment Strategy and OCHRE, which were reported as having had high success rates. The Report noted that, while there are many Aboriginal employment programs, Stolen Generations survivors may have problems accessing these due to Proof of Aboriginality requirements. The report committee recommended that the requirements and costs of these verifications be reviewed in consultation with Stolen Generations survivors to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

Complexity of needs

Another common experience for Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, that arose out of the qualitative data, was the complexity of their needs. The health and wellbeing and social and economic factors identified above were seen as intersecting and compounding, a factor rarely supported by policy or service providers:

"One issue that has been highlighted again and again is that the needs of Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities are complex, and that policy makers, program developers and service providers need to understand, and respond to, that complexity"
(Rule and Rice 2015:23).

The Scorecard Report stated that to improve people's wellbeing and mental health, it is necessary to focus on other community issues, such as the resources available to address poverty and social exclusion:

"Issues such as low rates of school attendance, endemic family violence, alcohol and drug misuse, suicide, the over-representation of Indigenous men and women in the criminal justice system and critical housing shortages need to be addressed along with individual empowerment approaches" (Rule and Rice 2015:25).

Ageing

The ageing of Stolen Generations survivors was raised as a significant concern in several of the reports reviewed (NSW PLC 2016; The Healing Foundation 2017; Rule and Rice 2015; Peeters et al. 2014). Key concerns were expressed for people living so long with the multiple and complex impacts of their removal but missing out on any reparations that might be made. As one individual submission to the NSW Reparations Inquiry said, *'members of the Stolen Generations are getting older and they are dying. It is truly unjust to expect them to continue to wait decades to have these terrible wrongs addressed'* (NSW PLC 2016:113).

Another concern was that elderly survivors may not have any family to support them and may be reluctant to go into a nursing home. The Chief Executive Officer of the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation pointed out *'that for those who were institutionalised "going into residential care is quite scary"'* (NSW PLC 2016:143).

Additionally, there was fear that people who are trying to find and reunite with family members would either not have the opportunity to do so, or that by the time they locate those people, they may have already passed away (see *Urgent need for action*).

Intergenerational impacts on descendants and carers

Several reports identified the significant intergenerational impact of trauma, grief, and loss, with many pointing out that although this issue was documented in the *Bringing them Home* report, it has not yet been adequately addressed (Rule and Rice 2015; NSW PLC 2016; The Healing Foundation 2016, Peeters et al. 2014; BTHWA Annual Reports 2011-2016).

The Scorecard Report stated that any reference to the Stolen Generations should acknowledge their families and communities, who also share the trauma, grief, and loss that resulted from the forced removal of children. It noted that there is still insufficient understanding and acknowledgement of the long-term impacts on communities. The NSW Reparations Report reiterated this lack of understanding and highlighted the lack of policies and specialist services dealing with this (NSW PLC 2016).

The NSW Reparations Report (NSW PLC 2016) also identified the impact of forced removal on families, given that many individuals grew up unable to learn any parenting skills. Individuals acknowledge that they have unknowingly passed on their own trauma to their families, and there is evidence that the families of former residents of Stolen Generations institutions have been traumatised themselves after learning of the suffering of their family members. Descendants of those who experienced forced removal also reported feeling disconnected from family and community. Intergenerational trauma may be linked to family violence, domestic violence, and substance abuse as evidenced in a submission from the Kinchela Boys Home:

"[The families'] trauma has been the result of trying to support the KBH Men and yet being the victims of the behaviours instilled during their time at KBH, including alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence and social and emotional disconnection" (NSW PLC 2016:34).

Family breakdowns have also been linked to the trauma of forced removal, and this in turn has perpetuated the intergenerational nature of that trauma. As one individual submitted:

"A lot of partners have not been able to stick around with their men because of all the traumatic issues and stuff that they have not dealt with. Then there are other strong women who have put themselves through the wringer, like my mum, to stay. They need to be heard as well" (NSW PLC 2016:35).

The Victoria OOHC Report stated that:

"The trauma and disadvantage associated with Stolen Generations impact on many Aboriginal adults today, to the extent that they are not able to care for children" (CCYP 2016:12).

The Marumali Program Review stressed the need to consider second and third generations in reparations, as descendants of Stolen Generations survivors are also victims who have suffered deprivation of 'community ties, cultural and language, and entitlements to traditional land' (Peeters et al. 2014:503). It notes that these people may live with traumatised parents who require support, and that descendants themselves may suffer added disadvantage, live in isolation from other Aboriginal peoples, come from families reluctant to engage with government agencies or Aboriginal services, and have trouble obtaining the requirements for Proof of Aboriginality. In addition, while statistics show that health and wellbeing outcomes are worse for Stolen Generations survivors, less is known about the impact of this on their descendants. The review states that:

"There is an urgent need to support the second generation in particular to begin the process of describing and documenting the transgenerational burden they have carried and the impact this had had on their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing" (Peeters et al. 2014:503).

Over-representation in the child protection system

The gross over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system was linked in the qualitative data to the impact of the forced removal of First Nations children in a number of ways. Most reports reviewed noted that despite numerous recommendations made in the *Bringing them Home* report relevant to current generations of children, very little progress has been made.

The grief, suffering, and loss felt by those who have experienced forced removal was repeatedly documented as impacting on their parenting skills and abilities, and as contributing to entrenched disadvantage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. For example, a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence by the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency:

“highlighted that parental stress related to poverty, mental illness, serious physical illness and drug and alcohol abuse is closely linked to risk factors for violent behaviour”, and that this needs to be understood in the context of past government policies of removal. Moreover, the report notes that removal of children from family violence may also mean their removal from ‘their kinship groups, community, culture and land. These are all factors that are integral to building a child’s resilience and healing trauma” (cited in CCYP 2016:68).

In addition, the Victoria OOHHC Report found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are removed from their families and communities – and who had parents and grandparents removed – may face the risk of abuse after their removal, as well as a range of other impacts. The Telethon Report concurred with these findings, stating:

“Due to the impacts of past policies and practices as well as the ongoing experiences of structural and institutionalised racism, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are disproportionately placed in out-of-home care and juvenile detention. The closed nature of these institutions means they carry higher situational risk for child sexual abuse, relative to other types of institutions where potential perpetrators do not routinely have unfettered access to vulnerable children” (Anderson et al. 2017:43).

The Victorian OOHHC Report identified issues with children who, for various reasons, were not identified as Aboriginal in a timely manner and thus did not receive appropriate support and protection either prior or subsequent to their removal. It was noted that:

“In cases where the child did not have a Certificate of Aboriginality this was often a result of the child’s parents and forebears being members of the Stolen Generations” (CCYP 2016, p. 82).

The Victorian OOHHC Report also identified ‘service gaps for family search services for vulnerable Aboriginal children subject to child protection involvement’ (CCYP 2016:107), given that Link-Up Victoria is not funded to provide this service for children.

Some stakeholder submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry refer to these children as ‘the new Stolen Generation’ (NSW PLC 2016, p.182) and others, while noting that it is a different situation, attest to the continued phenomenon of disconnection from families and communities that is likely to have the same impacts on the children concerned.

A BTHWA media release reported a lack of options for addressing this situation:

“Sadly, the Bringing Them Home Committee is increasingly being asked to assist in cases where young Aboriginal children are being removed from their families and due to the lack of funding for Aboriginal community controlled organisations and programs, they are increasingly being placed in the care of non-Aboriginal organisations or families” (BTHWA 2017).

Over-representation in the youth and adult criminal justice systems

Submissions to the reports reviewed re-stated the devastating legacy of Stolen Generations policies in the gross over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the youth justice and adult criminal justice systems. As stated in the NSW Reparations Report, the over-representation of First Nations peoples in the criminal justice system *'can be traced back to the cycle of disadvantage and poverty experienced in Aboriginal families, influenced largely by the effects of past forced removal policies and practices'* (NSW PLC 2016:145).

The NSW Reparations Report also noted that the Australian Government has failed to implement recommendations from the *Bringing them Home* report aimed at addressing this issue, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 31 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be incarcerated. The Report identifies clear links between incarceration rates and the *'intergenerational impact of lack of parenting and breakdown of community'* (NSW PLC 2016:15). The report committee expressed their concern about the ongoing high rates of incarceration, especially of children, mentioning that bail issues can be problematic for First Nations peoples, including for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders, who may be denied bail due to lack of suitable accommodation. The committee requested that the government review commitments made in response to *Bringing them Home*.

In relation to the recent focus on juvenile detention centres in the Northern Territory that led to the Royal Commission, BTHWA co-convener, Jim Morrison, also despaired at the failure to implement past recommendations, stating:

"There is no question that appalling mistreatment of juveniles in detention in the NT needs to be examined as a matter of urgency to ensure that it does not happen again, but governments around Australia need to start taking action to reduce the massive over representation of Aboriginal people in juvenile detention centres in prison around this country.

Until the root causes of this tragic situation are dealt with and programs, such as the healing initiatives being pursued by BTHWA, are put in place to deal with them, we will continue to see the tragedies so frighteningly illustrated on Four Corners last night and our First Nation people will continue to fall into a tragic spiral of despair" (BTHWA 2016).

COVID-19

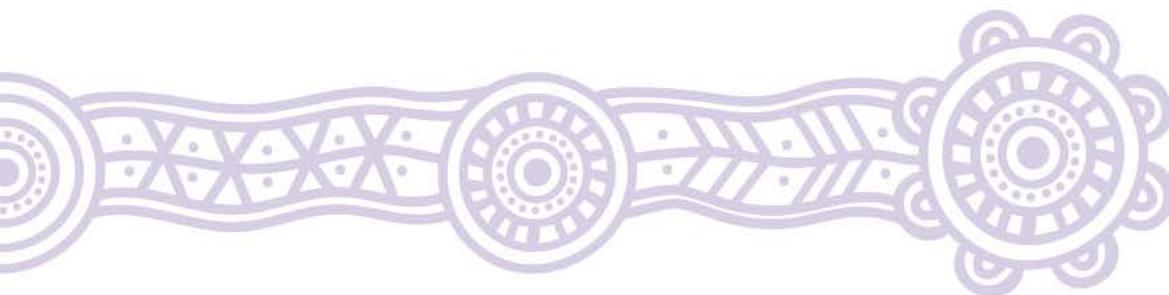
The Healing Foundation has recently documented the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions on gathering and movement have had a significant impact on elderly survivors, many of whom are in their 80s and 90s and struggling with isolation and loneliness as a result of separation from family, friends, and services (The Healing Foundation 2020b). As Uncle Michael Welsh has stated:

"This feels like being back in Kinchela, except it's worse this time, without our brothers" (quoted in The Healing Foundation 2020a).

In its COVID-19 Resilience Project report, The Healing Foundation set out a number of emerging issues identified by Stolen Generations survivors including: the retriggering of trauma, restrictions impacting attendance at funerals and the ability to carry out sorry business, challenges around use of technology and connectivity, issues around accessing practical support and the provision of

funding for financial support, and the dangers of vulnerable groups becoming even more disadvantaged (The Healing Foundation 2020c). In her submission on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme, Fiona Cornforth (formerly Petersen), CEO of The Healing Foundation, noted that COVID-19 had created further problems for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples trying to access psychological support in rural and remote regions, both through reducing the ability for collective and community based healing, and by re-traumatising people as *'it reminds our survivors of a time when they weren't in control of their lives and were subject to rules and restrictions'* (COA 2020:10).

In order to provide additional support to Stolen Generations survivors and descendants during 2020, The Healing Foundation, in partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), provided small grants to enable 18 Stolen Generations organisations across Australia to deliver COVID-19 response projects. These have included initiatives such as developing guided meditations in Pitjantjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra local languages, delivering care packs and food hampers for survivors and families, and the creation of virtual gathering spaces for survivors to come together. While it is still too early to determine to what degree well-documented mental health impacts associated with COVID-19 have affected Stolen Generations survivors compared with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, research into this is being undertaken by The Healing Foundation to enable appropriate support in the future. In consultation with Stolen Generations organisations and survivors, The Healing Foundation will also develop resources to support the long-term response to the impacts of COVID-19 (The Healing Foundation 2020c).



2.2 Ongoing and unmet needs

Reparations

The need for reparations for Stolen Generations survivors was identified as urgent and crucial by all the reports reviewed that discussed the issue. It was noted by reports from every jurisdiction, that while monetary compensation was an important component of reparations, it was not the only type of reparations sought by individual survivors or Stolen Generations organisations. For example, in evidence given to the South Australia Consultations, it was emphasised that:

“Parents of Stolen Generations should receive reparation. Children/families of Stolen Generations should receive reparation”
(South Australian Department of State Development 2017:13).

Another submission proposed:

“Compensation could also be in the form of a package of support – counselling, assistance to return home, parenting programs and educational support” (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:13).

Submissions to the Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation also stated that:

“Seeking Reparations for the loss, hurt, harm to all is one way of healing ourselves” (NTSGAC 2015:3).

The NTSGAC Submission stated that:

“A National Scheme of Redress is our preferred option given the NT Government’s appalling history in ensuring just compensation for Aboriginal people and we give the examples of Aboriginal people’s rights under the Land Rights (NT) Act and Native Title Act. They (NT) have fought long and hard, at a great cost in the courts, denying Aboriginal people of these rights” (NTSGAC 2015:6).

While the Commonwealth Government responded to the recommendations from the *Bringing them Home* report with some program funding for assistance for people affected by forced removal policies and practices, this did not include monetary compensation, which up until 2016 had only been provided in South Australia and Tasmania.

A range of potential benefits were identified as stemming from a formal process of assessing claims for compensation by Stolen Generations survivors. After noting that all applications, even unsuccessful ones, were genuine, the Tasmanian Assessor of Applications for Financial Compensation stated:

“There were many added benefits for applicants, successful or not, flowing from the operation of the Act and the assessment process. They had the opportunity to tell their story. They had access to files and learned about their families and heritage. Some were able to make contact for the first time with siblings or parents. Counselling was available for those who needed that help” (Office of the Stolen Generations Assessor 2008:18).



The NSW Reparations Report echoed the *Bringing them Home* recommendations in identifying monetary compensation as a key component of reparation, and an important form of recognition and step towards healing. In 2017, the NSW Government implemented the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme and Funeral Fund, which provided some monetary compensation to eligible people who were removed from their families by the Aboriginal Board prior to 1969. However, by excluding the large number of Aboriginal people who were removed from their families under other policies and practices this has reportedly created further division and trauma for individuals and communities (Aboriginal Affairs NSW July 2018; Aldrich 04 September 2020).

In 2020, Victoria announced it would establish its own Stolen Generations Redress Scheme (The Guardian, 18 March 2020) and Shine Lawyers began investigating a class action for compensation for survivors from the Northern Territory (Shine Lawyers NT 2020). Linda Burney, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians, emphasised the urgent need for redress, stating '*The reality is that many of those directly affected are getting old, getting dementia, and we're losing them*' (Gooley 2020).

All the needs identified throughout this section could constitute components of a comprehensive reparations response.

Stolen wages

State processes for providing reparations for stolen wages are inextricably linked with outstanding reparations for Stolen Generations survivors in certain parts of Australia. The issue of stolen wages arose in reports pertaining to three specific jurisdictions: Queensland, Western Australia, and New South Wales. The research indicated that state governments had addressed the question of reparations for stolen wages in a variety of ways.

In Queensland, the state government ran an Indigenous Wages and Savings Reparations Scheme from 2002 to 2010. Many claimants were found ineligible for payment under this scheme, primarily due to a lack of records to verify their claims. In December 2015, a new reparations scheme was launched, and the Queensland Government appointed the Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce to recommend how the \$21 million in funding should be distributed. The taskforce made a series of recommendations encompassing a monetary payment, the establishment of a reparations review panel to consider the claims of previous applicants who were found ineligible and to take evidence outside the traditional evidentiary basis, symbolic acts of reconciliation to publicly acknowledge the use of stolen wages and savings to fund Queensland's infrastructure, and finally, the divestment of government housing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The taskforce also recommended the scheme be monitored and feedback from individuals and communities sought to identify any recurring issues that might require a solution. All but one of the recommendations were accepted by the Queensland Government.

In May 2004, NSW Premier Bob Carr announced the formation of a panel to liaise with the Aboriginal community and report back to government on the design of a scheme to repay money to First Nations peoples who had wages or other payments placed into trust funds. The panel submitted its report to government in October 2004. In December, the NSW Government announced it had accepted the report and all of its recommendations and would establish an Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme to repay wages or other money paid into trust funds between 1900 and 1968 that were never repaid. The scheme operated until 2010. Unlike the Queensland model, which involved an ex-gratia payment and required claimants to waive any further claims, the NSW scheme repaid the full amount of money that was owed from the trust funds, calculated at its current value, which included both interest and inflation. Repayments were not capped. The scheme also made repayments

to the descendants of deceased Aboriginal peoples whose money was placed into trust funds and never repaid. However, submissions to the NSW Reparations Report indicated that not all eligible people were aware of the scheme, and that some were unable to claim due to location or health reasons. Others had such mistrust of the government that they were unwilling to access the scheme and thus missed out (NSW PLC 2016). In the NSW Government (2016) response to the Unfinished Business Report, the recommendation to reopen this scheme was not accepted.

In September 2016, 80-year-old Hans Pearson launched a stolen wages class action in the Federal Court of Australia against the Queensland Government (*Pearson v State of Queensland*). It concerned payment for work done from 1939 to 1972 by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose wages were often withheld by the state government and deposited into trust funds inaccessible to Indigenous people. It represented about 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, of whom about 60 per cent were already deceased. The class action was settled in July 2019 with a payout of \$190 million. The scheme was further amended to allow a living spouse or child to claim on behalf of registered claimants who had passed away (Grant Thornton 2020). One claimant to the class action talked about working on a station from the age of 15:

“We worked out there 7 [sic] days a week. I used to do the housework but I also done work in the kitchen with the cook... and I really don't think we were getting any money” (Grant Thornton 2020).

In May 2007, the Western Australian Government approved the establishment of a Stolen Wages Taskforce to identify the scope of the issue and suggest policy options. The Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce (2008) Report recommended a variety of initiatives including a monetary Common Experience Payment, the establishment of a Community Experience Fund to encourage economic development, official acts of recognition such as a ministerial statement, a formal apology and public acknowledgement of the substantial contribution Aboriginal people have made to the state, as well as oral and family history programs, and community healing and therapeutic services. In March 2012, the Western Australian Government announced that an ex-gratia payment of \$2,000 would be made to Aboriginal people who were born before 1958, and who from the age of 14 years or older were resident on a Government Native Welfare Settlement and experienced direct control over or withholding of their income. The scheme ran from March to November 2012. Many submissions to the Western Australia Taskforce spoke about the loss of language and culture as a result of such control. Other people expressed their need to find out what happened to the money in their trust accounts and highlighted the difficulties they faced in accessing information. At one group meeting it was stated:

“People would really like access to the records. Truth is really important” (Western Australia Taskforce 2008:77).

In 2020, a class action was filed on behalf of Aboriginal peoples who worked in Western Australia and whose wages were unjustly withheld or not paid as a result of wage control legislation in effect from the late 1800s until the 1970s (Collard 2020).

Justice through the legal system

One of the themes identified through analysis of the source materials was the importance of justice, in the form of criminal and/or civil litigation, for Stolen Generations survivors and their families. This was seen as a significant element of redress in the broader reparations process, epitomised in this quote from the Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (NTSGAC 2015) Submission:

“That justice in the form of appropriate punishment delivered through the criminal justice system to individuals and/or institutions deemed culpable for crimes committed against victims by the perpetrators is a compensatory measure that comes within the meaning and objective of providing redress to victims. For that to happen the criminal justice system continues to be the only means of achieving that.”

The NTSGAC (2015) Submission also outlined the history of unsuccessful civil litigation in the cases of *Kruger v Commonwealth* and *Cubillo/Gunner v Commonwealth*, and the disincentive effects of the litigation process on Stolen Generations survivors, particularly the possibility of re-traumatisation.

“The likely or possible re-traumatisation and the publicity involved in seeking redress through civil litigation has been the reason for most witnesses, assessed by legal teams as having a very good chance of success, to not pursue litigation. The causation and damage assessment processes, particularly if they involve cross-examination and facing their perpetrators, is not always the way to go. Some witnesses may be quite willing to pursue redress through litigation, most are not.”

In light of these issues, the NTSGAC recommended changes to the civil litigation process to ameliorate its more confronting aspects for already traumatised victims, including mediation and other early dispute resolution processes. The NTSGAC also suggested that Stolen Generations survivors' claims for legal redress may be more appropriately dealt with in less formal contexts such as victims' compensation schemes, which would not involve public airing of information or cross-examination of victims.

Lack of written records and difficulty in accessing records continue to be obstacles to victims seeking redress through civil litigation. The Victorian Taskforce Report examined the functioning of the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce – an organisation founded in response to the *Bringing them Home* recommendations that seeks to bring together Indigenous organisations, government departments, specialist records agencies and non-government groups – to advise on protecting and maintaining files and records relating to Stolen Generations policies and survivors. The Victorian Taskforce Report stated:

“Provision of an improved record management framework within government is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of effective community-based organisations and services that can support people to rediscover their history” (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2009:22).

The Victorian Taskforce Report points to a South Australian model in which Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia, State Records of South Australia and other organisations have reached five memoranda of understanding that put in place practices such as waiving of photocopying fees, production of finding guides and training of Link-Up staff to more effectively assist clients in records tracing.

The NTSGAC Submission indicated that another barrier to Stolen Generations survivors pursuing civil action is the imposition of time limits on statutory compensation schemes. The level of trauma experienced by survivors is such that often victims are not able to address pursuing compensation until many years after the event. In recognition of this, the NTSGAC recommended that:

“Time limits should not apply for statutory compensation schemes for victims of child sexual abuse for compensation to be awarded. There should be no time limitation when reporting sexual abuse or in application for redress to crime compensation schemes. We know of many who still have yet to report after 40 years of holding in the trauma—every individual has to be ready to speak up and report when they know it is safe to do so” (2015).

The necessity of waiving rights to access monetary compensation was a particularly contentious issue for many Stolen Generations survivors. The Queensland Report found that applicants to Queensland’s Reparations Scheme—Stolen Wages and Savings were told they would be required to sign a deed-of-agreement in order to access payments. The report stated:

“Government has promoted the payment of reparations as a gesture of reconciliation. The taskforce believes any gesture of reconciliation is hollow and risks losing meaning in having this requirement; which, if not completed, prevents people from accepting the gesture in good faith. Instead, it adds insult to injury” (Queensland Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce 2016:8).

Stolen Generations survivors forcibly removed from their families necessarily experienced the loss of connection to their communities and traditional lands. As part of its submission, the NTSGAC recommended changes to the Native Title legislation and the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 to recognise rights to land for those removed from their families.

The need for changes to native title and land rights regimes to better recognise Stolen Generations survivors and descendants was raised in some reports. There was acknowledgement in the NSW Reparations Report that survivors were disadvantaged in terms of land rights, and NSW Legal Aid advocated ‘changes to Native Title legislation to recognise the rights of land for Aboriginal people removed from their families,’ as one move which could increase the economic involvement of survivors and their descendants (NSW PLC 2016:139). The Queensland Report recommended the ‘handover of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land held in trust by the State government [of Queensland],’ and proposed ‘a new approach to the settlement of Native Title’ (Queensland Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce 2016:24).

Available research indicates that stakeholders in most jurisdictions felt that reparations should take the form of a package of measures, including but not limited to monetary compensation, acknowledgement and apology, community education and healing programs.

Another area identified in terms of justice via legal processes is that of historical sexual assault and abuse. The NTSGAC (2015) Submission recommended changes to statutory compensation schemes to recognise that injury is inherent in sexual assault and sexual abuse.

“Statutory victims of crime compensation schemes should have, as an option, a base level claim that does not have a separate requirement that an injury be made out before.”

It further recommended:

"We suggest there be a nationally consistent scheme across Australia and that a mechanism be established to frame compensation amounts based on criteria that recognise the seriousness of the damage caused by child sexual assault that is independent of the vagaries of political and budget priority influences and subject to indexation" (2015).

National Redress Scheme

In 2018, The National Redress Scheme (NRS) for people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse was established in response to recommendations by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Under the scheme, eligible survivors of institutional child sexual abuse can seek a range of redress options including monetary payments of up to \$150,000, access to counselling services, and a direct personal response – such as an apology – from the institutions responsible (National Redress Scheme n.d.). While 14.3 per cent of survivors who attended a private session identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, it is recognised that the true numbers are likely to be much higher, with many more survivors not coming forward, due to barriers such as *'fear, shame, a lack of cultural safety, language barriers, and/or systemic racism and discrimination'* (Knowmore 2020; National Redress Scheme n.d.).

Submissions on the implementation of the NRS identified various shortcomings relating specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, including Stolen Generations survivors, which include a need for greater cultural safety and support for these survivors, and a greater representation of First Nations peoples among the NRS staff who deal with them (e.g. see The Healing Foundation 2020; AH&MRC 2020; Knowmore 2020). The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW recommended that in recognition of *'the current rates of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care, and the associated impacts on families and communities, there be advocacy for the scheme to extend beyond historical survivors to acknowledge contemporary and future abuse'*. Various submissions also identified a need for compensation *'for other forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, emotional, and cultural'* (AH&MRC 2020:1; and see CLAN 2020).

Knowmore, an independent legal service providing advice to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse, expressed concern about the availability of appropriate support in regional, rural, and remote communities that are often compounded by issues concerning cost and distance which disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors. They also identified the need for greater acknowledgement of, and funding for, cultural healing approaches, including healing circles, family work, community-focused healing, and connection to culture (Knowmore 2020). The urgency of providing redress for Stolen Generations survivors was emphasised, with delays to the processing of some claims meaning there was a risk of elderly claimants missing out (Knowmore 2020).

Acknowledgement, memorials, and education

The need for acknowledgement of past wrongdoing and its ongoing impact on people's lives was a recurrent theme in the reports examined. Some Stolen Generations survivors favoured public acknowledgement, both at a parliamentary level and in terms of ongoing recognition. There were concerns that Sorry Day was being forgotten. In particular, those who made submissions to the Queensland and Western Australian stolen wages taskforces felt that there should be public





recognition of their contributions to the economic development of these states. The NSW Reparations Report received submissions that indicated some people also required individual apologies (NSW PLC 2016).

In response to the call for public acknowledgement, the NSW Reparations Report recommended that the NSW Government, on the 20th year anniversary of the tabling of the *Bringing them Home* report, acknowledge the wrongdoing of past government policies and practices, and the ongoing commitment to provide reparations to Stolen Generations survivors. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Sarah Mitchell, made a statement on the anniversary in May 2017. As part of the NSW Reparations Scheme, the NSW Government also provided a written apology to each Stolen Generations survivor who received a payment, in recognition of the harm and trauma they experienced as a result of past government policies (Aboriginal Affairs NSW n.d.).

The Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce recommended a range of other policy initiatives to *'recognise the common experiences of many generations of Aboriginal people and to reconcile the past practices of Government control'*, including constitutional recognition and a policy of 'Welcome to Country' for all events of public significance (2008:79).

Memorials

Many submissions to the various consultation processes concerned the importance of memorials, both public and private. Across jurisdictions the importance of memorials to Stolen Generations survivors was a consistent theme. Memorials serve a variety of purposes, including acknowledgement and healing. As one submission to the South Australia Consultations stated:

"Aboriginal people feel a deep connection to place. Acknowledgement of the significance of places and events, whether the memories are sad or happy, is important" (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:10).

Some focused on the preservation of records and photos documenting the experiences of Stolen Generations survivors. Others stressed the importance of memorials in educating the broader Australian community.

"I think that the government should fund a memorial/plaque that acknowledges that this did happen, their role within that and the steps they've taken to apologise and the reparation. I believe this should be placed in Parliament House or near Parliament House, and be spoken of at all Parliament House tours" (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:10).

Public memorials were widely supported. Both the Queensland Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce (2016) and the Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce (2008) called for memorials to promote community recognition of the events of the past. The NSW Reparations Report noted that a number of stakeholders identified a need for permanent memorials and commemorative sites to be established and funded *'to acknowledge and commemorate members of the Stolen Generations'* (NSW PLC 2016:71). These would also be important places for acknowledging the past, contribute to individual and collective healing, and be beneficial for the education of both First Nations and non-Indigenous peoples on the history of the Stolen Generations. Some memorials of this nature have already been established in NSW, e.g. the Stolen Generations memorial at the Australian Botanic Garden in

Mount Annan, the memorial garden on the site of the former Bomaderry Children's Home, and two memorials on the site of the former Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls. Others are reportedly underway.

Stolen Generations survivors who grew up in institutions have also expressed a desire for memorials at these locations. Survivors from Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home, the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home and the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls would like the horrific suffering and abuse they experienced at these institutions to be acknowledged through the establishment of 'Keeping Places' on the sites. These are considered valuable for both healing and educational purposes (NSW PLC 2016).

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of Stolen Generations memorials being established around Australia. In 2018, the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation office was opened at Central Station, Sydney (ORIC), a plaque and memorial were established at Kempsey Railway Station in northern NSW (Monument Australia n.d.), and a Stolen Generations plaque was installed on Platform 1 at Sydney's Central Station, all in recognition of the large numbers of Stolen Generations children who passed through these places. Other similar plaques are being planned for train stations across the state (Aboriginal Affairs NSW 3 December 2018).

More recently, the Australian Government has committed to establishing a National Memorial in Canberra for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, inclusive of all those who have been affected by institutional child sexual abuse including the Stolen Generations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (National Redress Scheme n.d.; DSS 2020).

The research indicated widespread support for locating and maintaining burial sites and headstones. The Queensland Stolen Wages Reparations Taskforce recommended:

"The upgrading, provenancing and appropriate care of all burial places to ensure each person's gravesite is respectfully acknowledged and signposted" (2016:24).

The Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce commented on:

"the persistent desire to mark and maintain gravestones both in town cemeteries and the 'lonely graves' scattered around the countryside, the urgency of which was matched by the sense of ongoing loss of knowledge of the location of graves" (2008:78).

Another view was that memorials should be located in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to acknowledge their loss and remember the children taken.

"The funding should not be about personal therapeutic services as there is money and support already for that. It should be about Community projects that tell the truth as to what happened in the community. It should have links to the oral history projects. There should be monuments and commemorative sites in the community. It should list all the names of the children taken. Set in stone. Never to be forgotten. Never to be lost!" (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:7).

Submissions to the NSW Reparations Report also raised the concern by former residents of NSW institutions that other residents of these homes had 'disappeared' and that some have been buried on the sites. The report recommended that the sites be investigated and searched to locate the remains of any Aboriginal children in order that they be identified, if possible, and given proper funerals (NSW PLC

2016). In their response to this report, the NSW Government pledged to undertake this work (Aboriginal Affairs NSW).

In 2017, a new memorial commemorating 20 years since the release of the *Bringing them Home* report was opened at the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park (ESMP), which contains more burials of Stolen Generations children than any other cemetery in Sydney. Local La Perouse Elders were instrumental in the design of the memorial, which was dedicated to the memory of Aboriginal children taken away from their parents and the parents who were buried at ESMP before their children were able to return home. Soil from the location of the Bomaderry Children's Home, Kinchela Boys Home and the Cootamundra Girls Home was sprinkled in the gardens surrounding the memorial (ESMP n.d.).

Education

The necessity for mainstream educational curriculum to include the history of forced removal as well as the ongoing impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community was identified in multiple reports. It was noted that while the national curriculum now includes some information on the Stolen Generations, further work was needed. For example, the NSW Reparations Report stated that *'several inquiry participants felt that the state's school curricula inadequately covers the history of past forced removal policies and practices, and suggested that more needs to be done to avoid a repetition of the past'* (NSW PLC 2016:173). It recommended that the NSW Government *'ensure that the history of past forced removal policies and practices and its continuing impacts on Aboriginal people are compulsory modules in primary and secondary school curricula, and encourage private providers to do the same'* (NSW PLC 2016:178).

The need for broader community education was also raised in multiple reports. A submission to the South Australia Consultations stated that:

"The members or survivors of Stolen Generations acts [sic] are largely marginalised and silent members in the broader Aboriginal communities they come from or live within ... There is a vast sense of "not belonging" within the Stolen Generations ... there needs to be Community Education around these and other related issues"
(South Australian Department of State Development 2017:9).

There continue to be issues around the inconsistent approach to teaching the history of the Stolen Generations in schools, resulting from insufficient teacher training and an overcrowded syllabus where schools and teachers can elect which aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history to focus on (Chrysanthos 2020). To address these issues, The Healing Foundation has worked closely with survivors to develop a Stolen Generations Resource Kit for Teachers and Students to help teachers integrate Stolen Generations history into their classrooms (The Healing Foundation 2019a).

Other organisations and individuals are also taking the matter of education about the Stolen Generations into their own hands. In early 2020, Kinchela Boys Home survivors in NSW, with support of the NSW Department of Education and other government agencies, created a mobile Stolen Generations education centre in an old bus and began to tour it around the state to mark 50-years since the closure of the infamous home and to expand on the education about Stolen Generations taught in schools. Survivor Richard Campbell says that truth telling of this nature is *'very important for our kids because they suffer from our trauma through intergenerational trauma and it's still affecting our kids at the moment'*. The project is also aimed at reconnecting survivors with the communities they were stolen from (Wellauer 2020).

In 2020, musician and Stolen Generations survivor, Archie Roach, recorded the stories of Aboriginal Elders and created a set of Stolen Generations resources for schools utilising song, books and stories (ABC Education 2020; NITV 2020).

Cultural competency of public sector and service organisations

The need for greater cultural competency of public sector and service organisations was an issue identified in several reports. After receiving a number of submissions to the inquiry raising this matter (including by the National Sorry Day Committee, a Senior Transitional Officer at the Community Restorative Centre, and an Aboriginal Mental Health Program Worker from the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service), the NSW Reparations Report identified that there was a need for a more comprehensive approach than just the requirement to attend a training course:

“Inquiry participants raised the need for greater emphasis on education and awareness about the history and impacts of past forced removal policies and practices, and the need for genuine cultural awareness and competency – particularly in regard to the impacts experienced by members of the Stolen Generations and their descendants – for public sector staff providing services to Aboriginal people” (NSW PLC 2016:171).

There were also concerns about a lack of cultural sensitivity and understanding exercised by staff of the NSW Department of Family and Community Services in regard to child protection matters (2016). Women’s Legal Services said it had seen examples of poor cultural competence and understanding among family and community services staff, and Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning reported discrimination and paternalism in child protection departments (2016). The Scorecard Report also found that in relation to health care training packages and their Stolen Generations content, there is no guarantee that training is delivered or linked to a core competency (Rice and Rule 2015).

What is needed was articulated by one participant in the South Australia Consultations:

“When a program is designed, it is important that a well-established, long-standing Aboriginal organisation with good governance and management systems is involved in the implementation of the programs. Members of the Stolen Generation need to have confidence in the Aboriginal organisation helping them with this very important role. The Aboriginal organisation also needs to have a good track record and the confidence of the Aboriginal community to achieve the best outcomes” (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:13).

The 2019 OCHRE Review Report by the NSW Ombudsman recommended ongoing support aimed at increasing the capacity of the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to develop and deliver services to Aboriginal people, noting that this in itself is a form of healing through supporting greater self-determination and increasing employment opportunities for First Nations peoples. It identified the need for ‘growing a well-qualified Aboriginal workforce across both the government and non-government service sector’, an area which requires further development. The report emphasised the need for greater cultural competence among non-Indigenous staff working with vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across a wide range of sectors, and for government agencies to formulate strategic plans to implement this (NSW Ombudsman 2019:51).

In 2020, submissions on the Implementation of the NRS also identified problems with the delivery of services to Indigenous peoples. For example, The Healing

Foundation reported that the lack of appropriate trauma-aware, healing-informed training in service delivery among staff at official organisations such as Centrelink was causing Stolen Generations survivors to experience further trauma and distress as a result of the discrimination and alienation they faced in such agencies (The Healing Foundation 2020).

Reunion

Tracing and reuniting with family are identified in multiple reports as essential elements of healing for Stolen Generations survivors, as well as important in helping them to establish identity and connections to culture and country. However, the reports acknowledged that this can be a difficult process with uncertain outcomes.

Submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry made it clear that additional support is required for those individuals who are unable to locate family, discover that the family they are looking for have passed away, are rejected by family or community, or experience other factors that make reunions difficult such as language or cultural differences. For example, Stolen Generations survivor Auntie Isabel Reid spoke of women who had been in the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls who were unable to access the information they needed to locate their families, were only able to have graveside reunions, or were not accepted by their communities.

In recognition of the fact that some people were unable to reunite with family or reconnect with country due to inadequate records, and that others had reunions that were not all they had hoped for, Link-Up SA developed and piloted a healing program for Stolen Generations survivors in and around Adelaide called *Reunion to Self*. This included a series of six day trips where people:

“visited important cultural sites and participated in yarning circles around themes of colonisation and survival, grief and loss, the healing journey, spiritual healing and cultural connections” (The Healing Foundation 2016:12).

In the reports that covered reunions, inadequate resources were identified as a barrier. The Scorecard Report found that family tracing and reunion services are not funded in all regional centres. Several stakeholders who made submissions to the NSW Reparations Report identified a need for continued investment in reunion services, including the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (2015). Link-Up NSW submitted that they were unable to meet the present demand for reunions and associated counselling, with current funding only sufficient for 36 reunions a year, and only up to three months of post-reunion counselling.

Financial support for the Stolen Generations organisations provided as part of the NSW Reparations Scheme was aimed, amongst other things, at increasing capacity for these organisations to facilitate reunions for survivors. In addition, the Stolen Generations healing fund was aimed at supporting priority healing initiatives including survivor reunions (Aboriginal Affairs NSW July 2018). It is unclear to what degree this has led to an increase in reunions, and it is an area that is very likely to have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions.



Counselling

Of significant concern to many individuals and organisations was the lack of culturally appropriate counselling services, and in particular, services designed specifically to meet the needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their families. A number of submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry emphasised that *'more funding for skilled, supported, and culturally appropriate counselling services for Stolen Generation survivors and their families is needed'* (NSW PLC 2016:51). The NTSGAC (2015) Submission likewise found that mainstream counselling services lacked awareness of Indigenous issues and were under-utilised as a result:

"NTSGAC endorses continued counselling services for victims and their families. Our preference, given many mainstream counselling services are not being utilised to the extent it should be by Aboriginal users, that the Royal Commission also recommends therapeutic services that are more culturally appropriate for our client group."

Regional areas in particular were identified as having service delivery gaps that need addressing. The NSW Reparations Report found these areas require specifically trained workers using culturally appropriate methods (NSW PLC 2016). Similarly, the Marumali Program review stressed the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counsellors to assist both people undergoing healing in relation to their trauma and non-Indigenous mental health practitioners involved in this healing (Peeters et al. 2014). Programs identified as meeting the needs of the community were the Marumali healing program, services provided by Rekindling the Spirit and the Seasons for Healing program run by Good Grief.

In Victoria, the Bringing Them Home program was funded through the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) who distributed funds to First Nations organisations, which were required to develop their own approach to dealing with Stolen Generations issues. However, there were a number of problems identified with this approach, including that OATSIH failed to provide minimum program standards or guidelines for services, and no central coordination, monitoring or support for workers or organisations. This put the onus on community organisations and workers to design, implement and manage complex services. In addition, there was a lack of documentation and evaluation of the program, and a lack of coordination between the Bringing Them Home program and Link-Up, leading to inconsistent service delivery across the state.

The 2019 OCHRE Review Report identified that more counsellors were needed in connected communities schools to meet the needs of young people, particularly adolescents, living in highly disadvantaged communities, many of who have complex needs often resulting from high levels of trauma including intergenerational trauma, and mental health issues. The OCHRE Report stresses that *'ensuring all Connected Communities schools have access to a school counsellor or psychologist is a critical priority given their level of need for such expertise'* (NSW Ombudsman 2019:213–214).

In 2020, submissions on the Implementation of the NRS continued to raise concerns that there are insufficient culturally appropriate and trauma-aware and healing-informed counselling services, including for financial counselling, to meet the needs of Stolen Generations survivors, particularly in rural, regional, and remote areas (see The Healing Foundation 2020; *National Redress Scheme* above and *Healing* below).

Healing

Healing and the forms it should take to best address the needs of Stolen Generations survivors was an issue that was raised perhaps more than any other across the analysis that was undertaken. Healing was recognised as an ongoing process that needed to be addressed in a variety of ways, including through individual counselling, intergenerational healing strategies, collective healing approaches such as healing camps and on-country programs, and in healing centres accessible to Stolen Generations survivors in every jurisdiction.

The large number of submissions to the NSW Reparations Report on the importance and urgency of healing for Stolen Generations survivors illustrates this (for example from the Hon. Linda Burney MP, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, the Australian Human Rights Commission, The Healing Foundation, Clarence Valley Aboriginal Healing Centre, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service, Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project, and Rekindling the Spirit). Many of these submissions specifically identified a need for more work to be done on healing programs for survivors. The Scorecard Report submission noted that while some progress had been made towards meeting the *Bringing them Home* recommendations, some of this work had been *'undermined through the withdrawal of essential funding support in a range of program areas'* (NSW PLC 2016:43).

The Western Australian Bringing Them Home Committee (BTHWA) and Yokai: Healing Our Spirit are also concerned with healing initiatives for Stolen Generations survivors. They secured funding from The Healing Foundation to develop a business model for healing in WA, including for healing camps with survivors, and are aiming towards establishing *'a community controlled, integrated and holistic healing plan'* once the requisite funding is secured (BTHWA 2017).

Collective healing

Healing programs and reunions, and collective healing in particular, were identified as a significant need for Stolen Generations survivors, and an important component of reparations. Submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry expressed the need for a holistic interpretation of healing involving families and communities as well as individuals, and which incorporates a broad range of social and cultural activities. Many individuals talked about the advantages of collective healing.

The Telethon Report found that collective healing was just one measure that increased protective factors for Indigenous children in institutions:

"The extent of collective trauma, the continuing loss and grief in communities, and emerging evidence showing that strong culture is associated with health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples suggests that collective healing approaches, culturally safe health services, alongside other supports for cultural revitalisation, should also be explored as a means to increase the protective factors available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in institutional settings" (Anderson et al. 2017:44).

Yarning circles were given as an example of a culturally specific program that has been successfully used in previous collective healing projects. The Healing Foundation 2016 Report noted that benefits from the program were experienced not only by participants themselves, but also in their families and communities:

“Projects reported that a great sense of healing was experienced by yarning circle participants. Their sense of isolation decreased and they gained strength and insight from discovering avenues for healing. In many cases the experience of sharing stories within the safety of the group was the catalyst for sharing their stories with family and support workers. In this way the healing continued beyond the space of the yarning circle and rippled out into participants’ families and communities” (Anderson et al. 2017:10).

The NTSGAC Submission identified a need for culturally appropriate therapeutic services for its clients and recommended that ‘services should be funded to include healing camps and getting back to country to let the country heal within. There are examples for the success of these forums across many Indigenous nations internationally’. Many other submissions suggested programs on country as a means of healing trauma and promoting cultural identity. One submission to the South Australia Consultations stated:

“I strongly believe that the biggest “gap” for the Stolen Generations is healing programs. Funding could be provided for camps for the Stolen Generations, trips to the Outback to learn more about traditional culture, healing medicines and specific healing programs for people to work through their grief and loss are required” (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:6).

Healing centres

Healing centres were identified as creating a culturally safe place of connection and renewal, with several submissions to the NSW Reparations Report expressing the need for investment in these centres, particularly at or connected with the institutions. Clarence Valley Aboriginal Healing Centre runs a program and while it described the success of the centre as being difficult to measure and acknowledged healing is a long-term process, it reported strong indicators of benefit. Likewise, many participants in the South Australia Consultations suggested that the establishment of a healing/community centre would be a good use of reparations funding. The NTSGAC Submission also recommended that a community centre be established in Darwin to support Stolen Generations survivors.

While a number of government-funded healing initiatives were considered important and effective – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health programs; the national network of Link-Up services; and the Healing Our Way forum – a need for more work to be done on healing programs for Stolen Generations survivors was emphasised in many of the reports reviewed:

“We all heal differently so having options available to really recover from trauma – time, space, counselling, back to Country, time with Elders, time to grieve, massage, exercise, or combination, whatever it is that is appropriate for that individual to overcome the trauma. Healing should not be a one size fits all approach” (Erub – Darnley Island, Mount Isa in The Healing Foundation 2020d:8).

Numerous reports make it clear that the need for culturally appropriate, trauma-aware, healing-informed programs and initiatives remains an area of urgent need, and that much still needs to be done to address the ongoing trauma experienced by Stolen Generations survivors, and to support both individual and collective healing for their families and descendants (Aboriginal Affairs NSW July 2018; NSW Ombudsman 2019; and see all post 2017 The Healing Foundation documents in Reference List).

The OCHRE Review Report notes that in December 2018, in response to the Unfinished Business Progress Report, the NSW Government made several commitments that focused on supporting the healing of Stolen Generations survivors and is currently working towards a state-wide healing framework (Ombudsman NSW 2019). In addition, The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013–2017) (the Royal Commission):

“made a number of specific recommendations about healing for Aboriginal people, including that federal, state and territory governments should fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches as an ongoing, integral part of advocacy and support and therapeutic treatment service system responses for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse” (NSW Ombudsman 2019:45).

The Healing Foundation determined that in response to the Royal Commission and the resulting National Redress Scheme, there is a need to scale-up current efforts to provide culturally appropriate and trauma-aware, healing-informed processes, as well as a need to build on the emerging evidence-base for healing (The Healing Foundation 2020e). The Healing Foundation has been working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders since January 2020 to co-design and develop the first ever Queensland Healing Strategy and has called for a national strategy to address First Nations trauma and to resource healing (The Healing Foundation 2020e).

The Healing Foundation stresses the need for service providers working with Stolen Generations survivors to focus on the underlying cause of their problems (trauma) and not just on their symptoms (such as substance abuse and violence), as well as the importance of collective healing as an alternative approach to the individualised focus of mainstream services which *‘struggle to recognise that the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are paramount’* (2020e: 6, 10). It identifies several culturally-based healing responses for survivors and those working with them, including Marumali (now running for 20 years with overwhelmingly positive reviews), We-Al-Li and Gallang Place, as well as gatherings and camps such as Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation, which brings together people in regional and remote Western Australia (The Healing Foundation 2020e; Marumali 2020).

In Western Australia, Curtin University and Aboriginal organisations are now attempting to utilise a number of defunct mission sites as healing centres for Stolen Generations survivors through use of a virtual reality experience that offers a safe and accessible alternative to physical access (Tiwari and Stephens 2019).

Funding for healing programs remains an issue, with The Healing Foundation identifying a need for increased access to funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and more sustainable funding for programs (2020e). While a recent ABC article pointed to a growing trend for governments to fund researchers and practitioners to work with communities to *‘co-design’* programs that more effectively address their needs, Indigenous psychologist Kelleigh Ryan emphasised that short-term funding continued to undermine trust and interfere with the effectiveness of collective healing programs (Salleh 2020).



In the 2018 Unfinished Business Progress Report, Stolen Generations organisation representatives identified ongoing concerns around the level of children in out-of-home care, saying *'20 years later it's not just about bringing Aboriginal people home; it's also about keeping them home. We are deeply distressed by the rate Aboriginal children today continue to be removed from their families'* (Aboriginal Affairs NSW July 2018:3). While issues concerning child protection are beyond the scope of this research paper, it is important to note that Stolen Generations survivors continue to emphasise that healing is about keeping families safe, and in particular keeping their grandchildren safe and in their communities, rather than in care (Aboriginal Affairs NSW July 2018; The Healing Foundation, personal correspondence, November 2020).

Culture and language renewal

Submissions from many jurisdictions referenced the importance of cultural reconnection for Stolen Generations survivors, particularly programs that involved getting back to country. The Telethon Report identified the positive effects of connection to culture on personal identity and how this may help to reduce the risks Indigenous children face in relation to out-of-home care:

"It is now increasingly being recognised, both in Australia and internationally, that positive connection to one's culture also helps children to develop their identities; fosters positive self-esteem, emotional strength and resilience; and increases the number of secure attachment relationships around the child" (Anderson et al. 2017:43).

It was suggested by participants in the South Australia Consultations that cultural renewal should include the opportunity for Stolen Generations survivors to experience on-country camps, as well as arts and language programs. One submission requested:

"Language Revival and Restoration on country for those who have lost their languages due to being taken away and also for their offspring to be able to go with their family to learn" (Anderson et al. 2017:12).

Several submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry identified a need for more local cultural programs and initiatives revitalising and preserving Aboriginal language, culture, and history. Various non-government programs were mentioned (NSW PLC 2016), most of which would benefit from further funding. The report indicated that there was a need for more Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests, and that Stolen Generations and their descendants should be prioritised in accessing these.

The Scorecard Report stressed the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages and indicated that effective service responses to Stolen Generations survivors must acknowledge this diversity. The report also stressed that culture, language and identity are significant because of their connection to social and emotional wellbeing, and that the *Bringing them Home* recommendations were aimed at improving the overall wellbeing of participants. The Scorecard Report found that:

"some progress has been made in relation to national language, culture and history centres, including the Mura online catalogue and audio-visual archive through the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and the recognition of the Australian Indigenous Languages Collection on the Memory of the World register" (Rule and Rice 2015:26).

However, it noted that where they have been regional initiatives they have struggled for support.

Since 2018, the NSW Government has continued to invest in the Nest initiative and schools and community members have worked on establishing and building up the Nests. There is a growing understanding of the importance of spending time teaching language on country, but concerns remain around ongoing and well-targeted funding, as well as a lack of clarity around funding. Nest representatives played a key role in shaping the Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 (NSW), which is aimed at nurturing and growing First Nations' languages, and supporting people to connect/reconnect with culture. Under this Act, an Aboriginal Languages Trust is to be constituted and a state-wide Aboriginal Languages strategy developed (NSW Ombudsman 2019; Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2018).

Other jurisdictions are also investing in First Nations' language-based activities. For example, the Victorian Government is working with Traditional Owners, organisations, and communities across the state on a variety of activities aimed at supporting the use and revival of Aboriginal languages. These include integrating Indigenous language programs into schools and early childhood centres and developing accredited training in learning and teaching an endangered language, as well as a range of initiatives around Aboriginal place names (Victorian Government 2019). In 2020, a \$200,000 Indigenous Languages Grants program was launched in Queensland to support initiatives to teach, learn and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages (Lucas 21 August 2020).

Services needed

In examining available reports and the submissions from survivors themselves, it became apparent that service delivery to Stolen Generations survivors in general has numerous gaps that require addressing. Trauma-aware and healing-informed services for survivors were identified as urgently needed.

The Scorecard Report identified a need for specialist training of service delivery agencies to better equip them in their interactions with Stolen Generations survivors, in order to *'focus on the specific trauma, loss and grief experienced by members of the Stolen Generations, and the ways in which this can impact their access to services'*, including barriers such as lack-of-knowledge about the types of services available, distance, and transport issues, as well as people's reluctance to engage with government departments as a direct result of their previous experiences (Rule and Rice 2015). More funding is also required. It was agreed there was a need to tailor services and make sure assistance was provided appropriately, and agreement that this would have to be done sensitively, utilising standardised methods of recording and accessing information (Rule and Rice 2015).

The NSW Reparations Report recommended a similar approach to meeting the needs of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, finding that the government should establish a direct point of contact to assist survivors to navigate the service system by providing information and making referrals to appropriate services. This point-of-contact should be staffed by people who are trained in trauma-aware, healing-informed practice and have specialist knowledge about the Stolen Generations, and who are preferably Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander themselves.

The Marumali Program Review emphasised the need for trauma-aware, healing-informed services in order to avoid re-traumatisation of individuals, and identified this as an underfunded area. It also warned that the legacy of not addressing trauma in Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants would be *'the transgenerational transmission of social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing problems'* that resulted from it (Peeters et al. 2014:496).

Submissions to the South Australia Consultations also highlighted the need for service-delivery agencies to recognise that their client-base is still suffering the effects of trauma.

“Government workers in Housing, Centrelink and so on, need to be aware that they are dealing with survivors of trauma, with many people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder”

(South Australian Department of State Development 2017:9).

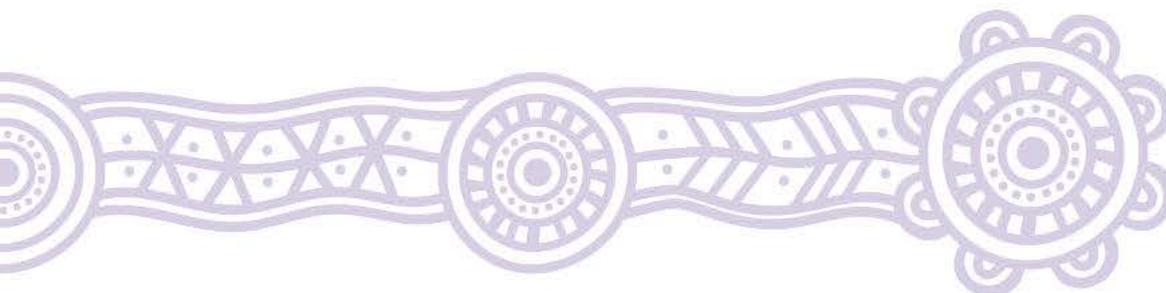
The Scorecard Report linked the need for individual and family services to holistic community healing strategies. It noted that the *Bringing them Home* recommendations recognised and addressed this complexity, and the need for service responses to occur at multiple levels, e.g. through culturally appropriate counselling, training for all professionals who work with First Nations peoples, and the establishment of Australia-wide Indigenous Family History Services to operate as a ‘first stop shop’ for people seeking information about and referral to records held by the government and churches (Rule and Rice 2015).

The Victorian Taskforce Report noted that although the state has services designed specifically for Stolen Generations survivors, as well as those that address Indigenous and mainstream needs, there is little coordination or focus on survivors, as is evidenced by the lack of accessible entry points, clear pathways to navigate the system, or linkages between stakeholder organisations. It stated:

“A significant percentage of Stolen Generations members reported difficulty in accessing and using services, particularly in some regional areas. The taskforce found that those who work in the field are highly committed to the process of healing, however they lack support and resources with which to deliver effective services”

(Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2009:24).

Gaps in service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including Stolen Generations survivors were identified in relation to the NRS, and many of the recent documents reviewed emphasised the need to fund more and better tailored trauma-aware and healing-informed services (see National Redress Scheme). This suggests that there has been little progress made in these areas over the past three years. Submissions concerning the need for better access to records and services to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access records, indicates there has been little progress made in this regard either (see *Access to records*).



Oral and family history services

Oral and family history services were specific initiatives for which there was widespread support. While there have been significant responses in some jurisdictions to the recommendations in *Bringing them Home* around recording, preserving, and administering access to the testimonies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples affected by past forced removal policies and practices, the Scorecard Report noted that it was important to ensure the sustainability of this work (Rule and Rice 2015). The NSW Reparations Report similarly stated that the need expressed by the survivors of the institutions to record their stories required funding.

Submissions to the South Australia Consultations also called for the establishment and streamlining of family and oral history services. One participant suggested:

“A repository for the safe and sustainable housing of oral history documentation as a space for community to interact and gain a deeper understanding of this legacy of experience – a truth telling and sharing place” (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:12).

The concept of a one-stop shop accessible to regional communities was also raised:

“It should support anything that empowers Aboriginal people to find out about family, culture and country. Family History workshops in communities which would assist people to know where to start with their own family history... Also support for people who wish to write their stories once they have researched them. Funding One-Stop-Shop Family History services in regional areas would be great” (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:6).

Since 2017, various local initiatives for recording the stories and memories of Stolen Generations survivors have emerged, along with new opportunities for survivors to share their stories as a means of truth telling. These include initiatives such as the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Operative project – The Precious Memories – Building a Library of Elders Oral History and Stories – that enabled 20 Aboriginal Elders aged 50-years and over who were impacted by their removal to share memories of childhood (The Healing Foundation 2017), and a three-part selection of videos featuring interviews with Stolen Generations survivors produced for Sorry Day in 2020 by Yokai/Bringing Them Home WA in collaboration with Noongar Danjoo at Curtin University (Yokai and Noongar Danjoo 2020).

The Healing Foundation continues to produce and support initiatives for Stolen Generations survivors and descendants to share their experiences, a recent example being the *Healing Our Way* podcast on intergenerational trauma. In launching the first episode, The Healing Foundation Chairman Professor Steve Larkin said, ‘*Truth telling has an impact on every aspect of the lives of our Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities and this podcast will help people to understand the stories and experiences, the real stories of our people*’ (The Healing Foundation 2020f).

Stolen Generations organisation representatives and The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) have reported a growing interest in family history research as a result of events such as the Apology to the Stolen Generations, and the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, and have identified a need for greater funding and assistance to help people access the records and information they are seeking (Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2018; Higgins and Collard 2020).

Aged care services

Culturally appropriate aged care facilities, services, and support were identified as urgent emerging needs. The NSW Reparations Report identified a need for appropriate aged care services and housing options for Stolen Generations survivors and reported on some moves towards meeting this in a couple of regional areas. In NSW, there are Aboriginal aged-care facilities in the rural towns of Kempsey and Nowra, however, there are none in Sydney. Kinchela and Cootamundra committee members have proposed the idea of a joint aged care facility for former residents who consider each other family (The Healing Foundation 2016). The Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation have already been delivering aged care and disability services to former residents of the home and to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in partnership with Annecto Western Sydney, allowing them to stay comfortably at home with the required support. The NSW Reparations Report also identified a need to allocate places in existing aged care facilities to Stolen Generations survivors, particularly in places where it would help them stay connected to family, community, and culture (NSW PLC 2016).

The Scorecard Report noted that the Stolen Generations have been identified as a 'special needs' group by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and others in submissions to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan and the review of aged care (Rule and Rice 2015), but it is not apparent whether that led to any specific response.

"It's hard to put her back in an institution because she started in an institution and will die in an institution" (Survivor statement in The Healing Foundation 2019b:8).

Since 2018, there have been increasing calls for urgent action on improving aged care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including specifically for survivors. Stolen Generations organisational representatives have identified inadequacies in the aged care system which put survivors at risk of being re-institutionalised and re-traumatised in aged care facilities. There are also difficulties faced by survivors in accessing services and at times long waits to receive home-care support with no means of being prioritised. In addition, service providers do not always deliver services in a way which is culturally safe and appropriately cognitive of or responsive to the needs of survivors (Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2018).

Reports by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare into the characteristics and outcomes of Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants (AIHW 2018a) and particularly the needs of older survivors (2018b), reveals the full extent of the disadvantages experienced by the survivors due to the trauma of removal from their families, communities and culture, which also frequently led to them being institutionalised, assaulted and abused (The Healing Foundation 2019b). The new AIHW data reveals that Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 or over are more likely to be worse off than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the same age on a range of health and socio-economic outcomes. Given that all Stolen Generations survivors will be aged 50 and over by 2023, it is both urgent and essential that the government, policy makers and service providers respond appropriately to the aged care needs of this group (The Healing Foundation and AAG ATSIAG Submission 2019; AIHW 2018b). In the meantime, individual agencies are doing what they can to improve aged care services by producing their own materials aimed at improving understanding of Stolen Generations and their needs (for example see ARAS 2019; The Healing Foundation 2019).

The 2020 submission from The Healing Foundation on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme (NRS) emphasised that:

“Stolen Generations survivors have multiple complex, compounded needs and their health and wellbeing is significantly poorer than that of Aboriginal people of a similar age who were not removed. Stolen Generations carry a legacy of social and economic disadvantage, and often lack access to appropriate services including to address their needs as they age” (The Healing Foundation 2020:2 and see National Redress Scheme above).

In March 2020, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing sought tenders for the Remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Service Development Assistance Panel. Once established, the panel will deliver expert assistance and advice concerning provider capability and support, sector development, and project management to aged-care service providers located in rural and remote areas and/or those providing aged care to a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples located anywhere in Australia. The Healing Foundation has applied to be listed on the panel to provide specialist knowledge and care for elderly Stolen Generations survivors (The Healing Foundation, personal correspondence, December 2020).

Social and emotional wellbeing services

The NSW Reparations Report participants expressed a range of concerns about the counselling services provided under the previous Bringing Them Home program and current Social and Emotional Wellbeing program. Evaluation of the programs noted successes and some limitations, including inconsistency (NSW PLC 2016). An issue raised by several stakeholders was the change of title from Bringing Them Home counsellors to Social and Emotional Wellbeing counsellors, which some people felt took the focus off the Stolen Generations and lowered awareness of this specific role (NSW PLC 2016). Another problem was that funding for programs was not ongoing.

An individual submission to the NSW Reparations Inquiry requested that some of the funding recently allocated for mental health services be allocated to *‘developing “strong” mental health and social and emotional wellbeing programs for Stolen Generation survivors and their families,’* (NSW PLC 2016:141). A submission by the Principal Solicitor at Warra Warra Legal Service noted the difficulties regional and remote communities experienced in responding to the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors, given that these areas often lack specialist services such as rehabilitation, mental health and counselling, even though they *‘are integral to the future health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community’* (NSW PLC 2016:142).

In the Unfinished Business Report, Stolen Generations organisation representatives raised questions about the lack of clarity around funding arrangements for and location of Social and Emotional Wellbeing counsellors in NSW and expressed concerns about the Commonwealth Government’s design and implementation of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing program, pointing to *‘ongoing difficulties with service delivery and access to trauma informed services across all levels of government,’* with current levels of support often insufficient to meet the needs of survivors (Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2018:12).

There has been some progress towards developing more Social and Emotional Wellbeing programs in other jurisdictions. For example, Healing Waters Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counselling and Wellbeing Service is currently being established in Queensland to provide support to Stolen Generations survivors and their families during their healing journey (The Healing Foundation 2020g).

Health

The need for greater support and funding for health care and rehabilitation for Stolen Generations survivors was documented in several submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry (NSW PLC 2016) and various recommendations were made in this regard. The NSW Reparations Committee expressed great concern about the high rates of chronic disease and mental health issues experienced by survivors. The report recommended the establishment of a Stolen Generations health care card, to help provide better access to medical services, including mental health services, and reduced gap fees and medication costs. The NSW Government Response committed to *'advocate with the Commonwealth Government to implement this recommendation'* (2016:12).

There were other ways suggested that poor health outcomes could be addressed. For example, a submission to the South Australia Consultations suggested:

"Perhaps some of the funds should be allocated to the health of Stolen Generations members. i.e. testing for genetic related illnesses due to not having a family medical history (e.g. genetic testing for the breast cancer gene is only free for people who have a history of breast cancer in their family)" (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:13).

The AIHW Stolen Generations Report has helped to paint a clearer picture of the health needs of survivors and their descendants, revealing that they experience higher levels of adversity in relation to most of the 38 key health and welfare outcomes analysed in the report, with their descendants also consistently experiencing poorer health and social outcomes, including poor mental health (2018a). The AIHW 50 Years and Over Report (2018b) and subsequent submissions concerning Stolen Generations survivors and the Royal Commission into Aged Care have emphasised the urgency of addressing the complex health needs of ageing survivors (The Healing Foundation and AAT ATSIAAG 2019).

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy, published in 2013, is currently under review. With clear evidence of the higher incidence of mental health issues amongst Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, The Healing Foundation is recommending that the renewed strategy strengthen recognition of the needs of this cohort, and include trauma-aware, healing-informed responses (The Healing Foundation, personal correspondence December 2020; Gayaa Dhuwi n.d.).



Intergenerational services

Several reports identified the need for specific services and support for the families and descendants of Stolen Generations survivors to heal the ongoing impact of the trauma experienced as a result of past policies and practices of removal (NSW PLC 2016; The Healing Foundation Reports; Peeters et al. 2014; BTHWA 2011-2016). For example, a submission from the Kinchela Boys Home, in relation to their request for a healing centre, stated:

“We need to be supported so we can lead the healing of our families and help put an end to the intergenerational trauma that continues to harm them” (NSW PLC 2016:59).

Kinchela survivor Michael Welsh echoed this sentiment, saying:

“We do not want this hate to go to our children or to our grandchildren and great grandchildren. Our children need to be connected to this healing process too. Our journey’s almost over, our children’s journeys are only just beginning” (Healing Foundation 2017:41).

In considering the extent of the trauma suffered and the sensitivity required in any service interactions, the NSW Reparations Report recommended that the NSW Government develop a plan to build a trauma-aware, healing-informed workforce to support Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities. The Clarence Valley Healing Centre in NSW is already providing trauma-aware, healing-informed measures to support families (NSW PLC 2016).

The need for an understanding of the legacy of Stolen Generations policies and its complex impacts on the descendants of Stolen Generations survivors is important for counselling and social and emotional wellbeing programs, but also crucial in addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection and juvenile justice systems. For example, the Victorian OOHC Report identified a need for better services for ensuring that Indigenous children are identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander both before and after their removal to ensure that they get appropriate support. They found that the failure to provide specific support manifests as many of those children are descendants of Stolen Generations survivors (NSW PLC 2016).

Since 2017, there has been some progress made towards gaining a better understanding of the complex impacts of removal on descendants of the Stolen Generations, as well as the numbers of people affected. The Healing Foundation notes that the 2018 AIHW Report provides comprehensive data to illustrate the direct link between the forced removal of tens of thousands of children from their families and the symptoms of intergenerational trauma (Healing Foundation 2018). The AIHW Report estimated that the number of Stolen Generations descendants aged 18 and over was around 114,800 including around 15,400 individuals who had also been removed from their families. The report identified that *‘the descendants were also consistently more likely to have experienced adverse outcomes over a broad range of health, socioeconomic and cultural indicators, compared with a reference group of Indigenous people aged 18 and over who reported neither being removed themselves from their own families, nor having any relatives removed’* (2018a: viii).

The Stolen Generations Advisory Committee established in 2019 to support the implementation of the NSW Government Response to Unfinished Business has highlighted *‘the need for more emphasis by government on rebuilding families, and more assistance be given to the SGOs to support the needs of descendants and families of Stolen Generations survivors who live with the effects of intergenerational trauma on mental health, physical health, incarceration rates and other issues’* (Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2018:3). In 2020, the Unfinished Business Progress Report

stated that the NSW Government had begun to undertake preliminary scoping work in order to build a trauma-aware, healing-informed public sector workforce (Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2019).

The Healing Foundation has continued to provide direct support to organisations providing healing services to Stolen Generations and their descendants, particularly those with a focus on collective healing (The Healing Foundation 2020h).

Records preservation, management, and access

One issue that arose in almost all jurisdictions (South Australia, Victoria, Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, and New South Wales) was record preservation, management and access. As noted in the NSW Reparations Report, there are resource issues contributing to ongoing challenges accessing records. After receiving numerous submissions relating to the need to resolve the issues with record access, it recommended that the NSW Government, in consultation with Stolen Generations survivors, undertake a comprehensive review of how records relating to survivors are managed and accessed, with a view to removing any barriers that inhibit survivors and their descendants from accessing records related to their family and history. It also recommended that appropriate mechanisms be put in place for Stolen Generations survivors to correct, alter or supplement records relating to their removal. The final recommendation was that additional funding be allocated to the Aboriginal Affairs NSW Family Records Unit so that it can provide increased assistance to those accessing records and to better promote its services.

Submissions to the South Australia Consultations were also concerned with records accessibility:

“The principal challenge with projects of this nature is records accessibility—not all records holders are prepared to make records available and not all records holders have sufficient staff to support the volume of research requests they receive” (NSW PLC 2017:6).

“Identifying and making certain that records held by government and non-government organisations are listed, indexed and made accessible. Re-establishing the Records Task Force that was one of the recommendations of the BTH report to work on achieving the above and on developing sensitive and across the board access principles” (NSW PLC 2017:12).

The need for a centralised system to manage confirmation of Aboriginality that is sensitive to the experiences of Stolen Generations survivors was another initiative that had support in South Australia:

“There is a strong need for a Centralised System to manage the ever increasing requests for Confirmation of Aboriginality. One organisation should manage this process with the support from Communities and Organisations. Perhaps some funds could be provided to establish this process and promote it throughout the State” (NSW PLC 2017:12).

Both the Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce and the Queensland Report determined that there was a need for specialist personnel to deal with culturally sensitive material and to facilitate service interactions with Indigenous clients. The Western Australia Stolen Wages Taskforce made the following recommendation:

“Establish a program to educate and train Aboriginal archivists, so as to provide services in a respectful and culturally appropriate way to Aboriginal people” (2008:84).

The NTSGAC 2019 Submission to the Tune Review of The National Archives identified a number of needs in relation to accessing records. These include the need for its MOU with the National Archives to continue, and for the National Archives to continue to preserve their collections of Australian history to ensure that current and future generations can access archival records, case files, and other relevant records held there to help people connect with their identity and family history (2019:1).

The 2020 Link-Up NSW Submission into the State Records Act 1998 reported inefficiencies related to accessing records concerning First Nations peoples in NSW, including unacceptable lengthy delays and unnecessary complications to obtaining records from some departments. They identified a need for better resourcing to ensure there are trauma-aware, healing-informed researchers on staff able to respond to and assist with inquiries from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples trying to access records (2020). Link-Up has repeatedly called for:

“the establishment of an Aboriginal Archive where all of the departmental records pertaining to Aboriginal people are consolidated under an Aboriginal-controlled administration with uniform and culturally appropriate access procedures; and an Aboriginal Archive committee comprising appropriate departments and Aboriginal organisations to be formed to formulate a plan for establishing the Aboriginal Archive” (2020).

This has not been implemented despite evidence of increasing need. Amongst other recommendations aimed at improving record access, Link-Up NSW identifies itself as the Aboriginal community-controlled organisation best placed to manage all state records and documents pertaining to Aboriginal people in New South Wales (2020).

Long-term secure funding

The reports reviewed that discussed initiatives and programs for Stolen Generations survivors all raised the need for sustained additional funding, and for funding that was not short-term or one-off. The Scorecard Report noted that due to a lack of funding, recent advances in Stolen Generations initiatives are at risk (Rule and Rice 2015). The NSW Reparations Report stressed that ongoing funding is important in the establishment and implementation of non-monetary forms of reparation. A large number of submissions called for funding for a wide range of activities and initiatives. For example, a need for additional funding was identified to establish and support healing centres for the former residents of NSW institutions, and for specialist culturally sensitive counselling and healing programs (NSW PLC 2016).

The Clarence Valley Healing Centre recommended additional funding for training and education in trauma-aware, healing-informed practices for staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council stated that constant changes to the job description and funding of the Bringing Them Home program deprioritised Stolen Generations survivors. The NSW Reparations Report received submissions from Kinchela Boys

Home Aboriginal Corporation, Redfern Legal Centre, Legal Aid NSW, Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre and a Public Interest Advocacy Centre Report that more funding was needed for skilled, supported and culturally appropriate counselling services for survivors and their families (NSW PLC 2016).

Submissions from NSW institutions including Coota Girls Corporation, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Centre and Bomaderry Children's Home all identified a need for funding to ensure that they can meet the health and wellbeing needs of former residents of these homes through initiatives such as healing centres, memorials and keeping places (2016). Ms Paulette Whitton, daughter of a Stolen Generations survivor, asked that funding be assured for the continuation of Sorry Day events, which the authors of the Scorecard Report noted once received Commonwealth funding (submissions cited in NSW PLC 2016). In response, the NSW Reparations Report recommended that the Government '*provide funding for collective healing initiatives, programs, forums and community centres, to support and assist Stolen Generation survivors and their families and communities*' (NSW PLC 2016:57).

The NTSGAC (2015) Submission expressed concern that Stolen Generations survivors from the Northern Territory had not benefited from Commonwealth funding provided in response to the *Bringing them Home* recommendations, submitting:



"While other States acknowledge the plight of their Stolen Generation groups and are providing funding to benefit their people the Commonwealth has not provided the same for the people of the Northern Territory."

More recent publications also stress that increased levels of funding and/or ongoing funding are needed for a range of initiatives concerning Stolen Generations survivors (NSW Ombudsman 2019; Aboriginal Affairs NSW 2018). However, there has been some progress made around funding in some jurisdictions. For example, in 2018/19, the Victorian Government invested \$1.38 million in the Healing the Stolen Generations Program aimed at boosting case management services for survivors and their families and money was allocated to the Koorie Heritage Trust to boost support for self-determination and to celebrate Aboriginal culture in Victoria (Victorian Government 2019). In NSW, funding for Stolen Generations organisations, provided as part of the NSW Reparations Scheme, has enabled Kinchela Boys Home survivors to fit out a bus as a mobile Stolen Generations education centre (Wellauer 2020).

The Scorecard Report, NSW Reparations Report and South Australia Consultations all identified a need for Stolen Generations funeral funding, with one participant to the South Australia Consultations saying:

"I would like to see some funding go into bereavement as in transport to funerals, all too many times Stolen Generations people meet family at funerals" (South Australian Department of State Development 2017:12).

Many submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry identified a need for funds to enable former residents of the institutions and their descendants to pay for funerals, attend each other's funerals and provide headstones for deceased family members. A funeral fund set up in 1991 and closed in 1994 in NSW provided those who are current members of the fund with \$5,000 to assist with funeral costs, while non-members can apply for \$1,000 assistance through the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. Acting on one of the Report's recommendations, the NSW Government agreed to set up a funeral fund that will make payments of \$7,000 to assist families to pay funeral expenses for survivors. The Victorian Stolen Generations Redress Scheme, announced in 2020, will also include a Funeral Expenses Fund, the details of which have not yet been announced (The Healing Foundation 2020i).

Improved data, monitoring, and evaluation

Several reports stated that there has been insufficient data gathering, monitoring, and evaluation of actions taken in the past to appropriately understand, document, and address the impacts of removal experienced by Stolen Generations survivors and their families. The Scorecard Report noted that despite *Bringing them Home* recommending a national process for implementing its recommendations, with annual audits by states and territories, *'there is still no systematic process for monitoring the implementation of the [report's] recommendations or for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the outcomes'* (NSW PLC 2016:31). As noted earlier, the invisibility of data and targets was perceived as compounding the disadvantage faced by survivors (Rule and Rice 2015) as well as their descendants.

The NSW Reparations Report found that mechanisms set up in NSW no longer exist and that there is no representative body responsible for their implementation, which means that *'the needs of Stolen Generation survivors in this state have been addressed in more of an ad hoc manner, rather than through a coordinated and focused approach by the government'* (NSW PLC 2016:201). The report indicated a need for *'a robust accountability framework to be established'* to ensure the needs of the Stolen Generations are met and clear responsibilities for agencies are established and maintained. In addition, it identified *'the need for a national system of monitoring and reporting, as previously recommended in the BTH report'* (2016:203). The Queensland Taskforce suggested that there should be a:

"Social Justice Commissioner position – similar to the Federal Social Justice Commissioner, which would report to Parliament on an annual basis as one measure to promote human rights standards and ensure that injustices such as the stolen wages are never repeated"
(The Queensland Taskforce 2016:24).

Comprehensive data on the location, experiences and demographic detail of Stolen Generations survivors is limited, as identified in the quantitative component of this study. There are several reasons why Stolen Generations survivors may not be accurately or sufficiently represented in current data gathering processes. There is a need for more detailed research and data on the needs of the Stolen Generations that is culturally informed and appropriate to better inform policy planning and programming for the Stolen Generations. The Broome Community Governance Paper (Taylor et al. 2012) set out the process through which current demographic information was gathered by the Yawuru Native Title Holders Aboriginal Corporation through its development company, Nyamba Buru Yawuru, to address its own demographic information needs via a *'comprehensive survey of Indigenous households in Broome'*, incorporating the results into a demographic information system that enabled the community to set their own priorities, meet the needs of their local populations as well as to prepare for the identifying and planning of future needs. Of particular relevance was the finding that none of the available statistics on the Aboriginal residents were helpful to future planning.

The lack of detailed quantitative data about Stolen Generations survivors and their families has made it difficult to anticipate and address their ongoing and future needs. One dimension to this is the reported trend of increasing numbers of Stolen Generations survivors moving back to country as they age. The 2018 quantitative analysis by the AIHW was the first report to comprehensively quantify the effects of removal on survivors and their descendants across a range of health and socio-economic measures, the findings of which is assisting with assessing the needs of Stolen Generations and their families (AIHW 2018a; The Healing Foundation 2017). More detailed and granular data is needed to inform understanding of and responses to survivors, ideally planned, gathered and analysed by Stolen Generations-led community-controlled organisations.

2.3 Core principles

As part of the process of analysing the needs expressed in various reports, three core-principles were distilled that are viewed as crucial in any response:

Self-determination

The majority of the reports reviewed for this research paper (see Rule and Rice 2015; NSW PLC 2016; The Healing Foundation 2016, 2017; Taylor et al. 2012; Anderson et al. 2017) emphasised the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be enabled to exercise greater self-determination in relation to policies and decisions that impact on them, and indicated that a commitment to the principle of self-determination is an essential component of the process of making reparations to Stolen Generations survivors.

The NSW Reparations Report reiterated that while Recommendation 43 of *Bringing them Home* encapsulates the importance of self-determination, this has not yet been implemented, and several stakeholders made submissions to this effect (Rule and Rice 2015; the Mount Druitt and District Reconciliation Group, ANTA NSW, Ms Elizabeth Rice, co-author of the Scorecard Report, the NSW Reconciliation Council cited in NSW PLC 2016). The authors of the Scorecard Report also recommended the use of the more equitable term and process of 'negotiation' rather than 'consultation' when talking about self-determination (Rule and Rice 2015).

The NSW Reparations Report reviewed self-determination as practised within the NSW OCHRE strategy for Aboriginal Affairs, which incorporates local decision-making and solution brokerage, and concluded:

"In terms of reparations for Stolen Generation survivors, the committee acknowledges that any component of reparation, whether related to monetary compensation, rehabilitation or other measures, must be developed and implemented in accordance with the principle of self-determination" (NSW PLC 2016:206).

The NSW Reparations Report also detailed the need for self-determination in the child protection system as discussed above.

In the Scorecard Report, a Stolen Generations survivor articulated how the Northern Territory intervention undermined self-determination:

"We need to try to find a way of not just giving Indigenous people a voice but making sure it is heard and stuff is done about it. The Northern Territory Intervention is a classic. People had been saying we need, we need help – for 20 odd years. What happens [after 20 years] is that the government goes in with a knee jerk reaction saying this is what we're going to do, but without any consultation with Indigenous communities about needs or wants. Government has just gone in and done what they wanted to do with a knee jerk reaction – but they waited 20 years and were crying out for help all that time" (Rule and Rice 2015:18).

Stolen Generations-led and -centred response

Numerous reports emphasised that any initiatives taken to address the needs of Stolen Generations survivors need to be led by survivors themselves and centred on the needs that they have self-identified. The reports found that lack of consultation in the past has not only undermined attempts at greater self-determination, but also impacted negatively on healing (see Rule and Rice 2015; NSW PLC 2016; NSW Government 2016; Aboriginal Affairs Victorian 2009; Peeters et al. 2014; Taylor et al. 2012).

The NSW Reparations Report stressed:

“In the interest of self-determination, it is essential that the reparation scheme be developed in close consultation with Stolen Generation survivors. This means more than a one-off discussion – it should include ongoing genuine engagement in all aspects of the scheme’s operation. Not only is it important that members of the Stolen Generations have a voice in how this scheme works, it will ultimately be vital to its success” (NSW PLC 2016:130).

Similarly, the Victorian Taskforce Report stated:

“Despite State and Commonwealth funding, the Victorian Government received consistent feedback from members of the Stolen Generations that their needs were not being met, that they lacked input into services designed to help them and that key service gaps were adversely affecting their healing process. Feedback received through the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce consultation forums (held in 2001) indicated a strong consensus on the need for services to be designed and provided by members of the Stolen Generations themselves” (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2009:7).

In response to a number of submissions to the NSW Reparations Report that emphasised this theme, the NSW Government agreed to the report’s recommendation regarding the establishment of a Stolen Generations Advisory Committee, consisting of primarily Aboriginal representatives including Stolen Generations survivors, to support the implementation of reparations measures taken in response to the NSW Reparations Report.

The reports reviewed identified the urgent need for Stolen Generations-specific services and support. For example, The Healing Foundation 2017 Report identified the importance of survivors having a voice in the design and delivery of services to meet their needs, noting that the transfer of funding to the Indigenous Advancement Strategy has meant a shift away from funding that meets the specific needs of Stolen Generations to those of the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It suggested that this issue could be addressed through the inclusion of Stolen Generations reference groups within broader Indigenous organisations.

The Victorian Taskforce Report also encountered this issue and stated that Stolen Generations survivors:

“have the right to be given time to take control of their healing. Most importantly, they have the right to have a say in how services should be designed to assist them, which is partially the reason why to date there have been flaws in service delivery – lack of consultation” (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2009:26).



The Marumali Program Review referred to the *Bringing them Home* recommendation that services to redress the impacts of removal *'had to be designed, provided and controlled by Aboriginal people themselves'*, and specifically by Stolen Generations survivors, as only they can fully comprehend the effects of the removal policies. Along with Link-Up, the Marumali Program, designed by Stolen Generations survivor Aunty Lorraine Peeters, has been evaluated and consistently identified as 'best practice' (Peeters et al. 2014:497-9).

Submissions to the various inquiries identified the need for counsellors who are not only Indigenous, but Stolen Generations survivors, and stressed that counsellors also need to be aware of the possibility of re-traumatisation. Former residents of Stolen Generations institutions expressed a desire for counsellors who understand what they have experienced. As one submission to the NSW Reparations Inquiry stated: *'We suffered collectively and we need to heal collectively'* (NSW PLC 2016:55).

Urgent need for action

Many of the reports reviewed emphasised that due to the age and frailty of many Stolen Generations survivors, there is an urgent need for reparations, for the provision of meaningful support, and to address the intergenerational impacts of removal. References to urgency frequently refer to the recommendations in *Bringing them Home* that have not been actioned or have not been comprehensively implemented (see Rule and Rice 2015; NSW PLC 2016; The Healing Foundation 2016, 2017, 2019b). On this basis, the Scorecard Report stressed the need to act on the development of a national strategy and made 11 urgent recommendations. It reiterated that Stolen Generations survivors are an ageing population and pointed out that many are dying without having found or reunited with family. It also noted the urgent need for the implementation of recommendations regarding the child protection system, in light of the intergenerational impacts of trauma, and continued over-representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system (Rule and Rice 2015, and see relevant sections above).

Multiple submissions to the NSW Reparations Inquiry also emphasised the urgent need to deliver reparations to address the intergenerational impacts of forced removal, particularly due to the advancing age of many survivors. The NTSGAC Submission also addressed the necessity for urgency due to ageing in relation to redress and civil litigation, noting:

"We do not support payments by instalments. One-off payments will go some way to allow for immediate needs to be met but more importantly understanding many of our members are frail and aged" (2015:7).

2.4 Gaps in understanding

Disability/NDIS

The 2018 AIHW Stolen Generations Report has brought a greater focus to issues of concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability, including for Stolen Generations survivors and descendants. The Report found that 67 per cent of survivors live with a disability or restrictive long-term condition (2018a). It also produced new evidence concerning the mental health of Stolen Generations and descendants, finding that in 2014-15, the effect of being removed on mental health status was statistically significant, with those who were removed 1.5 times as likely to have poor mental health, compared with the reference group (2018a:101). Research indicates that prevalence rates of disability amongst First Nations peoples, in particular mental and cognitive disability, are much higher than is formally documented due to community concern about diagnostic processes, labelling, and different cultural conceptualisations of disability (Baldry et al, 2015).

There is concern that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may not be able to access the services and support they may be entitled to under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (First Peoples Disability Network 2016). As noted in the Scorecard Report: *'disability access is likely to be a significant access issue for the Stolen Generations'*, given that:

"50% of Aboriginal people have some form of disability or long term health condition and 'this prevalence of disability is more than twice that of the non-indigenous Australians'

the Stolen Generations have a high rate of complex needs and comorbidities...

the Stolen Generations are in general more disadvantaged than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia"
(Rule and Rice 2015:13).

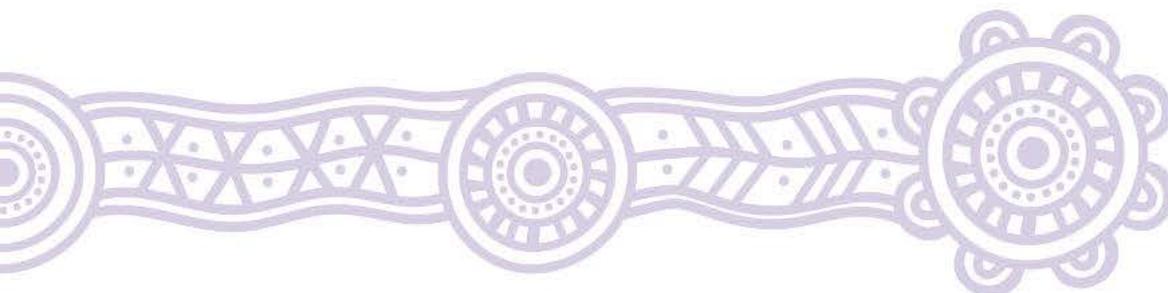
However, there was little mention of disability in the other reports reviewed for this research, and none of them included any discussion of the need for and capacity of the NDIS to address the specific needs of Stolen Generations survivors with disabilities.

Needs of carers/descendants

While many of the reports reviewed identify the extended family of Stolen Generations survivors as having specific unmet needs (as identified earlier), there is little attention paid to the specific needs of people caring for survivors and their families and this is an area that will be of increasing importance as Stolen Generations age and require the care of not only extended family members, but of other people in the community (service providers, aged care nurses) who may be uninformed of their specific needs and context and thus ill-equipped to appropriately and sensitively support them. In 2019, The Healing Foundation, in collaboration with their Stolen Generations Reference Group, produced a series of fact sheets in association with general practitioners, dentistry and aged care providers around how to provide trauma-aware and healing-informed services for elderly survivors. These are intended to be a starting point towards educating service providers and carers about some key issues when interacting with Stolen Generations survivors and descendants (The Healing Foundation 2019c).

Survivors not connected to Stolen Generations organisations

Given most consultations and submissions gathered to ensure qualitative input from Stolen Generations survivors into the reports were coordinated through organisations and/or groups of survivors of particular institutions, there may be individual Stolen Generations survivors whose voices and perspectives have not been represented. For example, submissions to the NSW Reparations report identified that when the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme was set up between 2004 and 2010 to repay stolen wages to Aboriginal people in New South Wales, not all Aboriginal people who were eligible were aware of the scheme, others were unable to claim due to location or health reasons, and others were unwilling to apply due to mistrust of the government. As a result, some eligible people missed out on this scheme. Of significance to the issue of Stolen Generations reparations, including services and support, is that individuals who are not connected to Stolen Generations organisations, for example, people who did not grow up in the homes, and may still not have reconnected with family, and therefore may miss out. Thus, there is a need to identify means to minimise this possibility and to ensure that any reparations measures taken are widely available and accessible.



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Note: abbreviations used to refer to particular reports throughout this report are included in brackets at the end of the reference where relevant.

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