

INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA MUST BE RECOGNISED AND ADDRESSED IN NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY

The Healing Foundation Submission to the National Preventive Health Taskforce

In its latest submission to the National Preventive Health Taskforce in response to the Draft National Preventive Health Strategy, The Healing Foundation is recommending that the impacts of intergenerational trauma be recognised and addressed across all parts of the health system.

It is one of six key recommendations that underpin The Healing Foundation's view that strategies that support those impacted by intergenerational trauma – conservatively, a third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – can inform all strategies for First Nations peoples and lead to better outcomes for all.

The Healing Foundation CEO Fiona Cornforth said that the continuing impact of trauma requires genuine steps to be undertaken to address trauma as an underlying cause of poor health.

“The National Preventive Health Strategy must prioritise intergenerational healing – our evidence indicates this is one of the most powerful ways we can improve health outcomes,” Ms Cornforth said.

“There is robust evidence for the effects of intergenerational trauma in a number of key indicators of wellbeing in contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life.

“These are strongly linked to the experience of unresolved intergenerational trauma such as the harmful legacy of colonisation, the history of high numbers of children removed from their families, the incarceration of young people, family violence, direct racism, and systemic racism.

“The Healing Foundation supports some key elements of the draft Strategy, in particular the commitment to addressing the broader causes of poor health and wellbeing, and the inclusion of principles that address health inequality.

“We know the potential of a trauma-aware, healing-informed response to health prevention for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

“At its core, the National Preventive Health Strategy must strive for truth telling and an end to institutional racism in the health system,” Ms Cornforth said.

The Healing Foundation recommends:

- the specific needs of target groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, be addressed in the Framework for Action, and are structurally identified throughout the Strategy.
- a greater focus on the early years, and the role of early childhood education, in prevention and building resilience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and communities, driven by dedicated programs and approaches.

- a recognition of the intergenerational impacts of colonisation on Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, and on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities more broadly, beyond the mental health space (Focus Area 7).
- more innovation in the designated focus areas, including an initiative for social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, that builds on trauma-aware, healing-informed program approaches.
- partnerships and collaborations to include specific self-determination models of service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including survivors and descendants.
- measures and reporting associated with health equity targets be disaggregated by Indigenous status, and the national prevention monitoring and reporting framework include reporting on target populations.

The full submission is available here: <https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2020/10/NPHS-submission.pdf>

The Healing Foundation's initial submission to the National Preventive Health Strategy (October 2020) is available here <https://healingfoundation.org.au/2020/10/20/national-preventive-health-strategy-must-provide-healing-for-indigenous-communities/>

To raise awareness about Stolen Generations survivors, The Healing Foundation is sharing [this animation](#) about the impacts of intergenerational trauma.

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

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