# Evaluation of the Collective Healing Grants

## Research Snapshot

### About this research

Over 14 years of granting, the CHGs have distributed over $6.1 million to 56 organisations across ten rounds of funding, supporting 138 initiatives. The most recent rounds reached more than 3,000 Stolen Generations survivors, descendants and family members, and an estimated 8,700+ participant opportunities across the earlier rounds.

The grants operate across three key areas of change: Access, Truth-telling and Healing – a framework developed collaboratively with SGOs and the steering committee.

The purpose of the evaluation was to understand the impact of the Collective Healing Grants – for Stolen Generations survivors, their families and descendants, and the organisations that support them.

### What we heard

The evaluation found consistent, positive evidence of change across all three domains and demonstrated the effectiveness of survivor-led, community-controlled healing approaches. The strongest and most consistent outcomes observed in round 10 included:

- **Truth-telling**
  All survey participants reported observing, 'to a great extent', that survivors experienced more confidence to tell their stories, a stronger sense of belonging and social and emotional wellbeing, and greater pride and self-esteem.

- **Connection supports healing**
  All survey participants reported observing, 'to a great extent', that families and descendants had an increased understanding of what Stolen Generations survivors have experienced, a deeper understanding of their own history, and greater pride and self-esteem.

- **Building Stronger Stolen Generations Organisations**
  All survey participants reported that the grants contributed significantly to increased organisational capability and capacity.

These outcomes are consistent with findings from earlier grant rounds.

A defining finding of the evaluation was evidence of intergenerational healing, with survivors, descendants and families coming together to share stories, strengthen cultural identity and rebuild connections fractured by forced removal. This was one of the most significant and consistent outcomes observed across the program and reinforces the importance of ongoing investment in healing.

## What happens next?

The evaluation confirms that Collective Healing Grants are delivering meaningful outcomes for survivors, descendants, and communities. The findings will inform future grant making, advocacy and policy discussions, and support broader sector learning about effective healing approaches.

The evaluation also identified opportunities to strengthen future impact through:

- **Increased and longer-term investment** to meet growing demand.
- **Support for organisational sustainability**, including workforce wellbeing, governance and capability development.
- **Expanded reach** to underserved communities and regions.
- **Continued investment in survivor-led and community-controlled approaches**, which were consistently identified as critical to success.
- **Greater collaboration and knowledge sharing** across the Stolen Generations sector.

As survivors age and intergenerational impacts continue to be experienced by descendants and communities, ongoing investment in healing remains essential. Recent AIHW findings show that descendants now represent 45 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and that many survivors continue to experience high psychological distress and barriers to accessing support. These findings reinforce the importance of continued investment in healing and in the Stolen Generations organisations that provide trusted, culturally safe and community-controlled support.

## Why this research matters

Nearly 30 years after the release of *Bringing them home,* survivors, descendants and communities continue to experience the impacts of forced removal policies. Recent evidence highlights ongoing challenges including psychological distress, barriers to accessing support and intergenerational impacts affecting around 200,000 adult descendants.

Against this backdrop, the work of SGOs, and the funding that supports them, remains essential. The evaluation demonstrates that Collective Healing Grants strengthen connection to culture, family and community, support truth-telling and improve wellbeing for survivors, descendants and communities.

The impact of this work extends beyond those who participate directly. By creating opportunities for communities to reconnect, share and preserve their histories, the grants contribute to truth-telling and greater public understanding of the Stolen Generations and their ongoing legacy. They

also provide evidence that investment in healing delivers meaningful outcomes for survivors, descendants and future generations.

**Download the full report: https://healingfoundation.org.au/media/zw5g5unv/collective-healing-grants-evaluation-report_.pdf**

## Acknowledgement

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