

Halo Leadership

Halo Leadership, an organisation building hope, aspirations and leadership for young men in Perth, launched its healing program on 11 April 2011.

Halo works with young men between the ages of 14 to 25 who are in conflict with the justice system. It provides culturally strong programs preventing destructive and offending behaviours being passed from one generation to the next.

The healing project, funded by the Healing Foundation, works with young Noongar men who are at risk of offending or re-offending in a six month community, cultural and personal leadership project.

The young men reconnect with land and culture through trips to country with Aboriginal elders and are supported by



Lee-Ann Smith and Shane Edmund from Halo with Foundation Board Members Graham Gee and Florence Onus

ongoing group work, mentoring, sport and employment opportunities.

"Our goal is to reduce risk, stabilise behaviours and teach responsibility allowing our young men to move into further education or training and enjoying economic freedom and independence" said Halo CEO Lee-Anne Smith. ☉

Send us your Stories

We would like to include healing stories from around Australia in our newsletter.

Please contact us:
info@healingfoundation.org.au
or phone (02) 6273 0722.

Profile: Florence Onus

Florence has been the Chairperson of the Healing Foundation since its beginnings in December 2009. She is a descendant of the Birri-Gubba and Kairi/Bidjara clans of Queensland and a survivor of the Stolen Generations.

Florence's vision for the Healing Foundation is for it to be recognised as the authority on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander healing. Florence sees the Foundation providing Australia's decision makers with evidence of the positive impact community healing programs have in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This research

will assist to prioritise Indigenous healing in public policy development resulting in ongoing support and funding.

Colonisation has fractured the lives of Indigenous individuals, families and communities. Florence sees the Foundation encouraging these communities to access healing through community engagement and promotional campaigns.

As a Stolen Generations survivor Florence acknowledges the ongoing work of the Stolen Generation Alliance, the National Sorry Day Committee and Link-Up. She would like to see the Stolen Generations Working Partnership (a partnership between the Australian Government and Stolen Generations advocates



and their supporters) grow and become an effective mechanism to promote the interests of the Stolen Generations.

"It's been a wonderful opportunity being involved with the Healing Foundation" said Florence. I've had the privilege of observing many different models of healing. I'd like to use this insight to benefit the communities in my region." ☉

Our Healing Our Way

Newsletter • Issue 1 • April 2011

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation



Welcome to the first edition of *Our Healing Our Way*, the newsletter of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation.

This newsletter provides us with the opportunity to engage with people throughout Australia who are involved with Indigenous healing.

We want to encourage and adopt an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world view for how healing will be undertaken in our communities.

We welcome your contributions. Please send us your stories and comments.

My name is Richard Weston and I'm the CEO of the Healing Foundation. I'm a descendant of the Meriam people of the Torres Strait and I've worked in Indigenous affairs for 20 years, the last

14 in Indigenous controlled health services in Far West NSW and Queensland.

I started work at the Healing Foundation in September 2010 and already I've met many extraordinary people working in the area of Indigenous healing. Governed by a Board committed to achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we're developing links with healing programs throughout Australia.

In its first year the Healing Foundation has been able to bring together hundreds of people to talk about healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on a national level. We've funded 21 organisations to run some ground breaking and community led healing initiatives.

We have continued the work of many of our elders and community leaders in advancing the healing journey for all our people with government and the community at large. We will notify you all when a decision has been made about the next round of project funding.

The projects we've funded are diverse but there are some common threads that run through them. They have been developed and led with strong involvement of the local Indigenous communities and culture is a central element.

Some of the immediate benefits from the healing initiatives are: the creation of 67 new jobs in healing and over 6,500 community members will have some link to a new healing journey, their own or a family member.

The Healing Foundation has formed a partnership with the NRL All Stars to promote practical and community based healing initiatives in Indigenous communities.

With support from FaHCSIA, the Healing Foundation was also able to fund more than 70 community organisations to run commemorative events for the Apology anniversary. These events ranged from community BBQs to the screening of *Bran Nue Dae*.

The intergenerational impact of trauma in Indigenous communities necessitates a focus on children and young people. In recent years there has been a significant investment in early child development with a noticeable lack of resources dedicated to young people. For this reason the Healing Foundation is prioritising funding to develop 3 pilot projects in strategic locations across the country for young people aged 10 to 19. These programs will help to build the evidence and knowledge of healing programs for young people.

We have just launched our new website which will keep you up to date with all the latest healing information from around Australia. Please have a look www.healingfoundation.org.au

As the Healing Foundation looks to the future we thank all those healing warriors who paved the way for us to come into being and pay our respects by continuing to foster your hard efforts through our collective healing journey into the future.

I hope you enjoy our first edition. ☉

2011 Healing Programs Evaluation Workshop



▲ Evaluation Workshop participants: Roger Knox - Aboriginal Music Showcase, Warwick Queensland; Milliwanga Sandy - Jawyon Association, Katherine NT; Vicki Couzins - Banmirra Arts, Bairnsdale Victoria

Twenty healing programs from throughout Australia came together for the first Healing Foundation evaluation workshop in February. Funded by the Healing Foundation, the projects provide healing for children and young people, men, women, families and communities, and the Stolen Generations.

Project representatives shared their experiences and made lasting links with other organisations to support the development of healing programs from an Indigenous world view. Even

though the projects are based in urban, regional and remote areas there was a real connectedness amongst the group.

Many ideas about healing were shared during the course of the workshop. Participants attempted to define what healing is and to describe how you know if healing has occurred.

“This healing work that we will do together is talk between 2 people’s tongues that will allow us to be strong and to sort out how to build our lives

together” said Margaret Kenmarre Turner from Akeyulerre, a traditional healing centre in Alice Springs.

The workshop helped to define the understanding and framework around healing for our people and communities and has assisted the Healing Foundation work towards an evaluation framework that fits for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The workshop was facilitated by Aboriginal cultural educator Grant Sarra whose ability to create a respectful environment contributed to its success. ●

“Healing is bringing our culture home to our hearts – a feeling of inter-connectedness.”

Anniversary of the Apology Celebration Grants

Communities throughout Australia celebrated the third anniversary of the National Apology with 72 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations receiving grants from the Healing Foundation. A wonderful variety of events were funded including yarning sessions, BBQs, dance and music performances, art activities and tree planting ceremonies.

In flood-affected Ipswich, the Kambu Medical Centre, which played a pivotal role providing crisis support, held a morning tea for elders and the wider community. This was a great moment of celebration for a community still recovering from the disaster.

The Tumut Brungle Area Community Working Party held a memorial ceremony to acknowledge the suffering of the Stolen Generations and the ongoing need for healing. A bundle of bark and leaves from the local environment was launched in the Tumut River. The natural bark and leaves symbolised Indigenous people and their ongoing healing journey. The bundle was wound with string symbolising joining with the broader community in this journey. In the words of one of the community members from the Brungle/Tumut area: “May we all learn from the past so that we never make the same mistakes again, and we have a future that respects each individual for their culture, beliefs and passions.”

In Tennant Creek, Aninginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation invited young and old to release balloons in the colours of the Aboriginal flag. The symbolic gesture of the balloons rising together represented Indigenous people rising in unity.

Moving across Australia from the centre to the sea, the Carwoola Elders group held a yarn-up and seafood lunch for hundreds of elders in and around Batemans Bay. This event brought community members together to celebrate the meaning of the Apology.

These events show the continued resilience and spirit of our people and community.



▲ Releasing balloons in Tennant Creek

▼ Stolen Generations members

Florence Onus and Maggie Walsh with Kevin Rudd at the Apology Breakfast at Government House

