Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation

On Whadjuk Nyoongar Boodja, Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation is a community dedicated to healing, cultural preservation and empowerment.

Established in 2004 by former residents of the Sister Kate's Children's Home in Queens Park, Western Australia, Sister Kate's believe in the power of connection – bringing together Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants to share stories, strengthen cultural identity, foster relationships and heal across generations.

How the Collective Healing Grants have been used

Sister Kate's supports Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants through a growing range of healing, cultural and community-led activities. Their work includes truth-telling, cultural learning experiences, kinship mapping, and intergenerational healing programs – all designed to strengthen connections between Elders and young people, build cultural identity, and support mental health and resilience. Central to this is helping younger generations understand the impacts of the Stolen Generations while developing their own sense of pride, identity and cultural responsibility.

The Healing Foundation's support has been critical to sustaining and growing this work. Five consecutive years of Collective Healing Grants have given Sister Kate's a rare and valuable foundation of stability in the community sector – one that makes it possible to hold a long-term vision and work towards it. With multi-year funding they can build trusted relationships, run programs with continuity, and develop as an organisation, rather than rebuilding with each new funding cycle.

The grant has also supported Sister Kate's successful bid to be granted care of 2.7 hectares of land in Queens Park.

Impact of the Collective Healing Grants

Sister Kate's work sits at the heart of intergenerational trauma, reconnecting survivors and young descendants while navigating the complex family dynamics trauma leaves behind. They support survivors to manage their guilt and the expectations of younger family members who don't fully understand the experience of survivors. To guide this sensitive work, the round 10 grant enabled Sister Kate's to engage an experienced social and emotional wellbeing specialist, a Nyungar woman, bringing both professional expertise and deep cultural knowledge to the programs.

A foundation of this work has been building trusted relationships with Elders, so they feel safe and confident to share their stories with younger participants. The results have been significant. Survivors have shown increased confidence to tell their stories, a stronger sense of belonging, and a feeling that their experiences are finally being heard and valued. As Jenny Day from Sister Kate's reflects:

> *'They're being recognised now ... they've got a good story and people are listening now. And these grants have done that.'*

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.





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Alongside growing confidence, survivors have also reported greater pride and self-esteem. In Jenny's words:

> *'There's no longer the shame – stories are out in the open. The Elders are seen as heroes and we are respecting them, therefore their esteem is lifted.'*

For descendants, the programs have deepened their understanding of Stolen Generations history and their own family story. Jacinda Blurton from Sister Kate's describes the shift she has observed:

> *'The program has given a lot of Elders confidence to actually tell their stories to young fellas, and they can see what their grandparents went through and empathise with them.'*

This empathy is matched by a growing sense of belonging. For some descendants, the loss of family at a young age left them disconnected from Community and Country. The programs have allowed Elders to restore those connections. Jacinda shares:

> *'For some of the descendants, their grandparents, mum or dad died quite young, and other Elders have stood up and actually reconnected them back into the community – they're like, 'Oh, I know who your mob is'. They give them details of where they come from, what Country they should go back to and visit to reconnect with their like identity, and things like that, so they start feeling a bit of belonging.'*

Descendants have also developed greater social and emotional wellbeing, and practical life skills including confidence to engage with employment and health services. Sister Kate's supports young people to think beyond immediate employment goals, building the mental resilience and self-belief needed to navigate life independently.



Cousins Pictures by Jacinda Blurton

About the Sister Kate's Children's Home

Sister Kate's Children's Home was established in Queens Park by mid-1934 when Sister Kate Clutterbuck moved with seven Aboriginal children from the Children's Cottage Home at Buckland Hill in Cottesloe.

From 1935 it was run by non-denominational management committees and from 1955 by the Presbyterian Church. In 1947, Kenwick Farm was established as a branch of the home. In 1980, Sister Kate's amalgamated with the Methodist Training Centre at Mogumber and became Sister Kate's Child and Family Services. According to the *Bringing them home* report (1997), Sister Kate's was a site that housed many removed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Survivors share their stories including being left with an unrepairable scar of loneliness, mistrust, hatred and bitterness.

Source: The Healing Foundation map, map.healingfoundation.org.au

As Jacinda puts it:

> *'The program has been developing very well – it's about having them get so strong in the head, like having that mental resilience to the point where they get into work and other spaces without support and that they won't crumble. That's my goal for all of them ... That they start shifting their brain in a different direction and reprogramming.'*

Sister Kate's has also extended its impact into the broader community through Cultural Learning Experiences delivered to external organisations, such as supporting the City of Canning in their cultural awareness.

The Collective Healing Grants have also strengthened Sister Kate's as an organisation, building capacity, supporting core operations, and providing the clarity of purpose that sustained funding brings. As Jenny reflects:

> *'The grant has given us a purpose and end goal to commit to programs.'*

Future plans

Sister Kate's plan to build on the success of their programs and continue to deliver and evolve their intergenerational healing work. They will also continue to work with the community to determine how best to use the 2.7 hectares of land in Queens Park, envisioned as a cultural centre and place of healing and connection.