



Five Fast Facts - The Healing Foundation

1) The Healing Foundation was established one year after the Apology.

On 13 February 2009, the [first anniversary of the Apology](#) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples acknowledging the legacy of trauma and grief as a result of colonisation and policies of removing children from their families, the Government announced that it was going to establish an organisation that would address trauma and aid healing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

After a nationwide consultation process, the report *Voices from the campfires* was produced, which made several recommendations about how the organisation should be set up. In October 2009 the Healing Foundation was officially incorporated. The Federal Government committed \$26.6 million to support the Healing Foundation until 2013. This year, the Government announced a further \$26.4 million over the next four years for the Healing Foundation to continue its work.

2) The Healing Foundation supports and promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing initiatives across Australia.

Colonisation, forced removals, and other past Australian government policies have resulted in trauma and grief for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, across generations. Many people have spoken of the ongoing pain they feel as a result of past government practices:

It never goes away. Just 'cause we're not walking around on crutches or with bandages or plasters on our arms and legs, doesn't mean we're not hurting. Just 'cause you can't see it doesn't mean ... I suspect I'll carry these sorts of wounds 'till the day I die.
(Confidential Evidence 580, Queensland. *Bringing Them Home Report*).

The Healing Foundation envisages a future where those affected by this legacy have “broken the cycle of abuse, and have enhanced their capacity as individuals, families, communities and nations, to sustain their wellbeing and that of future generations.” To achieve this goal, the Healing Foundation funds culturally strong, locally run Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs around Australia.

The Healing Foundation’s priorities include:

- defining what healing means to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- acknowledging the intergenerational impact of trauma on families and communities

- developing links between Indigenous and non-Indigenous healing models
- working with young people, building strong spirits and connections to culture
- supporting Stolen Generations survivors
- developing programs relevant to men and boys
- building on the work women have done to unite and heal families and communities.

3) The Healing Foundation is a community controlled organisation.

The Healing Foundation is a not-for-profit, community controlled organisation. This means that the organisation's priorities are developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, rather than by the government or another outside body. It also means that the Healing Foundation is governed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander board.

The Healing Foundation's chairperson is Charles Passi, a Daurareb tribesman from the Meriam Islands in the eastern Torres Strait.

4) Healing is a complex process with many different aspects.

The Healing Foundation continues to work towards understanding what healing is, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals. Some of the different aspects of healing that have emerged from the Foundation's work include:

- recovery from trauma
- re-connecting with land, identity, language, dance and song
- coming to terms with events of the past
- sharing stories
- recovery from addiction
- fostering connections between members of the Stolen Generations
- a process of returning to physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing.

The process of healing can take place on the level of the individual, the family or community, and more broadly, on the national level. The Healing Foundation supports practices that are strongly grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, values and cultures, but which can also incorporate Western viewpoints.

5) There are many different kinds of healing projects.

The Healing Foundation offers support to many different kinds of healing initiatives. Here are some examples of community-based healing projects that the Healing Foundation has funded:

- programs that renew people's connections with culture, language and country
- the development of healing centres and community healing plans
- cultural programs which use song, dance, drama and art to heal
- programs that focus on building inner strength for young people

- traditional healing methods
- programs to help people recover from drug and alcohol abuse
- projects that deal with anger management and lateral violence.

For more information about the Healing Foundation visit: <http://healingfoundation.org.au>



HealingFoundation

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