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Association of
Gerontology



ATSIAAG

Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Ageing Advisory Group

Stolen Generations Aged Care Forum Report August 2019



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1. Introduction

The Healing Foundation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group (ATSIAAG) of the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) jointly convened a Stolen Generations aged care forum in Melbourne on 5 June 2019.

The joint forum brought together Stolen Generations survivors, researchers and participants with experience in aged care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to help shape trauma-informed aged care strategies for the Stolen Generations.

This report identifies key themes from the forum and makes recommendations to support change.

2. Who we are

The Healing Foundation

The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions like the forced removal of children from their families. Our work helps people create a different future.

Australian Association of Gerontology's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group

Established in 1964, the AAG is Australia's peak national body linking professionals working across the multidisciplinary fields of ageing. Our purpose is to improve the experience of ageing through connecting research, policy and practice. Our guiding principles are to be evidence-informed, multidisciplinary and holistic, collaborative, independent and fair.

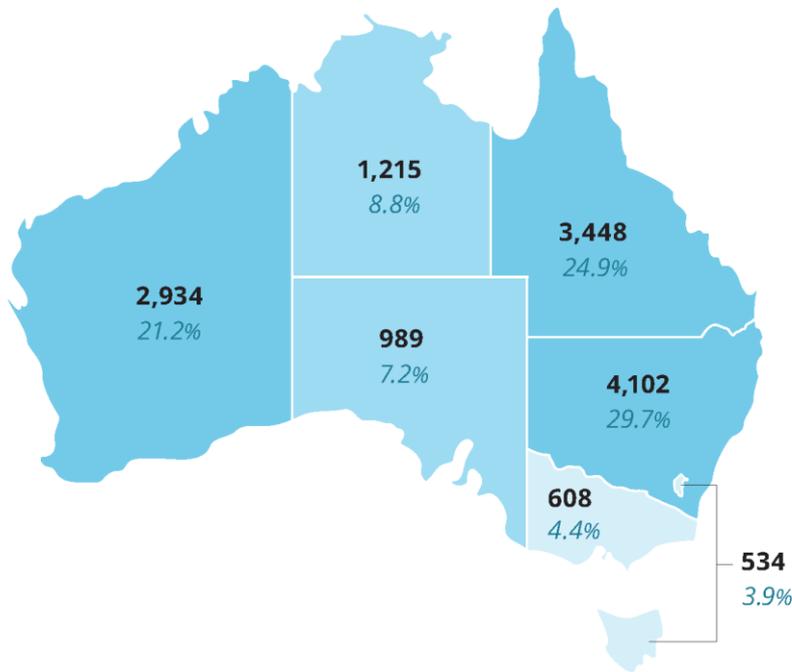
AAG has a strong focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ageing issues, and this area of work is led by the ATSIAAG, which was established 12 years ago. The ATSIAAG is made up entirely of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who make up over 4% of AAG members, and directly advises the AAG board on relevant issues.

3. Background

In November 2018, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) released a report *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over*¹ which was commissioned by The Healing Foundation. The report detailed for the first time the needs of older Stolen Generations survivors, and complemented an earlier, more detailed AIHW report² about the Stolen Generations and their descendants. Together these two AIHW reports detail the extent of disadvantage experience by the Stolen Generations due to the significant trauma they experienced when they were forcibly removed from their homes, isolated from family and culture and often institutionalised, abused and assaulted.

The AIHW data reveals that Stolen Generations survivors have been significantly more impacted in terms of health and welfare outcomes than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are already at a disadvantage. It also outlines the complex needs of ageing survivors.

Figure 1: Number and proportional distribution of the Stolen Generations aged 50 and over, by state or territory, 2014–15



Note: The estimate of the Stolen Generations population aged 50 and over for the ACT has been combined with Tasmania due to small numbers reported in the ACT. A similar approach was adopted in AIHW (2018).
Source: AIHW tabulations of ABS 2016.

¹ AIHW 2018 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over. Cat no IHW 199, Canberra <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generation-aged-50-and-over/related-material>

² AIHW 2018 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes. Cat no IHW 195. Canberra <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generations-descendants/contents/table-of-contents>

The impact:

Stolen Generations aged 50 and above, compared to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and above.

- 2.8X as likely** Government payments as main income source
- 2.7X as likely** Not a home owner
- 2.3X as likely** Ever charged by police
- 2.1X as likely** Arrested in last 5 years
- 2.0X as likely** Ever incarcerated
- 2.0X as likely** Does not have good health (composite measure)
- 1.9X as likely** Current smoker
- 1.8X as likely** Problems accessing services
- 1.8X as likely** Not employed
- 1.6X as likely** Felt discriminated against in last 12 months
- 1.5X as likely** Poor self-assessed health
- 1.5X as likely** Household income in lowest 30%

Source: AIHW (2018) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over. Infocus, published November 2018.

Stolen Generations survivors comprise approximately 14% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over³. In 2018 about 13,800 or two thirds of Stolen Generations survivors were aged 50 and over. By 2023 all will be aged 50 and over, and eligible for government aged care support. It is essential the aged care needs of Stolen Generations survivors are carefully and appropriately considered.

The need for the aged care system to acknowledge and respond to increased service demands from older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is identified in an Australian Government Department of Health publication for aged care providers⁴. This includes government, mainstream providers and specialist providers, in both residential and home care environments. The document encourages:

- exercising sensitivity in dealing with the complex needs of the Stolen Generations
- planning for the provision of culturally appropriate trauma informed care for the Stolen Generations
- ensuring aged care workers understand the meaning of healing and the risk of re-traumatising members of this community.

“The Action Plan calls for evidence based investment strategies. The Working Group is concerned that public policy and its investments have failed to reflect the diversity of circumstance and need of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, within and between remote, rural, regional and urban areas.”

³ 2014-15 estimate

⁴ Department of Health Actions to support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people <https://agedcare.health.gov.au/actions-to-support-older-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people>

“Non-institutional forms of aged care should be explored to support ageing in place to minimise disruption to living arrangements of Forgotten Australians, former Child Migrants, and the Stolen Generations. Where a high level of care is necessary, necessitating a move to residential care settings, that these settings do not replicate oppressive aspects care leavers were exposed as children. Evidence in this area also emphasises the need to design models of aged care collaboratively with care leavers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as best practice to create systems of care that will work.”⁵

From the perspective of public policy and financing, the Australian aged care system has been significantly overhauled in the last decade, and change is continuing. It is also under intense scrutiny through the current *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety*.

The Healing Foundation and the AAG/ATSIAG convened the forum to:

- examine and explore the needs, priorities and challenges facing Stolen Generations survivors seeking to enter the aged care system
- raise awareness and build towards a safer, more inclusive sector that considers issues such as family, kinship and culture
- identify common positions to submit to the *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety* to ensure the dignity of Stolen Generations survivors as they get older.

4. The forum

Almost 40 people participated in the forum, including members of The Healing Foundation’s Stolen Generations Reference Group and AAG’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group, government policy makers and program managers, and organisations delivering services to the Stolen Generations.

Graham Aitken, co-chair of ATSIAG, and Ian Hamm, Chair, Healing Foundation Stolen Generations Reference Group, (SGRG) opened the forum. Graham gave an overview of the need for better quality and accessible aged care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Ian spoke about the needs of ageing Stolen Generations survivors using data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Participants spent time in small groups discussing the following topics:

Discussion topic 1: What are the priority needs, issues and challenges facing Stolen Generations entering the aged care system?

Discussion topic 2: How can we create awareness, understanding and education across the aged care system to support the specific needs of Stolen Generations? And, what are big policy initiatives that could help?

Discussion topic 3: Are there any good practice programs, emerging practice or service delivery models that we can build on, replicate or integrate into the aged care system to better meet the needs of Stolen Generations?

The report presents emerging themes from the discussions and identifies recommendations for action.

5. Emerging themes

Urgency

“Given the spasmodic response in addressing the needs of the Stolen Generations, whose life journey has, by any measure, been a difficult one based on the trauma of childhood removal, it is only proper that we do not make the journey into ageing unnecessarily painful or burdensome.”

“While it is too late for many of the Stolen Generations, we need to get on with this unfinished business and provide for the specific needs of this ageing population, in a way that acknowledges their legacy of social and economic disadvantage.”

“We need to focus our efforts on breaking the trauma cycle, to relieve the stresses of ageing for the Stolen Generations, otherwise we will not only fail again, there will also be additional and unnecessary costs to the Australian taxpayer.”

Ian Hamm, Chair, Healing Foundation SGRG

“The Apology was good, but action would be better”

Concerns

Many older Stolen Generations survivors are fearful and anxious about aged care with the following concerns highlighted:

- anxiety about losing control over their lives
- fear of another removal - moving away from community, families, country
- fear of being abandoned or forgotten
- worried about re-institutionalisation
- concerned that they may have to seek care from providers connected with their forced removal as children
- possibly experiencing dementia and reliving traumatic experiences
- concerns about financial burdens.

The AIHW data presented at the forum demonstrates that Stolen Generations survivors have complex needs and are disadvantaged on almost all domains compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes having poor physical and mental health, disabilities, low incomes, and not owning their own homes.

Survivors talked about how as a group, Stolen Generations may be more reliant on non-family care, as they may not have families who can care for them:

- families may be struggling with their own Intergenerational Trauma
- Stolen Generations and their descendants are more likely to experience economic hardship than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and may not have additional resources available for aged care services
- survivors may be homeless
- reconnection and integration with family has been difficult for many survivors.

“We came into the world alone; we are still alone in our aged care. We don’t always have family around us. We need people who can help us.”

The trauma and impact of forced removal were commonly identified by Stolen Generations survivors, but they also highlighted the diversity of childhood and adult experiences and how everyone will be at different stages of their healing journey.

Service limitations

Some Stolen Generations survivors prefer Aboriginal services while others feel more comfortable with mainstream options. Many would prefer to receive care in their local community to avoid further family fragmentation and maintain connections to community, family and country.

It's important Stolen Generations survivors are able to choose the services and models of delivery that suit their personal circumstances.

“It's hard to put her back in an institution because she started in an institution and will die in an institution. “

Aboriginal community controlled aged care services are not readily available, and waiting lists are long. There are 35 services currently funded, with another 8 coming soon. Most are situated in remote areas, while most Stolen Generations survivors live in non-remote areas. Where the specific needs of Stolen Generations members are considered within these services, they find themselves as add ons rather than a central focus of the service.

“Need to get away from thinking of us [Stolen Generations] as add ons.”

The forum identified that many Stolen Generations survivors are not aware of the services that exist, or their rights in relation to those services. Combined with a reluctance to speak up against authority, this may mean they are not accessing services at all, or not complaining about negative experiences with aged care.

“When we talk to the facility, they say she says she likes it. She complies, but she always tells us how much she hates it. “

Many workers in the aged care system are unaware of the ongoing trauma that Stolen Generations survivors experience as a result of their forced removal. Policy and program designers, service delivery staff (including many Aboriginal services), and My Aged Care response officers are unlikely to have formal training in how to deliver services without triggering trauma. Programs and services therefore risk re-traumatising ageing Stolen Generations survivors.

The aged care assessment process is daunting for many survivors, with detailed questioning being particularly likely to re-trigger trauma. There is a critical need for education, advocacy and support to assist Stolen Generations members with this process. Stolen Generations, and other elderly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, may not feel comfortable telling their story to someone they have never met, and this is compounded if the interview is by phone rather than in person.

“It goes back to the assessment, they didn't consider her trauma or how best to serve her. We felt they didn't take into consideration her cultural needs or what she has gone through.”

Even Aboriginal controlled organisations must earn the trust of community members. People need to be confident their privacy will be protected, and that staff are trauma informed and understand the complex needs of Stolen Generations survivors. Aboriginal services can face similar challenges to mainstream providers in recruiting and retaining appropriately trained frontline staff.

“As service users, confidentiality is an issue. People may not go, because politicking is hard. Good services are there and I know which are good, but other people in our community don’t know what exists.”

What is required

‘Their [Stolen Generations] time is not long, and we need to respond fast’.

The forum discussions highlighted that to ensure high quality care choices for ageing Stolen Generations survivors, systemic change is required at various levels over the short, medium and longer term.

Participants emphasised the importance of increasing knowledge and understanding of the Stolen Generations through formal education. This would enable people coming into the workforce and positions of authority to more fully appreciate the extent and impact of government policies to remove children from their families and culture, and the contemporary impact on communities. This requires sustained, long term attention.

In the short to medium term, the systemic changes required include:

- co-design of policies, programs and services that enable Stolen Generations survivors to influence decisions about what support is available and how it is best provided
- workforce frameworks that are strength focused and build appreciation and capability for the skills and experience required to work respectfully with all elderly people, including Stolen Generations survivors
- having services that are culturally safe, trauma informed and recognise the diversity of experience of elderly people across all parts of the aged care system, with compulsory training and accreditation for management and staff
- accreditation frameworks must articulate quality standards and measures of care for elderly Stolen Generations survivors that reflect their complex needs and history of trauma.

Improving support to ageing Stolen Generations

Participants identified actions that could improve support for ageing Stolen Generations survivors. The diversity of experiences among Stolen Generations survivors and the complexity of their needs mean that no single model of care will be universally appropriate.

Although no single model of aged care can be recommended to cater for Stolen Generations, there are important underpinning principles:

- **Self-determination** - co-design is fundamental to planning and delivering aged care services for Stolen Generations
- **Choice** – Stolen Generations survivors require services and models of delivery that encompass flexibility and avoid assumptions – not every survivor will want an Aboriginal service, some have families who can assist, not everyone has reconnected to country

- **Trauma aware and healing informed** approaches will avoid re-traumatising survivors and their families and assist services to understand the symptoms of trauma
- **Trust** - support should be available from, or in partnership with, organisations that are trusted by the individual survivor – these may not be accredited aged care providers
- **Holistic** - services should provide holistic wraparound support that addresses each person’s cultural, spiritual and kinship contexts as well as delivery of ageing, health and housing services.

1. Influencing decision making

Self-determination is a fundamental element of healing for Stolen Generations survivors. Stolen Generations participants indicated their needs and interests often seemed to be addressed as after thoughts, and that they wanted to influence the design and delivery of aged care services.

Stolen Generations survivors need to hold positions of authority and have their needs reflected in high level policy and commitments such as the *Charter of Aged Care Rights* and the *Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality*. High level appointments provide opportunities to look at the culture of organisations and can facilitate greater understanding and education across the aged care sector in relation to the specific needs of Stolen Generations survivors.

Stolen Generations survivors should be:

- represented on the boards of mainstream and Aboriginal providers
- appointed to government advisory committees and decision-making entities including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Advisory Group; the Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group etc.
- represented in the leadership of peak sector organisations including aged care services such as the National Aged Care Alliance and the Aged Care Guild.

2. Underpinning quality care that is culturally safe and trauma informed

Participants commented that aged care and other service providers were commonly unaware of the trauma experienced by Stolen Generations and could inadvertently trigger trauma. Concern was expressed about the aged care assessment process which is likely to be conducted by a stranger over the phone and requires people to retell their stories.

All parts of the aged care system, including program design and management, assessment, service delivery and quality accreditation, must be made aware of the need to offer culturally safe and trauma informed services. Services should recognise the diversity of experiences and needs, and be supported by mandated training and accreditation for management and staff.

Participants highlighted that having more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in aged care would increase cultural safety and the means for providers to respond appropriately.

Accreditation frameworks must articulate quality standards and measures of care for elderly Stolen Generations survivors that reflect their complex needs and history of trauma. This requires further work on delineating what trauma informed aged care looks like in residential and home settings.

3. Resourcing Stolen Generations organisations as aged care system navigators and assessors

Participants talked about the difficulty that Stolen Generations survivors often have in trusting institutions and emphasised the importance of resourcing organisations that already have strong relationships with Stolen Generations survivors to provide wraparound services.

Participants noted that trusted organisations already caring for and supporting Stolen Generations survivors have a critical role. This may be as a delegated assessor, or as an authorised second party supporting the Elder - for example to navigate the system. Many Stolen Generations organisations already adopt a similar role, over

and above their funded operations. This role should be formalised and funded on a case by case basis rather than through competitive funding.

“We look after Elders all the time. We have a lot of first generation Stolen Generations in their 70s and 80s. We have a social and emotional wellbeing program, even though we’re not in the clinical sphere. Dementia, poverty, safety in their own homes/elder abuse. Stolen Generations feel as if they are not treated properly in services (non-Aboriginal people with no sensitivity) so they come to us for help.”

Brokerage and support schemes such as Link Up and Stolen Generations organisations could be funded nationally to better support Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities. This could include becoming aged care providers.

4. Promoting wraparound services

There was significant discussion about the impact of Intergenerational Trauma, including how family members caring for Elders may themselves be impacted by trauma, putting strain on kinship systems. Participants outlined how socially isolated some Stolen Generations survivors can be and how removal from family and community means some survivors do not have the same kinship networks as other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Services need to consider family healing and support the cultural and spiritual needs of Stolen Generations survivors, in addition to personal aged care needs.

Participants gave examples that demonstrate how community led, wraparound services can work better for clients. These included:

- Better connected home care services, wrap around case management models, advocacy services and system navigators with service providers
- NSW Family and Community Services (FACS) funds support workers (case managers) in each Stolen Generations organisation to prioritise services for Stolen Generations survivors across areas such as family support, aged care, housing and disability services
- Pooled funding in a coordinated model approach across disability, mental health and aged care i.e. 300 people in Looma community in the Kimberley. Lungurra Ngoora – was a pilot model of care in a remote Aboriginal community of 10-15 people who needed aged care. It involved training people in the community to try and work across programs and services (https://www.rrh.org.au/public/assets/article_documents/article_print_2078.pdf)
- Art centres as support services and hubs for aged care that promote connections with culture/family. Could potentially be extended to urban art centres and include art therapy for elderly Stolen Generations survivors.

We can learn from existing partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and mainstream providers to better understand how these work so learnings could be applied more broadly.

5. Telling once

Formal communication systems need to be implemented across and within services to ensure Stolen Generations survivors only need to tell their story once. This will reduce the risk of re-traumatising survivors and may involve adding their story to medical records and obtaining informed consent to share their story with other providers.

Having a trusted person who can work with survivors to capture their story before any move to residential care or onset of dementia would further promote healing and avoid re-traumatisation as people age. This could involve recording stories, using a language pen or creating a story book.

The discussions also emphasised the importance of ageing Stolen Generations survivors being able to access records relating to them and their families.

6. Funding – complex needs require extra care

Funding models need to recognise that Stolen Generations survivors often experience disproportionate disadvantage and have complex needs, which are best addressed through specific support and care services co-designed with the individual survivor in mind.

Given the extent of disadvantage experienced by many Stolen Generations survivors, it could be argued that they should be able to access aged care services prior to reaching 50 years of age. Some survivors aged between 50 and 65 are being supported by a mix of NDIS and aged care services, providing a more holistic and integrated range of supports. Such approaches should be promoted and supported, rather than seen as double dipping.

Incentives are needed to ensure that services will, and can, address the complex needs of survivors for example, by resourcing additional time for delivery of services to Stolen Generations members, as standard program provisions are often not appropriate for clients with high needs.

“The system isn’t designed to look after those who need the most”

Participants suggested:

- expanding funding streams such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care program which provide block funding and don’t require My Aged Care assessments
- pooling funding streams so that trusted agencies can provide a range of services that better meet individual needs.

7. Enabling access and choice by sharing information and collaborating

Discussions highlighted the importance of formal outreach so elderly Stolen Generations survivors understand their rights to services and how best to identify and secure their choices. Concern was expressed about many Stolen Generations members being isolated and vulnerable.

Participants talked about how confusing the aged care system is, the fear of using this system and the lack of understanding many users have about their rights within the aged care system.

Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are less likely than non-Indigenous people to access services and are more likely to report lower levels of satisfaction with services. Stolen Generations survivors aged 50 and over are 1.8 times more likely to report difficulty accessing services than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the same age⁵.

Participants also identified how competitive funding streams can drive organisations apart, so it is vital to network and promote services. The forum identified innovative responses that included:

- establishing networking and liaison opportunities between providers to promote services in the community such as regular morning teas/lunches for community members and providers
 - eg. Healesville’s monthly lunches where service providers host lunch for community members, providing local networking and partnership opportunities
 - eg. Stolen Generations community morning teas where guest speakers explain services.

⁵ AIHW 2018 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over. Cat no IHW 199, Canberra <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/stolen-generation-aged-50-and-over/related-material>

- Kinchela education bus – funded by Transport NSW to tell the Kinchela story. This involved turning a bus into an educational museum for visiting schools and other regional locations to share local stories. “Connecting our brothers together. Visiting our brothers”
- service expos/cultural days (other than NAIDOC) which give everyone information about what services are available
- big days out for aged care where service providers are all available in the one space, as was undertaken by the First Nations Foundation for superannuation
- directories of services to assist organisations and survivors in understanding what support is available in their local/regional area.

These augment other opportunities for creating public awareness and educating targeted audiences across the aged care system. Examples include:

- NAIDOC 2019 theme is Voice. Truth. Treaty
- GP education exchange – talk to young GPs, trainee hospital registrars
- display of survivors’ stories - an exhibition in Wellington Park, WA with a touch button display that enables visitors to hear survivors’ stories.

8. Investing in evidence-based models of care

Participants drew on their knowledge of what works in other sectors to suggest services for Stolen Generations survivors. These included:

- priority access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential services
- residential arrangements that promote home style care and support independent but connected living, such as Elders’ villages (Adelaide, Townsville, Brightwater WA)
- kinship housing arrangements, including the availability of larger houses as people age to accommodate family, rather than downsizing
- shared aged care facilities developed by communities of Stolen Generations survivors, similar to that proposed between Coota, Kinchela and Bomaderry which lapsed because of the 99 year leases granted over those former institutions
- services that are culturally friendly
- advance care planning that takes into account cultural and spiritual needs
- lists of vacancies in particular suburbs so people can continue to live close to community/family
- readily available transport services that accommodate families/carers as well as the individual

Existing care systems and tools, especially those designed with vulnerable populations in mind, could be extended to encompass holistic/wraparound care that meets the needs of individual elderly Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities. For example:

- applying kinship care systems to aged care
- residential ‘community’ care village in Townsville
- Wintringham homelessness centre responses
- establishing Elders’ councils and co-designing services
- Housing for Life
- Veterans Gold Cards
- a former institution being donated for art therapy with Stolen Generations survivors. WA - Bringing them Home, state body, and YOKAI (truth, justice and healing). 80 survivors came together for an art program
- education and truth telling
- ‘Good Spirit, Good Life’ tool, which can be used to identify the quality of life needs of older Aboriginal people, facilitating and measuring culturally informed care, when an older person receives community or residential aged care
- social and emotional wellbeing programs
- NSW Family and Community Services support model
- national agency which provides support, data, reports etc for Stolen Generations survivors

- extending the Reconciliation Action Plan commitments of aged care providers to specifically include Stolen Generations survivors.

9. Identification

A question was raised about whether survivors would benefit from government/service providers creating an additional identifying question about whether people are Stolen Generations survivors -similar to asking if someone identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Such identification could alert providers to the risks of re-traumatisation and provide a source of data about outcomes for Stolen Generations survivors in particular programs and services.

6. Recommendations

Stolen Generations survivors have complex needs and are disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of their forced removal as children. There is a clear and compelling case for urgent action to ensure the specific needs of ageing Stolen Generations survivors are met and their interactions with aged care services are not unnecessarily painful or burdensome.

The Healing Foundation and AAG's ATSIAG recommend that:

1. Government(s) should urgently fund trusted Stolen Generations organisations to expand their capacity to support ageing Stolen Generations and their families/carers to access appropriate aged care and wrap around services.
2. Government(s) should urgently fund specialist Stolen Generations advocacy services. Evidence and demographic data should inform a placed based approach to prioritising where resources are most needed. Where possible, advocates should be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and have existing links to targeted communities to enable trust and swift results.
3. Government(s) should urgently consider investment in incentives for existing Aged Care service providers to improve their capacity and willingness to service Stolen Generations clients. The incentives would enable service providers to invest in tailoring their service delivery models and ensure that they deliver culturally responsive and trauma-informed service models.
4. The Aged Care Assessment process for Stolen Generations survivors needs to be reviewed and urgently modified so that it doesn't re-trigger or exacerbate trauma for vulnerable clients. This should be undertaken via a genuine process of co-design with Stolen Generations survivors and include in scope minimum standards that can be tracked and measured to ensure compliance.
5. Governance mechanisms need to be established that provide Stolen Generations with a strong voice and opportunity to provide ongoing strategic advice to government in relation to aged care policy, program and service delivery models.

Joint statement

The Healing Foundation and AAG's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group Joint Statement – 7 June 2019

The Healing Foundation and the Australian Association of Gerontology's (AAG) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Ageing Advisory Group are pushing for urgent action in aged care for survivors of the Stolen Generations.

Together the two organisations are preparing a joint submission to the *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety* to ensure the dignity of Stolen Generations as they get older.

Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reveals the survivors of the Stolen Generations have been significantly more impacted in terms of health and welfare outcomes even compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are already facing greater challenges in Australia.

The evidence paints a picture of complex needs for the Stolen Generations who suffered profound childhood trauma when they were forcibly removed from their homes, isolated from family and culture and often institutionalised, abused and assaulted.

The Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Group chair Ian Hamm said the majority of Stolen Generations survivors were now aged 50 and over and all would be eligible for aged care by 2023.

"Given the spasmodic response to date in addressing the needs of the Stolen Generations, whose life journey has, by any measure, been a difficult one based on the trauma of childhood removal, it is only proper that we do not make the journey into ageing unnecessarily painful or burdensome," Mr Hamm said.

"We need to focus our efforts on breaking the trauma cycle, to relieve the stresses of ageing for the Stolen Generations, otherwise we will not only fail again, there will also be additional and unnecessary costs to the Australian taxpayer.

"While it is too late for many of the Stolen Generations, we need to get on with this unfinished business and provide for the specific needs of this ageing population, in a way that acknowledges their legacy of social and economic disadvantage."

A forum was held this week in Melbourne to examine and explore the needs, priorities and challenges facing survivors of the Stolen Generations seeking to enter the aged care system.

Survivors were joined by representatives from research institutes, the aged care and health sectors and state and federal governments to raise awareness and build towards a safer, more inclusive sector that considers issues such as family, kinship and culture.

AAG's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group co-chair Roslyn Malay said the aged care sector is not prepared for the unique needs of our Stolen Generations, many of whom have been left severely traumatised as a result of deliberate race-based policies set up by both state and federal governments.

"We are looking for culturally appropriate aged care solutions that reduce the cost of care for everybody," she said.

“The things that work best are those that are community owned, developed and delivered – that build capability, strength and lead to the best outcomes.

“When we train service providers to understand how trauma works, they are more likely to pick up warning signs early, assess people correctly and find solutions that work.”

According to the AIHW data 89% of Stolen Generations survivors did not have good health, 79% relied on government payments as their main source of income and 76% did not own their own home.

The data also shows that ageing Stolen Generations survivors are struggling to access the support and services they need, at a greater rate than other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Ian Hamm is a Yorta Yorta man who has been actively involved in the Victorian Aboriginal community for many years. He has extensive government and community sector experience, particularly at executive and governance levels. He is currently the board president of the Community Broadcasting Federation and chair of both Connecting Home Ltd, a Victorian Stolen Generations service, and The Healing Foundation’s Stolen Generations Reference Group.

Roslyn Malay is a researcher and a Yurriyangem Taam Kija woman from the Kimberley region of Western Australia. She has a passion for working in the area of Aboriginal ageing, particularly in the remote community setting. Roslyn is currently working as a project officer with the University of Western Australia, WA Centre for Health and Ageing.

Graham Aitken is currently the chief executive officer of Aboriginal Elders and Community Care Services Inc (AECCS) and the treasurer of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation Community Transport Network. AECCS is the largest aged care service provider for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders in Adelaide and South Australia. Prior to his current role, Graham worked for over 15 years with various commonwealth and state government departments on programs specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In his last position in government, Graham was responsible for the administration and funding for all the former Aboriginal Home and Community Care (HACC) services and programs across South Australia.