Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Link Up Alice Springs

For over 50 years, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress), located in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), has provided support and advocacy for Aboriginal people in the struggle for justice and equity. The Congress Link Up Service supports Aboriginal people and families living in central Australia who have been separated from family through forced removal, fostering, adoption or institutionalisation between 1910 and 1970.

Support is provided across a vast area, including up to Tennant Creek and down to the South Australian border. The services include family history research and reunion; family tracing; graveside and return to Country reunions and associated social and emotional support; healing activities, including healing camps, support groups and counselling; and assistance with Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme applications.

How the Collective Healing Grant has been used

The Congress Link Up Service has received three Collective Healing Grants in the last four years, strengthening its engagement with members of the Stolen Generations. During 2024–25 they supported over 120 Stolen Generations members. They also referred 76 clients to the Redress Scheme, and advocacy for community members to test their eligibility for the scheme.

Social events are an important part of support activities, including morning tea and information sessions (for example on aged care, disability support and Centrelink) and an annual Christmas party. Events are held to commemorate significant days, such as National Sorry Day and National Apology Anniversary. In the last two years they have coordinated a community film event on Sorry Day, connecting the broader community. Stolen Generations members enjoy receiving 6-monthly printed newsletters which provide a written record of activities with photos and stories. The team also provides information on the Link-Up program to other local agencies and promotes their services at shows, during NAIDOC week and other events.

With funding from a Collective Healing Grant, Congress is undertaking an oral history project, facilitating members of the Stolen Generations to tell their stories. The grant has allowed a project lead and people with skills in writing and photography to be engaged, to honour the stories and produce them professionally.

According to a Senior Manager at Congress:

> *'Without the grants we wouldn't have been able to facilitate the film event for the broader community – it's a lot of work. Also the current project, "This is My Story", would not be possible without the Collective Healing Grant funding ... The Healing Foundation grants allows us to lift our profile and reach and provide additional activities for our Stolen Generation members.'*

Collective Healing Grants have been distributed by The Healing Foundation to Stolen Generations Organisations on behalf of the National Indigenous Australians Agency since 2012.

The Collective Healing Grants support Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants through initiatives that promote healing, strengthen community connections, and enhance wellbeing for Stolen Generations survivors and their communities. These initiatives are delivered by dedicated and committed organisations working to create lasting and positive change across Australia.

The grants program emphasises the importance of intergenerational connections, cultural preservation, and capacity building within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Link Up Alice Springs
Phone: (08) 8951 4400, Email: info@caac.org.au
Website: caac.org.au

Collective Healing Grants case study

Impact of the Collective Healing Grants – the value of truth telling

The Congress Link Up Service helps Stolen Generations survivors across central Australia to participate in healing activities, tell their stories, and receive validation that their stories are being heard. Attending healing activities and events enhances their sense of belonging and positively impacts their social–emotional health, as well as building stronger connections between generations. The impacts are similar for their families and descendants. A Link Up staff member shares the significance of in-person events:

> *'Stolen Generations members who grew up together in group homes are family to one another. By bringing members together it provides an opportunity to catch up, share stories have a laugh, and share their healing.'*

They also noted the importance of the environment:

> *'By providing a safe comfortable space with supportive staff that acknowledges and reinforces to Stolen Generation members they are survivors, assists in healing.'*

Survivors are consulted about the topics for information sessions, to ensure they are valuable and meeting their changing needs. Being able to engage directly and regularly with survivors and their families have deepened relationships with staff and increased trust which facilitates better service delivery.

Sharing stories through the oral history project has provided a pathway to healing for survivors, supported by social workers, it ensures their stories are recorded before they are lost. The project will promote understanding in the broader community of the personal and intergenerational effects of the policies of forcible child removal, and was launched alongside National Sorry Day commemorations in 2026. Short versions of the stories will be available to the public, with a longer, detailed book for survivors and their families that provide a personal archive of photos and history. A Link Up staff member says recording these stories is a priority:

> *'Survivors were voicing they wanted their stories recorded. There were worries that their stories would be lost. Some Stolen Generation members never shared their stories before ... it's a part of their healing journey. We are proud and privileged to be able to be a part of this healing journey.'*



The Collective Healing Grant has allowed the Congress Link Up team to engage with more survivors, strengthen education resources and programs, and build organisational capabilities. Members are also more connected with other support services, government departments, and other Stolen Generation Organisations. A Link Up staff member reflected on the benefits for the Congress Link Up team:

> *'We have held information sessions with local and interstate Stolen Generations Organisations and had the opportunity to work closely with The Healing Foundation which has been very beneficial. Our organisation has continued to thrive, along with our staff and we have strived for continuous quality improvements to provide a best practice, trauma-informed model of service delivery.'*

Future plans

The Congress Link Up team would like to continue their large-scale events and to scale up the 'This is My Story' history project, to record more stories. Ideally a bigger grant is needed to manage the project separately. Currently the Link Up team are doing a lot of work to support the project such as liaison with Stolen Generations survivors, assisting with transport, picking up photos and other associated activities, which adds pressure and impacts undertaking their other activities.