

## WHAT'S YOUR ROLE IN HEALING THIS NATIONAL SORRY DAY?

The Healing Foundation is calling on all Australians to ask what they can do to contribute to the healing of the nation, as we come together to commemorate National Sorry Day.

On 26 May each year we acknowledge Sorry Day to mark the anniversary of the tabling of the *Bringing Them Home* report into the Australian Parliament in 1997.

The report detailed the history of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, under laws enacted by Australian governments.

The Healing Foundation Chair Professor Steve Larkin said the *Bringing Them Home* report gave voice to the experience Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants – stories that have had been denied, ignored, or forgotten.

“Today we pay our respects to Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities,” Professor Larkin said.

“Despite the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report, the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations, and many other inquiries – there have been more than 20 reports in the last 12 years alone – there has still been no systematic government response to the needs and rights of the Stolen Generations and their descendants.

“As we acknowledge Sorry Day, we share the message that healing is about restoring the wellbeing, strength of spirit, family connections, and lore that has made our cultures the oldest living cultures on earth.

“Healing enables people to address their personal distress, overcome trauma, and live well.”

Professor Larkin said by honouring the stories that led to national recognition of Sorry Day we aim to bring about change that can deliver better outcomes across education, health, and social and emotional wellbeing.

“The Stolen Generations have endured a lifetime of trauma, grief, and loss and as a result, they carry a significant burden of health, wellbeing, social, and economic deficits.

“Stolen Generations survivors are also ageing, and many live with disabilities and complex health problems, including poor mental health.

“They have increasingly complex overlapping needs yet face barriers, mostly systemic in nature, to accessing services.

“And they are worried about their families’ futures.

Professor Larkin also highlighted that the effects of the trauma and abuse inherent in the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children carries across to subsequent generations.

“It is reflected in the higher levels of disadvantage borne by descendants of the Stolen Generations.



# Media Release

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“Healing is fundamental to reaching our full personal, cultural, social, educational, and economic potential, and living lives from a place of strength and self-determined success.

“Healing is at the heart of the work of The Healing Foundation. It was written into the *Bringing Them Home* report from the many conversations, testimonies and stories of our people going back over 100 years.

Professor Larkin said that The Healing Foundation is currently working with Stolen Generations organisations on more than 100 grassroots community healing projects across the country.

“We will progress the healing of Stolen Generations survivors – including reparations, tailored trauma-aware and healing-informed support for ageing and ailing Stolen Generations survivors, and better access to historical records for survivors; and a National Healing Strategy to address the impact of intergenerational trauma.

“The demand for our healing expertise is growing. Our support comes in many forms – sector development, workforce capacity building, community healing forums and strategies, healing frameworks, teaching resources, Covid-19 Resilience, redress, video and audio recording of the stories of Stolen Generation survivors, mental health, men’s sheds, women’s groups, youth justice, wellbeing programs, and truth telling.

“We are well positioned this Sorry Day to show all Australians how healing happens, with a focus on intergenerational healing, rather than intergenerational trauma.”

Our message to all Australians this Sorry Day is strong and simple:

- Commit to ACTION.
- Build on STRENGTHS - of culture, spirit, and our status as First Nations peoples.
- Tell the TRUTH.
- Do no more HARM.
- End RACISM.

The Healing Foundation CEO Fiona Cornforth will be addressing the National Press Club of Australia to unveil the *Make Healing Happen* campaign on 2 June. Details are available here:

<https://www.npc.org.au/speaker/2021/836-fiona-cornforth>

To raise awareness about the Stolen Generations this Sorry Day, The Healing Foundation is sharing this animation about the impacts of intergenerational trauma: <https://youtu.be/Y-RaB19D13E>

*The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address 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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