



HealingFoundation

Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People

Fifth Anniversary of the National Apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Report on the 2013 Micro-Grant Funding Round



Background

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation is a national, independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation with a focus on healing our community.

Established on the first anniversary of the Apology to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Healing Foundation works to address the profound legacy of pain and hurt in our people's lives caused by colonisation, forced removals and other past government policies. The Healing Foundation is improving the wellbeing of our people by:

- developing the story of healing by funding healing programs
- raising the profile and documenting the importance of culturally strong healing programs through research and evaluation
- building leadership and the capacity of communities and workers to deal with trauma through education and training.

For the past three years, together with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Healing Foundation has made small grants available to communities to commemorate and celebrate the National Apology to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

13 February 2013 – Healing our Past, Building our Future

Given the importance of the fifth anniversary of the National Apology, the Healing Foundation provided grants in the range of \$500 to \$1000 for communities to commemorate and celebrate the National Apology. The theme for this year's event was 'Healing our Past, Building our Future'.

Smaller grants were used to fund events such as screenings of the Apology, yarning circles, memorial services to honour Stolen Generations members, educational workshops for children and young people, and community cultural showcases. Larger grants enabled communities to hold community events that included multi organisations holding public events that included welcome to country, smoking ceremonies, healing workshops, invited guest speakers, yarning circles and the sharing of bush tucker. Some of these events were able to be held on country.

The Healing Foundation awarded 155 micro-grants to community organisations and schools to hold events. Twelve organisations were unable to host events within the timeframe and funds were returned to the Healing Foundation. Of the 143 micro-grants distributed, only a few events had to be postponed slightly due to inclement weather, local sorry business or other conflicting community issues. Some organisations teamed up and pooled their available resources to host events in their community. All-in-all, 132 events were held across the country to commemorate and celebrate the anniversary of the National Apology.

Events by State / Territory	
Queensland	34
New South Wales	60
Victoria	9
South Australia	4
Western Australia	18
Northern Territory	6
ACT	1
Total	132

Key Achievements and Outcomes

Funding per State / Territory	
Queensland	22,250
New South Wales	39,450
Victoria	5,050
South Australia	2,000
Western Australia	12,400
Northern Territory	5,400
ACT	500
Total	\$87,050

Participants by State / Territory	
Queensland	9,133
New South Wales	9,030
Victoria	1,393
South Australia	263
Western Australia	997
Northern Territory	363
ACT	50
Total	21,229

The Healing Foundation distributed over \$87,000 to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia to host 132 apology events.

The apology events reached **over 21,200** people nationwide.

A common theme in the feedback received was that these types of events help to keep the spirit of the National Apology alive and contribute to participants' experiences of healing, particularly for members of the Stolen Generations. It was also seen as important to acknowledge that many who had been deeply affected by colonisation and past government policies had not survived to hear the apology and there was a need to pay tribute to them.

Acknowledging the lived histories of Stolen Generations survivors and providing opportunities for community to come together to pay respects and to celebrate their resilience and determination was seen as a healing experience in and of itself. These types of community events were also seen to raise the profile of healing and support environments that enable healing for community members.

Events were held across remote, regional and urban communities, in all states and territories except Tasmania. Over two-thirds of events were held in regional and remote communities of Australia. There continued to be a good uptake by regional communities especially, a pattern attributed to the increasing presence of the Healing Foundation in these areas through community healing projects, training initiatives, sponsorship of events and social media engagement.

Events by Area Classification	
Very Remote	9
Remote	8
Outer Regional	37
Inner Regional	41
Major City	37
Total	132

Participants by Area Classification	
Very Remote	422
Remote	1,645
Outer Regional	6,175
Inner Regional	6,975
Major City	6,012
Total	21,229

This year also saw many kindergartens, schools and training institutions host apology events. Over one-quarter of all events were delivered to children and young people through these organisations including classroom activities, whole-of-school assemblies and cultural ceremonies and performances. Engaging younger generations in the spirit of the National Apology and the healing movement was seen as overwhelmingly positive. It also provided opportunities for non-Indigenous students to learn about the experiences of Stolen Generations members and bring together non-Indigenous and Indigenous students in learning and celebration. Feedback from teachers showed that these types of events gave them a platform to have deeper conversations with their students about this part of our nation's history and the impact this has on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders today.

Many organisations and Elders expressed their gratitude to the Healing Foundation and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for giving their community the opportunity to hold an event to mark this important occasion. A review of the reports received by the Healing Foundation clearly highlights how effective these types of funding rounds can be. Even small grants can support communities to come together in a culturally safe place to talk, share and contribute towards our ongoing acknowledgment of the importance of the National Apology. It also provides communities with opportunities to support members of the Stolen Generations to continue their healing journey.

Stories from Around the Country

MAJOR CITY

Link-Up (Qld) – Brisbane, Queensland

Link-Up (Qld) marked the anniversary of the apology with the Hon Kevin Rudd MP in attendance. The day began with a yarning circle for more than 20 members of the Stolen Generations. Here they were supported to share their stories and talk about what the Apology had meant to them in 2008 and today. During the official ceremony, the aunties invited Mr Rudd to speak and Les Collins performed his song, 'Great Moments', a reflection on what the apology has meant to Indigenous Australians. Moving performances by students of the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA) and the Meeanjin Voices and Songlines Choir contributed to the celebratory mood of the day. This event highlighted how important it is to acknowledge and pay respect to the resiliency, strength of character and capacity for forgiveness of the Stolen Generations survivors.

"The feeling was it [the National Apology] was really good and strong. It was one of the best things ever. It took a long time but it happened, and when it did, it took some of the pain away."

– Kimberley Stolen Generation Office, Broome, WA

"It is important for our community to pay respect for our Elders who have passed on without receiving the apology."

– Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Alice Springs, NT

“Moving, touching, memorable. Bonds strengthened, opportunities for people to feel safe and comfortable sharing their stories. Sadness, laughter, joy and healing. People left feeling good.”

– Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women’s Shelter, Darwin, NT

“By commemorating and recognising the Apology, it brought our community together and revealed the significance of this event in our nation’s history. It was also interesting to see the realisation that the Stolen Generation was still having an impact on people in our community today and that this is part of our recent history as Australians.”

– Browns Plains State High School, Browns Plains, Qld

REMOTE

Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation – Tennant Creek, NT

The local health service hosted a morning of activities that included a yarning group for members of the Stolen Generations, speeches from young and old community members about what the apology had meant to them, and watching the National Apology again together. Balloons with messages of hope, forgiveness and healing were released, followed by a shared meal that provided many opportunities for sharing stories about kin, country and community. Fifty community members attended. Organisers of the event commented that this type of gathering encourages community healing by recognising that this is part of their recent history and is the root of much of the trauma in their young people.

REGIONAL

Willmot Public School – Willmot, NSW

Willmot Public School commemorated the apology by hosting a day of workshops, lessons and activities for students of the local primary and secondary schools. Activities included yarning circles, Aboriginal art, storytelling, traditional and contemporary dance, traditional Indigenous sports and poetry writing. Students learnt about the history of the Stolen Generations and expressed empathy and sorrow. The Aboriginal staff and community commented that they believed the students had walked away from the day with a greater appreciation of Indigenous history and that the Aboriginal students had demonstrated great pride and leadership skills throughout the day, generating a sense of optimism and hope in the school.

“It was the most powerful acknowledgement I have been to and certainly will change the way I present it [the National Apology] to kids in the future.”

– Woodberry Public School, Woodberry, NSW

“For our Indigenous community members, the ceremony was a significant celebration ... I could feel their sense of pride to share their culture with their school community and to be acknowledged in such a powerful way.”

– Clairvaux Catholic School, Belmont, VIC



Kirrawe Indigenous Corporation, Queensland



North Rockhampton State High School, Queensland



Queanbeyan Schools as Community Centres, New South Wales



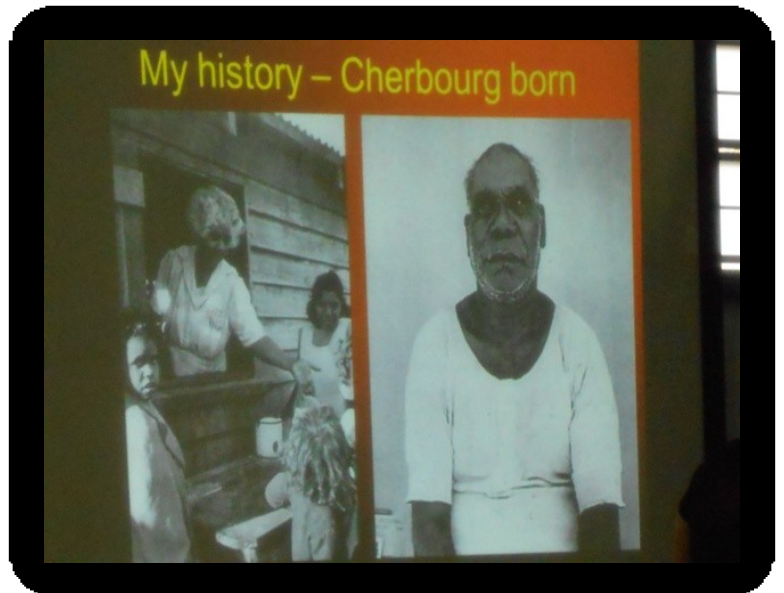
Woodberry Public School,
New South Wales



New England Medicare Local,
New South Wales



Rise Community Support Network,
Western Australia



Mountain Creek State High School,
Queensland



COMMEMORATION: Balloons were released into the sky as part of Healing Day, an event marking former prime minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations. Photo: Geoff O'Neill 130213G0A02

Healing Day celebrates Rudd's historic apology

DOZENS of pale blue balloons were released into the sky above Tamworth yesterday as part of the region's commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the government's historic apology to the Stolen Generations.

To mark the theme of Healing Our Past, Building Our Future, the New England Medicare Local Aboriginal health programs team hosted a Healing Day for the community.

The event aimed to encourage healing, bring the community closer together and promote reconciliation and positivity.

About 250 people attended, including schools, Aboriginal elders, non-Aboriginal people and representatives from a wide range of com-

munity groups and organisations.

"People who don't usually come together came together today, so that was good," organiser Ryan Taylor said.

Elders, youth and members of the Stolen Generations made speeches, and the McCarthy dance group performed.

The blue balloons – the colour of healing – were released to recognise all those affected by the Stolen Generations.

"I think it was well-received. I had a lot of positive feedback and a lot of people said it was needed and hope the community continues to organise events such as today," Mr Taylor said.

New England Medicare Local,
New South Wales



REMEMBRANCE: Members of the Tamworth High School junior Aboriginal education consultancy group, from left, Katrina Nolan, Alex Jordan, Georgia Taggart, Kiara Clare, Taneeka Chisholm, Montana Ellsley, Matika Porter and Tjanara Sampson prepare to release balloons in honour of those affected by the Stolen Generations. Photo: Geoff O'Neill 130213G0A03

Zillmere man remembers national apology

ZILLMERE resident Duncan Johnson made his way to Canberra five years ago to witness the National Apology Speech first hand.

Last week, he joined 100 people in Taigum to celebrate this anniversary, remember the past and pay their respects.

"Me and my daughter were in parliament house five years ago when it all happened,"

Mr Johnson said. "It was amazing, an indescribable feeling."

To mark the anniversary - of the Motion of Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples - families from all over north Brisbane visited Koobara Kindy for a breakfast sponsored by the Healing Foundation and Winangali.

"It's good coming together with the com-

munity and everyone getting involved," Mr Johnson said.

"For us older people it's good because of the recognition but there's still a lot of things (to be) undone."

On February 13, 2008 then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered a speech to apologise for past laws, policies and practices in particular that devastated Australia's Indigenous people and their way of life - and in particular for the Stolen Generation.

- Renee Subacius



• Families moving forward - Tashina Roma, her son Jayden Moore and uncle Duncan Johnson enjoy the Koobara National Apology Acknowledgement Breakfast.

Koobara Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kindergarten, Queensland

Cover Photo:

Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corporation, Western Australia