Teralba Park Stolen Generations Support Group Inc

Teralba Park Stolen Generations Support Group Inc. (TPSGSG) is a not-for-profit organisation founded as a direct response to the 1997 *Bringing them home* report. In 1998, an official opening was held at Teralba Park with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and they have held their annual National Sorry Day Commemoration there ever since.



What began as a small group of Stolen Generations survivors and supporters has grown into an annual commemoration attended by around 400 people – schools, community groups, the Australian Defence Force, politicians and local residents, all coming together to ensure that what happened is never forgotten, and that those who lived it are never invisible.

Alongside Sorry Day, TPSGSG supports healing through yarning circles, community gatherings, school visits, and intergenerational learning that connects survivors, descendants, and younger generations to one another. In the words of Zoe Andolfatto, Secretary, TPSGSG:

> *'Sorry Day is not just an event. It is a promise to those who have passed that they will not be forgotten. To those who never found their way back to their families, their stories live on. To those who found their families but could never find that connection again – we see you. We feel for you. We are here for you. That is what 27 years of showing up looks like.'*

How the Collective Healing Grant was used

The Collective Healing Grant has supported TPSGSG across a range of healing activities, from the annual National Sorry Day commemoration to community yarning circles that have brought together schoolchildren, their extended families, businesses and local politicians. The grant enabled TPSGSG to establish a new Elders group and begin working directly in schools, with Elders regularly visiting with students and hosting yarning circles. The stories of Stolen Generations survivors from Teralba Park have been recorded and documented, preserving their voices and lived experience for future generations. From listening deeply to those stories through yarning circles, an illustrated story and learning resource has been written for students. The grant has also allowed Elders who have given their time voluntarily for many years to be remunerated for their time and intellectual property.

The healing work of capturing stories, strengthening cultural connection and building intergenerational knowledge is important and urgent.

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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HealingFoundation

Collective Healing Grants case study



Zoe shared:

> *'We don't have many Elders left. The loss this year alone has been significant, and the work of capturing their stories has never felt more urgent.'*

Impact of the Collective Healing Grants

For survivors

For some survivors, standing up and speaking publicly has been a step toward confidence, supported not only by the room's response but also by the presence of Elders beside them, holding space and leaning on one another. TPSGSG have observed increased confidence to engage in healing activities, a growing willingness to share their stories, and stronger connections between generations. As Zoe observed:

> *'When survivors speak, and the room listens – really listens – you can see something shift. That is where the confidence comes from.'*

Survivors have shown a stronger sense of belonging and social and emotional wellbeing. Zoe reflected on how quickly that shift has been felt:

> *'That's changed just in six months. The change is quite dramatic.'*

There has also been renewed participation in cultural roles and activities, increased pride and self-esteem, and stronger connections between generations. Survivors feeling validated that their stories are truly being heard remains something TPSGSG is actively working toward. As Zoe put it:

> *'While people are listening, they're not hearing, if that makes sense.'*

Progress is being made through the recording project and ongoing yarning circles, and the grant has been central to that work.

For descendants and families

For descendants and families, the disconnect from culture and community that removal created runs deep – it does not end with the survivor generation.

TPSGSG activities have supported descendants and families toward a greater understanding of their own history, connection to culture, and pride in who they are as a people. Zoe reflected on what that reconnection looks like in practice:

> *'Some descendants don't know how to feel pride in their Culture. There's a disconnect from Culture because of removal. Having Elders around has made a difference. Elders have a way of just bringing you in and making you feel safe and secure.'*

For the organisation

The grant has increased TPSGSG's capabilities, enabling them to fund their core operations, expand their healing activities and connect with more survivors. They were also able to collaborate with other Stolen Generation Organisations and strengthen education resources and programs.

> *'Without the grant, I think the activities would have still taken place, but it would have taken longer. What the grant actually did was give us a broader vision, like the storytelling and recording we were doing … the grant really made us think about the activities we could do and got us very excited about everything; it certainly pushed us beyond our perimeters. And we've got bigger dreams!'*

Future plans

The bigger dreams for TPSGSG include one day having a permanent home, a place where the service operates from and where people can walk in and feel welcome. The vision is to build capability and provide wraparound support within the community: education, financial literacy and a pathway back to connection for those coming out of. TPSGSG would also like to broaden the recording project and expand their illustrated story and learning resources.

TPSGSG's story is one of quiet, consistent, and determined presence. For 27 years, without fanfare and largely through volunteer effort, this organisation has held space for survivors, descendants, and families, showing up year after year because the work is not finished, and the people it serves have always deserved more than silence. Good governance, the right people, and a shared vision have been the foundation. But what has sustained it is something harder to measure, a deep commitment to ensuring that those who were taken are seen, that those who were lost are remembered, and that those who are still finding their way back are never alone.