



The Hon. Stephen Jones MP
Assistant Treasurer
Minister for Financial Services
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

RE: Pre-Budget submission 2024-2025

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation is the national organisation that platforms and elevates voices and lived experience of Stolen Generations survivors, their families, and their communities. We work closely with survivors and communities to create environments for survivors to tell their stories and drive their healing. We are governed by a Board of First Nations Directors, a Stolen Generations Reference Group, a Youth Reference Group and are led by a First Nations Executive. Critically, our work is informed by the Stolen Generations sector – organisations that provide direct support to Stolen Generations survivors in communities across the country.

Please find attached our Pre-Budget submission 2024 – 2025. The Healing Foundation is calling on the federal government to urgently address a key recommendation made nearly 30 years ago in the ***Bringing Them Home*** report, that all Stolen Generations survivors have access to ***redress***. In addition, we call on the government continue its commitment to our ***Organisational capacity***, and to invest in three priority areas of ***Ageing, Records Access and Management***, and ***Building a Sustainable Healing Sector***. This investment is designed to ensure holistic support and services are available to Stolen Generations survivors, their descendants, and communities in their journey to heal from intergenerational trauma.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these priorities at your convenience.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannan Dodson", written over a horizontal line.

Shannan Dodson
CEO
The Healing Foundation

Pre-Budget submission 2024-2025

Introduction

The impacts of intergenerational trauma resulting from past government policies of forced removals are well evidenced and documented. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has reported on the poorer health, social and emotional wellbeing, social, and economic outcomes experienced by Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants, showing clearly that there is a 'gap within the gap'.

Our core work towards healing the intergenerational trauma resulting from forced removals is aligned with key government initiatives, including:

- Closing the Gap National Agreement and Priority Reforms that recognises building the community-controlled sector is critical for improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Aged care reform, specifically recommendations of cultural safety in the aged care sector identified in chapter 7, Vol3A of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's *Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect*.

Stolen Generations survivors have unique trauma experiences and healing occurs on individual, family, and community levels. Trauma and intergenerational trauma co-exist and are built upon individual and collective experiences of colonialism and racism. Healing must be grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, doing and emphasise cultural, spiritual, physical, psychological, and emotional safety.

By centring survivors and their communities, we can address the critical healing needs first identified in the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report that remain unmet. The Healing Foundation is uniquely placed to continue to walk alongside communities in translating healing evidence into community driven health and wellbeing practice, community-led truth-telling, and driving the systemic change required to make healing happen.

Urgent National Priority: Redress for *all* Stolen Generations Survivors.

The Healing Foundation is calling on the federal government to work with the relevant states to support redress for survivors in Western Australia and Queensland, and to provide top up and additional payments to survivors in South Australia and Tasmania.

In 1997 the *Bringing Them Home* report recommended reparations - including compensation - for all Stolen Generations survivors and their descendants. The Healing Foundation has consistently advocated for redress for survivors and their families, reiterating the urgency of this in the 2021 report *Make Healing Happen*, which specifically called for schemes to be run in conjunction with co-designed healing initiatives. Many survivors have not had access to reparative measures. As survivors age and start to pass away, access to reparations is more urgent than ever.

Queensland and Western Australia have some of the largest populations of Stolen Generation survivors yet neither have committed to a reparations scheme for survivors. Previous schemes held in South Australia and Tasmania have provided inadequate compensation amounts that are not aligned with more recent and current schemes, while the South Australian scheme had overly restrictive eligibility criteria which excluded many survivors.



Using the Territories Redress Scheme model, the following is recommended for survivors:

Jurisdiction	Redress Payment	Healing or Funeral Payment	Top Up Payment
Queensland	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$7000-\$10,000	
Western Australia	\$75,000- \$100,000	\$7000-\$10,000	
South Australia (previous recipients)		\$7000-\$10,000	\$45,000
South Australia (survivors not eligible under original SA scheme)	\$75,000- \$100,000	\$7000-\$10,000	
Tasmania		\$7000-\$10,000	\$17,000

It is imperative that any scheme is adequately funded to ensure the program is culturally responsive in its design and implementation, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance, and supported by community-led ongoing healing programs. At a minimum, the schemes must:

- Acknowledge the harm of past policies, including the option of a personal apology.
- Provide access to a suite of relevant counselling services, including financial and legal.
- Fund ongoing co-designed support and community-based healing programs.
- Provide an option to receive copies of removal and family history records.
- Ensure trauma-aware, healing-informed training for all individuals working across the design and implementation of the scheme, including external organisations and consultants.

Organisational Priorities

On top of building our organisational capacity, The Healing Foundation has identified four key priority areas that require **urgent** funding to ensure culturally responsive healing can continue for Stolen Generations survivors, their families, and their communities. These priority areas have been developed based on feedback from, and engagement with, survivors, Stolen Generations organisations, and our Youth and Stolen Generations Reference Groups. They directly respond to the often-complex needs of survivors and are aligned with key government initiatives and Closing the Gap priority reforms.

1. Organisational Capacity
2. Building a Sustainable Healing Sector.
3. Survivor Ageing.
4. Records Access and Management.

Priority Area 1: Organisational Capacity

In 2024 The Healing Foundation will mark its 15th anniversary. Since our establishment in 2009, we have received the same amount of government funding, operating through increasing cost pressures and increased demand for our services. We have grown to become the national leader in evidenced-based survivor-led intergenerational healing, contributing expertise, knowledge, and experience in trauma recovery and the role of trauma-aware, healing-informed approaches in systemic reforms.

This is achieved by elevating the voices of Stolen Generations survivors so that they can lead their healing journeys, by supporting the Stolen Generations sector, through policy advocacy, research partnerships, and resource development. We have supported and funded hundreds of healing activities for Stolen



Generations survivors, their families and communities and led continued education around the Stolen Generations for future generations to never forget the impact.

The Healing Foundation is calling on the federal government to **offer a continued commitment to our** base funding, including an increase of:

Priority Area 2: Building a Sustainable Healing Sector – up to \$6.15 million

Priority Area 3: Survivor Aging – up to \$1.58 million

Priority Area 4: Records Access and Management – up to \$2.47 million

Total - \$10.2 million

This will allow organisational growth to meet increasing demands from government, industry, and the growing national interest in truth-telling, and to meet the ongoing and increasing needs of the Stolen Generations sector to ensure survivor-led intergenerational healing continues to happen.

Continued investment in our organisation will allow The Healing Foundation to sustain our current funding and increase our capacity to:

- Monitor implementation of *Bringing Them Home* recommendations and scale up advocacy.
- More readily identify and respond to research, policy, and practice gaps.
- Support Stolen Generations organisations around the country.
- Build and grow healing activities and Indigenous healing knowledges.
- Establish training packages around Trauma Aware, Healing Informed approaches in workforces working with Stolen Generations survivors

Priority Area 2: Building a Sustainable Healing Sector

Stolen Generations Organisations struggle with inconsistent funding across multiple jurisdictions. They are generally ineligible for workforce initiatives provided for across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing sector, despite running programs that directly benefit survivors' health and wellbeing. They are a unique sector (not recognised as so), that support Stolen Generation survivors have a better quality of life.

In alignment with the National Closing the Gap Agreement, The Healing Foundation has been calling for better funding to support the sector. Additional funding would directly support healing activities that happen outside of clinical settings, including programs that are locally driven, incorporate traditional and collective healing initiatives, respond to the impacts of colonial and intergenerational trauma, build community capacity, and are proactive in making healing happen for survivors and their communities. In 2024 the Healing Foundation is committed to allocating around \$900,000 in Collective Healing Grants that directly support the sector to deliver community-led healing initiatives. **Increasing** this investment would create additional funding for Stolen Generations Organisations to grow their healing programs and build holistic service models.

Increased investment would also provide **research grants** to Stolen Generations Organisations to partner with research institutions. This allows organisations to expand and preserve their evidence base developed through their collective healing work, build sector capacity, and drive survivor-led healing.



Item	2024-2025	2025-2026	2027-2028	Total
CHG Programme funding	\$1.5m	\$1.5m	\$1.5m	
Research funding	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	
Staffing x 2FTE	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Administration	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Evaluation	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	
	\$1,950,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$6,150,000

Priority Area 3: Survivor Ageing

In 2022, all Stolen Generations survivors were aged 50 or older and eligible for aged care¹. As they age, survivors can face multiple challenges stemming from their personal histories of removal, with many not accessing aged care services as a result. Many are dying without the opportunity to lay down their trauma burden. As The Healing Foundation noted in the 2021 report *Make Healing Happen*:

Stolen Generations survivors have multiple complex and overlapping needs. They carry a legacy of social and economic disadvantage and often lack access to appropriate services, including services to address their needs as they age. Dementia, and depression in later life has the potential to trigger memories of institutionalisation. Their health and wellbeing is significantly worse than that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of a similar age who were not removed.²

The Australian Government has committed to improving access to aged care, with new legislation following the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. A First Nations Aged Care Commissioner has been appointed, and a First Nations Aged Care Framework is in development – positive steps towards addressing the under-representation of First Nations people accessing aged care.

A multi-year investment in what culturally responsive and survivor-led ageing looks like will address critical service gaps, identifying what is needed to support the aged care sector in delivering appropriate trauma-aware, healing-informed aged care for Stolen Generations survivors.

The Healing Foundation is well placed to pilot a survivor-led, co-designed program that engages with Stolen Generation Organisations, Aboriginal community controlled aged care providers, and the aged care sector more broadly. Through an innovative survivor-centred trauma-aware, healing-informed approach, we can develop best practice models of care, training packages, and education programs aimed at building a workforce and sector that is response to the unique needs of survivors and their communities.

Item	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	Total
Staffing –1 x FTE project officer	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$180,000	
Engagement (workshops, symposia, online)	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	
Development of resources	\$200,000	\$150,000	\$200,000	
Implementation of resources	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Administration	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	
Evaluation	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	
	\$530,00	\$510,000	\$540,000	\$1,580,000

¹ The Healing Foundation (2021), *Make Healing Happen Report*

² The Healing Foundation (2021), *Make Healing Happen Report*

Priority Area 4: Records Access and Management

A key aspect of truth-telling is access to historical records. This was identified in the *Bringing Them Home* recommendations, with standardised national access called for in The Healing Foundation’s *Make Healing Happen* report. While there has been progress in this space, the recommendations in *Bringing Them Home* have not been fully implemented, and survivors continue to face **barriers in accessing records**.

Historical records are critical for survivors and their descendants to learn not just about their personal family and community histories but participate in schemes such as **redress** and **reparations** programs, and access identified services. Access to historical records more broadly contributes to community and societal truth-telling and healing.

Funding is urgently needed for targeted policy and advocacy work in this space, and The Healing Foundation is well placed to design and implement a records program. Working directly with Link-Ups and collecting institutions, and building cross-jurisdictional advocacy partnerships, a multi-year investment would focus on identifying key access barriers and developing survivor-led solutions, awareness raising for privately held collections, including church records, and developing survivor-led best practice records access and return principles. Investing in Link-Ups and other Stolen Generations organisations that work with records to develop data and records management and access principles builds sector capacity while embedding Indigenous data sovereignty models.

Item	2024-2025	2025-2026	2027-2028	Total
Staffing x 2 FTE	\$280,000	\$280,000	\$280,000	
Engagement	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	
Resource development	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Stolen Generations Organisations support	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Advocacy partnerships	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	
Administration	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	
Evaluation	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	
	\$810,000	\$830,000	\$830,000	\$2,470,000

Time is running out to address the ongoing impact that Stolen Generations survivors face day in, day out. We urgently need to contribute resources to the area's most affecting survivors and their families, to work towards intergenerational healing; not inflicting more trauma.

The Healing Foundation
 Unit 11 (Level 2)
 11 National Circuit
 Barton ACT 2600
 Contact: Dr. Gemmia Burden
 Email: gemmaia.burden@healingfoundation.org.au

