Mibbinbah Spirit Healing

Since 2007, Mibbinbah Spirit Healing has brought communities together to create safe spaces for healing, empowerment, celebration, education and training. Founded as a health promotion charity supporting the wellbeing of First Nations males – who continue to face significant inequalities – its work has since evolved to reach and support the whole community, including Stolen Generations survivors, their descendants and families.

How the Collective Healing Grant was used

With a Collective Healing Grant in 2023–24, Mibbinbah piloted a program to support Wilcannia (Western NSW) Stolen Generations Elders through its Intergenerational Mentoring program. The program continued in 2025–26 with further grant funding. The program enables Elders and their descendants to access healing programs, one-on-one support, and take active roles in expanded community initiatives.

The Intergenerational Mentoring program aims to rebuild intergenerational connections impacted by trauma and family breakdown, stemming from child removal and other policies that systematically undermined the authority of Elders. It supports Stolen Generations Elders and families to engage, heal and take on leadership roles.

The program is delivered through one-on-one sessions and workshops, using a strengths-based approach guided by Mibbinbah's Proper Way. It includes check-ins, follow-up support (in person and online), and opportunities to connect with existing community programs and yarning circles. Sessions incorporate guided meditation, breathing exercises, and cultural practices such as smoking ceremonies, Didgeridoo playing, basketweaving, boomerang throwing, and art workshops.

Impact of the Collective Healing Grant

The 2023–24 program connected with eight Wilcannia Stolen Generations survivors and a further 22 participants who identify as direct descendants of the Stolen Generation. In 2024–25 they continued to support these participants and connected with further survivors and descendants.

The Mibbinbah team has observed Stolen Generations survivors experience increased confidence to participate in healing activities, to access and engage with support services, and to share their stories. There is validation they are being heard.

Descendants have developed a stronger awareness of Stolen Generations history and a deeper understanding of both survivors' experiences and their own histories. They have also gained confidence to participate in healing activities and engage with support services.

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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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Collective Healing Grants case study

According to Jack Bulman, Co-founder and CEO of Mibbinbah Spirit Healing:

> *Participants get a deeper understanding of each other through storytelling and the different workshops that we've run where they engage and share. Then they also get one-on-one support which is particularly valuable for survivors.*

Participants have experienced stronger social and emotional wellbeing, including a deeper sense of belonging, greater pride and renewed Cultural roles and participation. There are stronger connections across generations within the community.

Jack shared this story of healing to illustrate the impact of the program:

> *'One particular lad found out he was part of the Stolen Generation and that he grew up near his real family, that his best mate was his cousin. He had so much built up frustration from the lost years. His parents lived in the next street and couldn't speak to him. He had always felt different, but didn't understand why. There was so much anger and a lot of guilt – he had suicidal thoughts. Through this program he was able to talk and work through healing and the sacredness of anger and what it was doing. It was beautiful energy to witness. There are many other stories like that.'*

He also told how a participant was able to establish a Community leadership role:

> *'An Uncle had been taken away with his brother and sister, given a new identity and educated. Then he came back into Community and was subjected to reverse racism – seen as too white; not black. With the support of this program, he is standing today as one of the local Elders and men people go to.'*

Without the Collective Healing Grants, Mibbinbah would continue to deliver their core work, however, the situation in Wilcannia would be dire. According to Jack:

> *'Without the program suicide rates, mental health and wellbeing would be far worse. The program is incredibly impactful. We couldn't specifically visit Wilcannia without the funding. With it we can provide targeted support where there's a critical need. I think that it's fair to say that lives have been saved by us being able to be in Community.'*

Mibbinbah will use the evidence gathered in the Wilcannia program to advocate for this type of support for Stolen Generations members in other communities they work in.



Key lessons

According to Mibbinbah their program for Stolen Generations survivors in Wilcannia highlights the importance of a community-centred, strength-based approach grounded in respect, partnership and cultural integrity. They say the success of programs in similar communities depends on centring the process around community strengths, maintaining adaptability and committing to long-term engagement. They shared these key lessons:

1. Community engagement and trust

Building trust and respect takes time but is essential. Involving mob in planning and delivery strengthens ownership and participation.

2. Cultural sensitivity

Respecting local culture and values ensures relevance. Programs must be tailored to specific community needs, not one-size-fits-all.

3. Flexibility and adaptability

Programs need to respond to feedback and evolving community needs to remain effective. Ongoing refinement of program strategies supports continuous improvement.

4. Evaluation and feedback

Regular evaluations and participant insights help assess what works and what doesn't. This ensures programs can be enhanced to deliver their intended outcomes.

5. Sustainability

Focusing on long-term planning and sustainability – including alternative funding sources – from the outset helps community initiatives continue delivering benefits after external support ends.