



# Unfinished **Business**

Progress Report to Parliament

DECEMBER 2020

## Glossary

<b>AbSec</b>	NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation
<b>ACAT</b>	Aged Care Assessment Team
<b>Advisory Committee</b>	Stolen Generations Advisory Committee
<b>AECG</b>	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
<b>AHO</b>	Aboriginal Housing Office
<b>Bringing Them Home Report</b>	<i>Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families</i> , Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sydney
<b>BCH</b>	Bomaderry Children's Home
<b>CBACH</b>	Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated
<b>Coota Girls</b>	Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation
<b>DCJ</b>	Department of Communities and Justice
<b>FACS</b>	Department of Family and Community Services
<b>Healing Fund</b>	Stolen Generations Healing Fund
<b>KBH</b>	Kinchela Aboriginal Boys' Training Home
<b>KBHAC</b>	Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation
<b>NIAA</b>	National Indigenous Australians Agency
<b>NSW Health</b>	Ministry of Health – NSW Health
<b>PSC</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>Reparations Scheme</b>	Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme
<b>SEWB</b>	Social and Emotional Wellbeing
<b>SGC</b>	Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT

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# Acknowledgement

We respect and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and past, present and emerging leaders. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge the Stolen Generations, those living, and remember those who have passed. We acknowledge the missing children who were never found and those who were not able to return home.

The strength, resilience and perseverance of Survivors drives us in this Unfinished Business. We work together and under their guidance we aim to heal our spirit and care for future generations.

The NSW Government is committed to the ethical and respectful treatment and use of Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property (ACIP). The content of this report respects the True Tracks® principles developed by Terri Janke of control (self-determination), prior informed consent and consultation, interpretation, integrity, respect, Secret/Sacred and privacy, attribution, sharing benefits, maintaining Aboriginal culture, recognition, and protection.

Our commitment to Survivors and all Aboriginal people and communities we consult is that their contributions will always be protected by these principles. As we continue to work with Survivors and the Stolen Generation Organisations to progress the Unfinished Business commitments, we will remain committed to ensuring that the cultural and intellectual property of Survivors is respectfully treated and ethically used.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following material contains names of people who have died.



**The Hon. Don Harwin MLC**

## 1. Minister's Foreword

I am pleased to release the second *Unfinished Business Progress Report to Parliament*. We as a government acknowledge the wrongful past policies and the impacts and trauma of forced removals and assimilation policies and practices and are continuing to provide reparations for Stolen Generations Survivors. This report outlines the government's progress towards the Unfinished Business commitments to reparations for Stolen Generations Survivors.

In July 2019, significant changes were implemented across the NSW public sector to enhance effective delivery across government. We have made meaningful progress since December 2016, when the NSW Government first tabled its response to the recommendations of the General Purpose Standing Committee No 3 report, *Reparations for the Stolen Generations in NSW – Unfinished Business*.

Foremost, I acknowledge the leadership and resilience of Survivors and appreciate the time they commit providing guidance, and the courage they show in sharing their lived experience. This commitment and courage guides our reparations work, building cultural healing in Aboriginal communities in NSW.

NSW Stolen Generations Organisations have strengthened their organisational capacities and have developed survivor-led approaches to healing and provided direct support to Survivors and their families using collective reparations funding committed by the NSW Government.

In 2019–2020, \$1.35 million in collective reparations funding was provided to the Stolen Generations Organisations. In addition, the Stolen Generations Healing Fund launched in 2019, which will provide \$5 million over 10 years for survivor-led collective healing initiatives. As of December 2020, a total of \$375,000 has been provided from the fund to collective healing priorities identified by Stolen Generations Organisations.

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The Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme opened in mid-2017 and will operate for five years. A total of \$52.7 million in reparations payments has been paid to 720 Survivors. While no amount of funding can undo the trauma and damage caused by the forcible removal and assimilation policies and practices, the scheme provides important recognition of these wrongdoings. Importantly, the scheme provides written apologies, including personalised written and face-to-face apologies for people electing to receive these.

During the reporting period the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has made it alarmingly clear that more needs to be done by everyone to care for our ageing Australians. Stolen Generations Survivors continue to experience vulnerability stemming from their forcible removal and need culturally safe and trauma-informed support to stay well, be cared for and live independently. Governments are making significant investments in aged care, as well as disability assistance and health services, but more must be done to ensure the services provided are accountable, accessible and appropriate for people when they need that support.

In March 2019, the NSW Government signed the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, which will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome inequality and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. As well as working towards improving outcomes across 17 social and economic targets, the Closing the Gap Agreement will drive reform in the way governments work with communities. I am looking forward to future discussions with Survivors and the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee to consider how the Closing the Gap reform priorities can support progress across Unfinished Business commitments.

We will continue working with Survivors to progress the Unfinished Business commitments that raise awareness about the Stolen Generations, and to listen carefully to Survivors' aspirations to establish keeping places that enable people to reflect and learn more about history and healing for Aboriginal families and communities.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has required all of us to rapidly adapt our ways of working to provide support and services. The Stolen Generations Organisations have demonstrated remarkable resilience and leadership, quickly adapting to the situation with new technologies and responding to the additional needs of Survivors facing vulnerable health and social isolation.

The NSW Government has found new ways to listen and work with Survivors to implement Unfinished Business commitments and report on progress. We will take this experience forward beyond the pandemic, challenging 'business as usual' approaches and continuing to improve the way government listens to, supports and works with Survivors in the future. We will continue to be guided by and work with Survivors on Unfinished Business commitments.

The NSW Government is committed to listening to Stolen Generations Survivors and to continue improving the working relationships formed through the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee, to build healing for future generations.

## 2. Stolen Generations Organisations Foreword

Since the establishment of the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee in 2017, we, the Stolen Generations Organisations have been working with government to advise on the implementation of the Unfinished Business commitments and improve the way government works with Survivors, our descendants and families.

The Stolen Generations Advisory Committee continues to be our opportunity to provide advice and feedback in a formal and collective way across government, to highlight issues and identify solutions and ways of working to progress change for Survivors.

We ask for the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee to be extended for the duration of the 10-year commitment to Unfinished Business, to ensure our voices continue to be heard to guide the work government still needs to do. Our role as Elders is significant; we provide advice about our experience of trauma and our understanding of healing for our families and communities and cultural healing more broadly.

We are very excited and proud of the progress made by the Stolen Generations Organisations: the Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation with offices now in Redfern and Kempsey, and its successful Mobile Education Centre developed and operated by the Uncles; the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation Keeping Place and office for Survivors and families at Central Station; the Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated Memorial Garden and Survivor Contact Centre at the former home; and the Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT advocacy for Survivors and their families. These significant achievements have established a visible presence for the Stolen Generations and make it possible for Survivors and their families to connect and participate in their communities. Progress is most importantly measured in our own terms, to feel we are being seen, heard and moving closer towards our hope that Survivors and their descendants will be understood and remembered.

Collective reparations funding is significant for Stolen Generations Organisations. It recognises the value of Survivors supporting each other in healing. Funding provided through the Stolen Generations Organisations Reparations Fund and the Stolen Generations Healing Fund is supporting our organisations to develop and grow under the leadership of Survivors themselves.

The Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme and Funeral Assistance Fund is providing financial reparations to living Survivors. Stolen Generations Organisations have advocated for the eligibility criteria to be widened to include payments for those who passed before the scheme, their descendants and other Aboriginal children removed from their families. Survivors advocate that the amount of reparations and compensation received by Survivors is insufficient.

We have continued to identify the commitment to tailor supports as a high priority for Survivors. More work is required by all levels of government to work closely with Stolen Generations Organisations to understand what improvements government can make to existing services, and to tailor services and supports to meet the needs of Stolen Generations Survivors, particularly in the areas of health, aged care and disability support, and better housing strategies and assistance.

We progressed to roundtable discussions with senior representatives from the Department of Communities and Justice cluster (formerly Family and Community Services) and the NSW Health cluster. We would like further ongoing opportunities to advocate and speak directly with senior government officials to progress the Unfinished Business commitments and other priority issues impacting Survivors, our descendants and families.

We appreciate that the NSW Government has continued to advocate to the Commonwealth about service systems that are very complex and difficult to understand or navigate for Survivors. We are also concerned that commitments made long ago in the national Bringing Them Home response are not

being delivered effectively, including to provide social and emotional wellbeing programs and counselling for Survivors, and the provision of suitable trauma-informed aged care options. Progress in these issues has been slow and we are very disappointed that the Australian Government has not committed to reparations for Stolen Generations Survivors or to service improvements for Survivors.

Survivors have been consulted about their aspirations for keeping places and the future use of the State heritage-listed and Aboriginal Place-identified former Aborigines Welfare Board homes as historic and significant sites. Survivors have asked government for assistance to support Survivors to achieve custodianship and to lead healing at these sites. We are concerned about delays in progressing action to preserve and determine the future use of these sites and to establish Stolen Generations Keeping Places.

We are pleased the memorial acknowledging the Stolen Generations has been established at Central Station. We are looking forward to working with Transport for NSW for the design of the proposed statue for the second phase and the rollout of more memorial plaques at regional railway stations in significant locations.

We appreciate the reviews and research being implemented to improve access to historic archives and family records services and we are interested to be involved in plans being developed for the proposed Cultural Exhibition and Reading Room at the Aboriginal Affairs NSW office in Mascot.

Survivors have enjoyed speaking in schools and local communities about Aboriginal culture and our experience growing up as Stolen Generations. We are also interested in developing education resources that are sustainable and suitable for teaching in the school curriculum.

We have also supported work being done by the Public Service Commission to develop resources to raise cultural awareness in the public sector. It will take significant commitment from all agencies to build the trauma-informed workforce that is necessary for Survivors and their descendants

to receive appropriate services and to stop the intergenerational cycle of racism and trauma experienced by Aboriginal people.

We continue to be deeply distressed about the ongoing trauma occurring as a result of current child protection removals. We appreciate discussion and engagement with various divisions of the Department of Communities and Justice but are concerned that not enough focus is put on supporting Aboriginal families to rebuild their cultural strengths and family relationships to care for their children, rather than removing them. As Stolen Generations Survivors, our voice and perspective on child protection issues is important. We want to be resourced to support our families and believe we are best placed to do this given our unique experiences.

We need proactive engagement from government agencies on these issues, including regular and timely engagement on matters affecting Stolen Generations Survivors and our families. Agencies should be involving us in co-design in the early stages and throughout the program design process, providing us with clear information and advice and adequate time to consider issues and make informed decisions, so we can genuinely influence and add value.

This year presented many new challenges for our organisations as we worked to support our Survivors and families through the outbreak of COVID-19. We were able to adapt to new technologies and ways of working to manage Survivors' health and wellbeing by providing online activities, distributing care parcels, emergency food hampers and data vouchers; and ensuring elderly Survivors were able to maintain contact with their families and support services.

We would like to acknowledge the great resilience of Survivors and their families during this very challenging year, and government's continuing efforts to listen to Survivors. We are committed to continue working with government, to see more action and the significant changes we want these commitments in *Unfinished Business* to achieve in our lifetime and for future generations.



## 3. Introduction

### Overview

In December 2016, the NSW Government released its response to the *Unfinished Business report* into Reparations for the Stolen Generations in NSW, accepting the majority of the recommendations of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, and making a 10-year commitment to work closely with Stolen Generations Survivors to progress reparations.

The government response officially acknowledged the enduring trauma caused by the historic government policies and assimilation practices of removing Aboriginal children from their families, communities and culture. The NSW Government announced Unfinished Business commitments totalling \$73 million over the first four years, to include both individual and collective reparations to Stolen Generations Survivors.

In October 2018, the NSW Government delivered the *Unfinished Business – Progress Report to Parliament* (the First Progress Report), outlining that implementation had commenced and reparations had begun for Stolen Generations Survivors. The First Progress Report focused on the period from the commencement of Unfinished Business until June 2018.

This second *Unfinished Business Progress Report* (the Second Progress Report) outlines the significant progress that has been made to deliver reparations to the Stolen Generations from June 2018 to December 2020. It also reflects on the government's approach to working with Survivors.

Actions have now commenced across all Unfinished Business commitments, with Survivors guiding the NSW Government to better understand their perspectives and expectations in relation to the more complex commitments.

This Second Progress Report was prepared by the NSW Government in consultation with NSW Stolen Generations Organisations (Stolen Generations Organisations) represented on the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee (the Advisory Committee). The report follows the structure of

the First Progress Report, and outlines progress against the themes adopted in the NSW Government response to *Unfinished Business*:

- Recognition (Acknowledgement and Apology)
- Monetary Reparations
- Collective Healing
- Tailored Supports
- Guarding Against Repetition
- Cultural Renewal.

The views of Survivors are embedded in this report, guiding government on areas to focus upon in the coming years. The report sets out the next steps that the NSW Government intends to take to progress reparations for Stolen Generations Survivors. The status of each Unfinished Business commitment made by the NSW Government is provided at Appendix 1 to ensure maximum transparency and accountability.

### Impacts of COVID-19 and natural disasters

Since November 2019, the NSW Government has been managing natural disaster conditions impacting on communities across the state. In February 2020, public health emergency powers were declared to manage the public health risks and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which are continuing into 2021. These extraordinary state and global emergencies have redirected government focus and critical business to protect public health and safety and manage the economic recovery of NSW. There have been unavoidable disruptions to ordinary ways of doing business while government resources have been concentrated on the unprecedented scale of these crises.

The NSW Government has worked closely with communities experiencing vulnerability facing the COVID-19 emergency, with an immediate focus on public health and safety and the longer-term recovery of communities and the economy.

Stolen Generations Organisations have undertaken an important role: staying connected with Survivors and their families, providing support to help Survivors receive essential items, and adapting to technology during COVID restrictions to help maintain Survivors' links to health care and other services.



Source: Aboriginal Affairs

Aboriginal Affairs has worked closely with the Stolen Generations Organisations – supporting them to adopt new ways of staying connected during COVID-19, and to progress Unfinished Business commitments to the extent possible during these extremely difficult circumstances.

As government action shifts in 2021, from responding to the immediate COVID-19 health crisis to supporting social and economic recovery and community resilience, we anticipate a renewed focus on government priorities and further progress on Unfinished Business commitments.

## Stolen Generations Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee promotes dialogue, building understanding and better relationships between Stolen Generations Survivor communities and government. Meetings have been developed by Aboriginal Affairs, with Survivors' guidance, to facilitate discussions that support Survivor participation. Meeting arrangements include cultural protocols and involve commitments to cultural safety and trauma awareness. The Advisory Committee

supports relationships being built on mutual understanding and trust, with the aim of progressing to sustainable relationships between Stolen Generations Organisations and agencies.

The Advisory Committee was established in 2017 with nominated representatives from the following four NSW Stolen Generations Organisations:

- Children of Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated
- Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation
- Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation
- Stolen Generations Council of NSW/ACT Incorporated.

The committee also includes ex-officio government representatives from departments responsible for services impacting on Survivors and their families. Current Advisory Committee members are listed in Appendix 3.

The Advisory Committee was initially established to operate for two years. It was later extended to May 2021 to ensure Survivors could continue to inform the implementation of Unfinished Business. The Advisory Committee is formally appointed according to the *Appointment Standards: Boards and*

*Committees in the NSW Public Sector*<sup>1</sup> and operates under agreed protocols and a Code of Conduct, with confidentiality applied to Committee business. Aboriginal Affairs provides Secretariat support for the Advisory Committee and the Head of Aboriginal Affairs is the Committee Chair.

The Advisory Committee oversees the implementation of government commitments under Unfinished Business and advises the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on issues relevant to the Stolen Generations. The Advisory Committee also performs an important role providing a channel for government and community consultation across a range of issues impacting on Stolen Generations Survivors and their descendants, families and communities. The committee has engaged with significant policy issues, making contributions to policy discussions including:

- advocating to the Commonwealth Minister for Aged Care and Disability, and Minister for Health
- background briefing from Jennifer Morse, representing Australian Government, Department of Health on *Age Care Strategy*
- consultation with Dr Christine Evans, Chief Education Officer, Aboriginal Education, NSW Education Standards Authority – Curriculum Standards on *Representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*
- background briefing and consultation with NSW Privacy and Information Commissioner, Elizabeth Tydd, on *Right to Know*
- consultation with Professor Megan Davies on the *Family is Culture Review into Aboriginal Children and Young People in Out of Home Care 2019*
- consultation with the Department of Social Services on implementation of *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse*.

Stolen Generations Organisations have responded well during the COVID-19 emergency, adapting to new and emerging technologies for videoconferencing to remain in contact and participate in meetings and workshop discussions during this period. This will be an enhancement to ordinary ways of doing business when the public health restrictions ease and gatherings resume.

<sup>1</sup> *Appointment Standards: Boards and Committees in the NSW Public Sector*, NSW Public Service Commission, July 2013, [www.psc.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/appointment\\_standards\\_-\\_october\\_2015\\_-\\_update\\_for\\_m2015-04.pdf](http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/appointment_standards_-_october_2015_-_update_for_m2015-04.pdf)

Following the NSW State election in March 2019, the Premier announced significant changes in the machinery of government. As part of this, Aboriginal Affairs has transitioned to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, which is responsible for leading the NSW public sector to deliver the NSW Government's commitments and priorities. Other agencies responsible for commitments moved portfolio responsibilities, resulting in some delays as it took time to implement and prioritise important aspects of Unfinished Business. However, new opportunities have also emerged for agencies to build relationships within the new clusters.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

Through the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee, we have continued to bring the voices of Survivors to the government to raise awareness of our experience and influence decisions that affect Survivors and their descendants. The Advisory Committee has introduced our organisations to government representatives and that is a start to building relationships.

We are encouraged to see that more government agencies are reaching out to us to seek our advice on matters affecting Stolen Generations Survivors and our families, however this is only just starting. We feel that other forums used by government for consultation with Aboriginal people are not able to represent our experience or insight, which results in Survivors' voices and Stolen Generations' perspectives being overlooked or misrepresented.

We want to see government improve the way information is provided by agencies and how discussion outcomes and commitments by agencies are followed up with our organisations after meetings. From our perspective this causes concerns about delayed progress on priority issues for Survivors and Unfinished Business commitments. ■

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## 4. Implementation of Unfinished Business by Theme

### Recognition (Acknowledgement and Apology)

Through Unfinished Business, the NSW Government committed to recognise and remember the wrongs and impacts of past government policies and practices that separated Aboriginal children from their families, kinship systems and culture.

Survivors are committed to truth-telling and sharing their own stories on their own terms, individually and as organisations, to raise public awareness and to support education about assimilation and racism, aiming to ensure that what happened to the Stolen Generations does not happen again.

Raising public awareness of the history of Stolen Generations is important to Survivors, to break the cycle of cultural and intergenerational trauma. Public acknowledgement and apology on behalf of the State of New South Wales is a significant act of respect. Public and personal apologies can hold deep sensitivities and mixed emotions for Stolen Generations Survivors, their families and communities.

Survivors are committed to truth-telling and raising public awareness about assimilation and racism.

There are strong and complex feelings associated with actions undertaken in recognition of the Stolen Generations and memorials. For Survivors, these public commitments are an important part of their personal and cultural Sorry Business, connecting their grief, loss and memories from the past to healing in the present. Stolen Generations Organisations provide unique support and understanding that the views of Survivors shift and are diverse on these issues.

Since the First Progress Report, significant steps have been taken to progress commitments focused on recognising and remembering the Stolen Generations respectfully and sensitively. These steps include public statements and truth-telling, progressing memorials and preserving sites of significance for Survivors.

### Personal apologies

Through the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, Stolen Generations Survivors who are eligible for reparations receive a letter from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs with an apology on behalf of the State of New South Wales for the harms experienced as a consequence of their removal from their family, their community and their culture.

Survivors may also choose to receive a personalised written or face-to-face apology from the NSW Government that addresses their individual circumstances. In the preparation of personalised apologies, Survivors are invited to make an impact statement and the apology may reflect the Survivor's own experience. For verbal apologies, skilled Aboriginal facilitators have assisted by creating safe spaces for all participants.

As of 31 December 2020, 332 Survivors have chosen to receive personalised apologies – almost half of eligible claimants. Of these, 175 Survivors have received their apology in writing, with four apologies delivered face-to-face by a senior NSW Government representative. In 2020, the capacity to deliver face-to-face apologies was hampered by COVID-19. The arrangements for personal apologies will be reviewed and refreshed in 2021.

Each apology means something different to the individual Survivor, but each has the potential to become a powerful element for healing and telling their family history. Survivors are encouraged to take their time to reflect on the issues they would like addressed in the apology. They may elect to receive a personalised apology at any stage while the scheme is open. This has been especially important for siblings with reparations claims assessed at different times, and for other Survivors who have taken time to consider the invitation, or who have changed their minds.

Aboriginal Affairs has adapted communications with Survivors regarding apologies following advice from Stolen Generations Organisations that Survivors need to be given time to consider whether they want to receive a personalised apology or provide any personal statements, as this can be an emotional and painful experience.



Source: Transport for NSW

## Public statements and truth-telling

The NSW Government has committed to acknowledge and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage at the commencement of each new Parliament. On 7 May 2019, the first session of the 57th Parliament of NSW opened with an acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture and heritage included in the opening statement for the first time in its history. It acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on which NSW Parliament sits, the Gadigal People of the Eora nation, and recognised the impacts of past government policies on Aboriginal peoples and Stolen Generations Survivors. The acknowledgement was developed together with Aboriginal community representatives.

Stolen Generations Advisory Committee representatives attended the official opening and afterwards met with key government officials, including the Premier of NSW, The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian.

Successive Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs have acknowledged the annual commemoration of the National Apology and the acknowledgement of Sorry Day in Reconciliation Week. This will continue in Parliament each year.

## Memorials at NSW railway stations

Transport for NSW is working with Stolen Generations Organisations to install memorial plaques at train stations of significance to Survivors across the state in recognition of the role that trains played in transporting Aboriginal children away from their families and communities.

A Stolen Generations memorial plaque was installed on the Grand Concourse at Central Station on 3 December 2018, acknowledging the journey of Stolen Generations children and their families throughout the state and those who travelled back in search of their families and cultural identity.

A ceremony was held to commemorate the occasion and was attended by Survivors, Transport for NSW, and the (then) Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell. The plaque includes four original artworks created by Survivors representing the Stolen Generations and expressing their experience of being removed and taken away.

Transport for NSW has also engaged Balarinji, an Aboriginal-owned design and strategy agency, to develop a proposal for a Stolen Generations statue for Central Station Platform 1, to tell the stories of Survivors. Balarinji will consult with the Stolen



Generations Organisations during the concept and development phase of the project. It was agreed that this stage would be deferred to 2021 due to restrictions on face-to-face meetings due to COVID-19.

The Stolen Generations Organisations have identified eight regional train stations and one suburban station as significant to the Stolen Generations and their descendants. Transport for NSW has worked closely with the Stolen Generations Organisations to develop a memorial plaque for each individual station and to align with the Central Station Memorial Plaque. Site visits were conducted at each station to determine the best and most appropriate location for each memorial plaque. The Stolen Generations Organisations, local communities and station staff were all engaged and contributed to the outcome.

A Stolen Generations memorial plaque, designed by Kinchela Boys' Home Survivor, Uncle Richard Campbell, was installed at Kempsey Railway Station on 27 October 2018, with an accompanying memorial event led by Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation. Memorial plaques at Berry, Bombaderry, Bourke, Cootamundra, Grafton, Mittagong, Parramatta, Wagga Wagga and Yass were due to be installed and completed with unveiling events to be held mid-2020 but were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ceremonies will now be held at each location from August to October 2021 to commemorate the unveiling and significance of the Stolen Generations Memorial Plaques. Transport for NSW is working with Stolen

Generations Organisations on the best way to progress this commitment in each location.

Transport for NSW is committed to continue working with Stolen Generations Organisations to ensure that Survivors are involved in decision-making about railway memorial sites and that cultural protocols are maintained in these places and events.

### Memorials and keeping places

The NSW Government has committed to work with the Stolen Generations Organisations to establish memorials and keeping places to provide sites of remembrance for Survivors. Survivors have requested that the government focus on the sites of former Aborigines Welfare Board homes, which are heritage-listed and Aboriginal place-designated, and one additional site, representing children placed in other homes.

Memorials at significant sites are an important acknowledgement of the Stolen Generations and a reminder that the wrongs of the past should never be repeated.

Government has commenced this work carefully, and with a phased approach, to consider the specific complex issues for each site and the interests of all key stakeholders.

In 2019, Aboriginal Affairs established a cross-government working group to establish and guide the Keeping Places Project. Aboriginal Affairs contracted an Aboriginal consulting firm, Cox Inall Ridgeway, to work with the Stolen Generations Organisations and Local Aboriginal Land Councils to explore opportunities to progress their aspirations for the proposed sites and to provide a scoping study (the Cox Inall Ridgeway report). This was jointly resourced by Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Regional NSW. This important phase of work

has been undertaken to ensure that Survivors' aspirations for the sites of the former homes are sensitively captured and to guide government, Stolen Generations Organisations and Local Aboriginal Land Councils about responsibilities associated with the sites and next steps.

Government is considering the recommendations presented in the Cox Inall Ridgeway report in consultation with the Stolen Generations Organisations and Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

### **Children of Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Memorial Gardens**

The Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home is often referred to as the 'birthplace' of the Stolen Generations in NSW as it was the first home established in NSW in 1908.

Today the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home has enormous significance for the people sent there as children. It is a place associated with deep emotional ties. Former residents have strong memories and feelings from their time spent in the home. There are feelings of both hurt and affection for the place.

Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated (CBACH) has established a memorial garden in the grounds of the former home, alongside an office space renovated in one of the historic cottages, to acknowledge the Stolen Generations and support contact with Survivors and their families.

The memorial garden has been developed in partnership with the local community and Local Aboriginal Land Council, recognising connections that local families and visitors continue to have with the site. A focal point of the garden are the small footprints on the southern side leading into it, designed to commemorate the children and babies that were taken from their families and brought to the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home. On the northern side of the garden are larger footprints leading out of the garden. These represent the older children leaving the home for local domestic servant work, or to other places such as Kinchela Boys' Home and Cootamundra Girls' Home.

Local Elders Uncle Will Dixon and Auntie Christine Blakeney explain: "When we enter the garden to pay our respects we always come in the south end and exit the northern end, as this was the path our Aboriginal children were forced to walk. We pay our respects to the families and children whose lives were changed forever as no baby or child was ever allowed to be returned home."



Source: Aboriginal Affairs

## **Investigation of Aborigines Welfare Board sites to locate missing Aboriginal children**

Stolen Generations Survivors have requested that former Aborigines Welfare Board sites be investigated and searched to locate the remains of any Aboriginal children or on-site burials. The NSW Government has committed to progress this work.

A healing ceremony was held in Parramatta on 7 December 2020 in remembrance of missing children who were removed and never returned home to their families and communities. The event was linked to smoking ceremonies involving Survivors and their families that took place at the sites of the former Aborigines Welfare Board homes.

The healing ceremony involved testimonies from Survivors representing the Stolen Generations Organisations and included a ceremonial handing-over of a report to government that expressed Survivors' aspirations for the former Aborigines Welfare Board sites and their recommendations. Survivors have requested government to consider the report recommendations and to take urgent action led by Survivors.

This work is particularly sensitive and complex, being directly linked to Survivors' childhood memories of trauma and abuse associated with their removal and these sites. Survivors and their families continue to struggle with unresolved grief, loss and lost connections to family members and other children who were at the homes, and their unresolved fears for those who were never reunited.

Cox Inall Ridgeway consultants have been commissioned to consult Survivors on how they wish to remember and document the missing children. This will include documenting their experiences and memories, or the memories of other witnesses, of missing children on or near the Aborigines Welfare Board homes. This work will inform further decisions, made in consultation with Survivors, regarding possible site investigations and on-site memorials.

Aboriginal Affairs is also planning research focused on contextualising historic records relating to the Stolen Generations and the former Aborigines Welfare Board sites. This includes learning more about emerging practice in archives management focused on 'de-colonising' historic accounts in archived records.





### **Stolen Generations Memorial, Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan**

The Stolen Generations memorial at the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan, is a site for healing for all Australians to visit, reflect and commemorate the impact of the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families. The memorial was established in 2007 through a reconciliation partnership formed between the Royal Botanic Garden and Domain Trust, the NSW Government, Link-Up NSW and Stolen Generations Survivors.

The memorial is situated in a woodland setting, with a sculptural centrepiece carved by renowned Aboriginal sculptor, Uncle Badger Bates. Local Dharawal Elders have a strong connection to this special place and community Sorry Day commemorations focus on the memorial.

Artist Uncle Badger Bates, Aboriginal community Elders, and staff from the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan, are working together to repair and protect the Stolen Generations memorial following significant vandalism done to the statue in February 2020. Uncle Badger shared his sadness but stressed he did not want to respond with anger. He has inspected the damage and will be returning when COVID travel restrictions have eased in 2021 to begin repairs on the statue.

## Education

Public awareness and knowledge of past forcible removals and their impacts on Stolen Generations Survivors and Aboriginal communities is an essential part of reparations for individual and collective healing.

There is an active, positive focus on education in Unfinished Business commitments and the activities of Stolen Generations Organisations. The History Syllabus taught in Years 7–10 in NSW schools includes content on Stolen Generations, and the NSW Education Standards Authority has welcomed further discussions with Stolen Generations Organisations on curriculum content in the future.

Stolen Generations Survivors are invited by individual schools to speak about their experiences as Elders and Survivors. Stolen Generations Organisations have also started to work with local schools to develop sustainable arrangements to teach Stolen Generations content, including the engagement of Survivors themselves and development of education resources. Stolen Generations Organisations are interested in future opportunities to develop education resources to support teaching and learning about Stolen Generations history and survival.



### Kinchela Boys' Home Mobile Education Centre

In February 2020, Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) officially launched its Mobile Education Centre, designed by Kinchela Boys' Home Survivors to support truth-telling. KBHAC's aim for truth-telling is to ensure that the experiences of Stolen Generations Survivors are never forgotten and never repeated.

In 2019, KBHAC established its own project to develop the Mobile Education Centre based on the experiences of Survivors of the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys' Training Home (KBH). The Mobile Education Centre was designed to travel across NSW, visiting schools and communities to expand public understanding of the Stolen Generations. It is the first of its kind.

A Survivor-designed re-fitted bus was created, housing an exhibition that tells the story of the more than 400 boys who were placed at the KBH. It provides a whole-of-community learning experience drawing on oral testimony, archival material, visual images and timelines. The back half of the bus has been converted into a cinema that shows a short film produced by some of the Survivors.

The NSW Government supported the KBHAC project, providing \$670,000 in funding from the Department of Education and the Ministry for Health to support the fit-out and the delivery of training and visits to schools and community organisations. Assistance came from DCJ to construct the bus fit-out, and logistical support was provided by Aboriginal Affairs and Transport for NSW.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

Stolen Generations Organisations want to see acknowledgement statements in Parliament continue. These are an important way of educating elected representatives and the public about respecting Aboriginal people and cultures.

The history of past government wrongdoings, racist assimilation policies and the Stolen Generations experience needs to be understood across Parliament and government. Ongoing racist commentary and public discussion is a continuing problem faced by Aboriginal people and families. Denial and ignorance are a continuation of the trauma and rejection experienced by Stolen Generations Survivors since their childhood removal.

Survivors believe that apologies and public statements recognising the Stolen Generations encourage people to reflect on history and connect with healing. Individual Survivors who elect to receive a personal apology can also find that experience meaningful for themselves and their family if it is done well.

Truth-telling is an important part of healing, reconnection and reconciliation. Survivors have said that memorials are important for connecting local communities, to bring people together to understand the history of the place where they live. The Stolen Generations Organisations are encouraged by the work taking place to memorialise and acknowledge the Stolen Generations, including at Central Railway Station and the memorial plaques at regional railway stations. Stolen Generations Organisations would also like to see Local Aboriginal Land Councils and local government being more involved and developing local community memorials with Survivors.

Stolen Generations memorials installed in prominent locations help raise awareness and educate the public about the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities. Stolen Generations Organisations are enthusiastic to work closely with Transport for NSW to have commemorative events for the unveiling of the remainder of the memorial plaques at regional train stations, and for the development of the statue at Central Station acknowledging Stolen Generations children.

Memorial statues, gardens and plaques are important places for reflection, and this can touch on sensitive emotions and beliefs. Unfortunately, vandalism can be one of the consequences of public access to these spaces. These significant sites need to be protected and maintained to preserve their integrity and purpose, along with their cultural connections to Stolen Generations Survivors and Aboriginal communities.

Stolen Generations Organisations are strongly committed to education and raising public awareness through Survivors telling their own stories about their experiences and survival. Stolen Generations Organisations are encouraged by the increasing requests that are being received from teachers and from community events, inviting Survivors to speak about their experiences and the significance of the history of the Stolen Generations.

Survivors work in their communities as volunteers and are interested in developing Survivor-led, sustainable programs and education resources to assist teachers and students develop their understanding of the history of the Stolen Generations and the effects of removal policies.

Stolen Generations Organisations would also like to see education resource kits developed to incorporate local and regional information about Stolen Generations experiences and significant sites in particular locations. Stolen Generations Organisations would like to engage further with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and AECG local committees for further discussions about learning resources and the delivery of the curriculum on Aboriginal histories and the Stolen Generations.

Stolen Generations Organisations representatives are very proud of the achievements of Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation in designing and launching its own Mobile Education Centre. The Stolen Generations Organisations are looking forward to government continuing to support and engage with this outstanding resource. It has the potential to make a significant impact in schools and communities across NSW. The enthusiasm and energy that the Uncles from Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation commit to the project is inspiring for everyone who comes into contact with them and the Mobile Education Centre.

Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated has worked onsite with Nowra Aboriginal Land Council to establish a Stolen Generations Memorial Garden and its own office to maintain contact with Survivors, families and visitors.

This is a significant place for reflection, where the community comes together to support each other during times of grief and loss. The garden became an important focus during COVID-19 isolation, supporting Survivors to stay connected, for example by providing home gardening kits.

The sites of the former Aborigines Welfare Board homes are places of personal and historical significance to Survivors. It is essential that Survivors have easy access to these places that hold the stories and trauma of their past and the physical memories of forced removals and family devastation. Survivors want to transform these sites into reflective places of truth-telling, learning and healing for their families, communities, and for the public to understand the past and connect to a better future, ensuring what happened to Survivors never happens again.

Survivors advocate that these sites are part of the legacy of suffering of the Stolen Generations and that the healing needed for Survivors, families and communities must be taken forward by Survivors themselves. This needs to happen urgently, while Survivors are alive and able to lead the way.

Stolen Generations Organisations have asked government to recognise the significance of these sites for memorials and healing and to provide the necessary and urgent assistance needed to fulfil Survivors' goals to lead the future of these sites.

This is a high priority for Survivors and there is strong interest across the Stolen Generations community of Survivors and their families and local communities. Stolen Generations Organisations are frustrated that the process to bring Survivors' aspirations for the sites to reality is moving slowly and progress has been delayed.

Survivors engaged with consultations for the Cox Inall Ridgeway report in 2020. Stolen Generations Organisations have asked to be provided with better information, and receive it more regularly, to understand the findings and recommendations in the report and government actions. Stolen Generations Organisations are anxious about delays and the time taken by government to respond to Survivors' aspirations and the report.

Stolen Generations Organisations have focused strongly on the current and future use of the former Aborigines Welfare Board sites in their own work and do not want to see their healing activities and future opportunities for the sites diminished over time due to delays.

Stolen Generations Organisations have asked that government agencies work more closely with Survivors and Stolen Generations Organisations on the Keeping Places Project in the future and that action for Survivor-led aspirations for the sites proceed without any further hesitation or delay. ■

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## Monetary Reparations

One of the critical priorities for Unfinished Business, identified by Survivors, is the delivery of monetary reparations to the Stolen Generations.

Survivors have advocated for monetary reparations for many years. Historically, there was no legal recourse for Survivors to claim compensation for the act of removal in NSW under the former *Aborigines Protection Act 1909*. Stolen Generations Survivors who sought to make legal claims for other compensation related to their experience, including abuse or neglect, found civil legal proceedings distressing and difficult to resolve.

The NSW Government has recognised the wrongdoing of forced removals under racist assimilation policies under legislation that existed up to 1969 and is addressing individual circumstances through the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme. Unfinished Business commitments also provide for: collective reparations; delivering financial assistance to Stolen Generations Organisations that support Survivor-led assistance; and support for healing determined and led by Survivors.

### Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme

The Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme (the Reparations Scheme) was established to acknowledge and make reparations for the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities under former NSW Government policies of ‘protection’ and assimilation, using the racist provisions of the *Aborigines Protection Act*.

Under this discriminatory legislation, children were either removed from their families and placed in *Aborigines Welfare Board* institutions or other state or non-state run institutions; or were adopted or fostered due to the fact that they were Aboriginal. Survivors suffered significant long-term harm from the resulting loss of family, community, culture and identity.

The Reparations Scheme provides ex gratia payments of up to \$75,000 to living Survivors who were removed as children by the *Aborigines Welfare Board* or its predecessor, the *Aborigines Protection Board*, in recognition of their wrongful removal and subsequent loss of connection to family and culture. Each claim is considered based on individual circumstances. All eligible claimants receive the same sum.

Survivors who are eligible to receive monetary reparations are also eligible to receive a \$7,000 Funeral Assistance Fund payment. This is in recognition of the impact that forcible removal had on contributing to entrenched economic and social disadvantage, resulting in many Stolen Generations Survivors having fewer resources and less support around funerals.

As of 31 December 2020, the Reparations Scheme has received 1,874 applications. Of those applications, 720 have been assessed as eligible, and the scheme has paid \$52.7 million to eligible Survivors.

Since the commencement of the Reparations Scheme, additional records have become available to support the assessment of reparations claims. Increased access to archival records and emerging research has enhanced the scheme’s understanding of the operation of the *Aborigines Welfare Board*, enabling many more Survivors to confirm their eligibility for reparations. As a result of additional information about the broader context of claimants’ removals becoming available, 183 claims from Survivors whose claims were initially assessed as ineligible or out of scope have been found eligible following reassessment or review.

The Reparations Scheme will continue to review claims on the basis of new evidence or circumstances not previously considered.

The Reparations Scheme commenced in July 2017 for a period of five years, with the closing date for applications being 30 June 2022 and the scheme ending on 31 December 2022.

There are significant challenges to be addressed before the scheme closes, including strategies to reach all eligible Survivors. An interim review of the scheme is being undertaken to assess progress, identify issues and impediments, and consider the resources needed to ensure the scheme is fully implemented.

There is some advocacy by applicants and their legal advisers aimed at broadening the eligibility criteria of the Reparations Scheme to include *all* Aboriginal children removed from their families under the government’s policies of assimilation, including children taken by the *Child Welfare Department* after the *Aborigines Welfare Board* was abolished in 1969. The *Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)* has legacy responsibility for responding to concerns

about the actions of Child Welfare Department staff, including any removals of Aboriginal children under child welfare legislation.

The Reparations Scheme is only able to process applications for reparations submitted by living Survivors. There is an unresolved sense of loss remaining for the families of Survivors who have passed away in the 20 years since the publication of *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (the Bringing Them Home Report). For many, the Reparations Scheme was implemented too late.

The operation of the scheme has also generated interest and enquiries from Aboriginal people who were separated from their families or communities in circumstances that are outside the scope or jurisdiction of the scheme. There have been ongoing difficulties for applicants understanding the purpose or eligibility requirements of the scheme.

The fragmented availability of other forms of compensation for other circumstances experienced by Stolen Generations Survivors has certainly contributed to this confusion. For example, the Reparations Scheme recognises the wrongful removal of children under the Aborigines Protection Act, but compensation for any mistreatment, neglect and abuse suffered while in care must be sought through other avenues.

Before the Reparations Scheme commenced, legal action initiated by Stolen Generations Survivors had already begun to result in the State of New South Wales paying damages for negligence and breaching its duty of care. Aboriginal Affairs and the (then) Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) were identified as the responsible agencies in these Stolen Generations Group Action claims. The first claim was settled in early 2015, with about 150 matters settled to date. The action remains open, although it is expected that the bulk of the claims have now been settled.

A year after the NSW Reparations Scheme commenced, the Australian Government established the National Redress Scheme for people who have suffered institutional child sexual abuse, creating another avenue for Survivors who were abused while in care to seek redress. The National Redress Scheme was established in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

## Funeral Assistance Fund

The Funeral Assistance Fund was established to assist families of Stolen Generations Survivors by contributing to the cost of funerals. The Funeral Assistance Fund provides \$7,000 payments to eligible Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme claimants. Survivors may elect to receive the one-off payment at the same time as their Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme claim is approved, or they may nominate to receive the payment at a later date.

The NSW Government committed \$5.1 million to the Funeral Assistance Fund in response to Unfinished Business. As of 31 December 2020, \$4.8 million has been paid from the Funeral Assistance Fund to 685 eligible claimants.

The majority of eligible claimants have elected to receive their funeral assistance with their reparations payment. A small number of claimants have opted for Aboriginal Affairs to hold the \$7,000 in trust; either until they elect to receive it, or until it is needed to pay for funeral expenses. In relation to this small group of Survivors, robust processes are in place to ensure payments are promptly processed when required.

Concerns raised by Survivors to the Advisory Committee regarding the high cost of funerals, burial rights, transport and memorial headstones have been forwarded as feedback to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW (IPART). IPART is conducting reviews on Interment Costs and Pricing in NSW and on Competition, Costs and Pricing in the NSW Funeral Industry.

## National Redress Scheme for institutional child sexual abuse

Stolen Generations Survivors who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse have requested assistance through the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee to understand how the National Redress Scheme interacts with NSW Government agencies and the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme.

Aboriginal Affairs arranged for the Department of Social Services, the department responsible for administering the National Redress Scheme, to attend Stolen Generations Advisory Committee meetings during 2019–2020 to provide information about the scheme and to hear directly from Survivors about their concerns.

The National Redress Scheme was established by the Australian Government on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years.

The National Redress Scheme:

- acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions
- holds institutions accountable for this abuse, and
- helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response (Apology), and a monetary payment in recognition of the abuse.

The scheme assesses applications for redress on the basis of eligibility criteria, to determine:

- whether the institution responsible for child sexual abuse is participating in the National Redress Scheme
- whether the claimant is eligible to receive redress
- what type of redress can be offered to the claimant, and
- the amount of a redress payment if one is offered by the scheme.

Claimants may only make one application for redress for institutional child sexual abuse. The claimant's acceptance of an offer of redress releases the responsible participating institution, its officials and any associates from civil liability.

The NSW Government joined the National Redress Scheme prior to its commencement in July 2018. NSW agencies are participating State institutions.

In order to consider an application for redress, the Scheme asks relevant participating institutions for information. This includes records of the time the applicant was there (if they exist) or if there has been a prior payment. This is because 'relevant prior payments' are taken into account when determining the amount of a Redress payment.

Unfinished Business reparations commitments – the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme and the Funeral Assistance Fund – provide ex-gratia payments acknowledging the removal of Aboriginal children under former assimilation policies. These payments are in recognition of other harms and therefore are not considered 'relevant prior payments' under the National Redress Scheme.

Stolen Generations Survivors are concerned about the impact of payments received from the NSW Government in settlement of previous group action litigation on applications for redress.

Aboriginal Affairs has continued to refer concerns raised by the Stolen Generations Organisations to the NSW Government Redress Implementation Steering Committee, as well as referring enquiries directly to the operators of the National Redress Scheme.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

The Stolen Generations Organisations representatives feel strongly that the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme does not adequately recognise the experience of all Survivors who were removed from their families and communities. Survivors are relieved that the scheme has pushed forward research and access to records assisting some Survivors to have their claims reassessed to confirm their eligibility for the scheme.

Stolen Generations Organisations have concerns about arrangements for the closing date for applications to the Reparations Scheme and want all Survivors' applications to be assessed without delay.

Some Survivors continue to believe that the scope of the scheme and eligibility criteria should be expanded to include all Aboriginal people who were removed under the practices of racist assimilation policies, which continued to be active beyond the abolition of the Aborigines Welfare Board in 1969.

Survivors have continuing concerns that the amount of reparations set by the scheme is insufficient. The implementation of the National Redress Scheme for institutional responses to child sexual abuse has caused significant anxiety and concern for Survivors who are distressed to learn that prior compensation payments are being assessed to reduce any offer of redress. Survivors feel that all compensation and reparations related to their removal should be preserved and that they should also be entitled to the full amount of redress for any sexual abuse. Stolen Generations Organisations are also concerned to see how proposed reforms to civil liability legislation in NSW will impact on legal avenues for monetary compensation.

There are ongoing concerns about families experiencing financial distress associated with funeral costs. The Funeral Assistance Fund payment of \$7,000 is a contribution and does not adequately cover funeral costs, particularly in circumstances where Survivors wish to be returned back to Country for burial. ■



Source: Cassandra Hannagan, Parramatta City Council

## Healing

The NSW Government has committed to provide reparations to support collective healing led by Stolen Generations Survivors.

Government recognises the important role that NSW Stolen Generations Organisations have played in supporting Survivors and developing Survivor-led ways and models for healing and understanding their own trauma as well as intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal families and communities.

### Stolen Generations Organisations Reparations Funding

Each of the Stolen Generations Organisations is unique. Under the *Stolen Generations Organisations Reparations Funding Policy Guidelines*, funding aims to strengthen the capacity of Stolen Generations Organisations and to support Survivor-led collective healing activities. As at 30 December 2020, a total of \$3.74 million in collective reparations funding has been provided to the four NSW Stolen Generations Organisations. This funding has supported Stolen Generations Organisations to provide:

- outreach and peer support, assisting Survivors managing trauma
- support for Survivors to access and engage with services

- collective healing gatherings and activities for Survivors and their descendants
- grief support and assistance for families experiencing Sorry Business
- project development for healing and cultural renewal projects
- organisational capacity building, including training to address governance benchmarks
- office and meeting space costs
- administration and operational costs, including fees and salary contributions.

The Stolen Generations Organisations are developing and documenting their governance and administration models to enable them to negotiate longer-term reparations funding arrangements and, for some Stolen Generations Organisations, service delivery agreements and project partnerships.

Some Stolen Generations Organisations are planning to develop their business capacity to transition from auspice funding agreements to more independent arrangements. Stolen Generations Organisations have established office spaces, or are transitioning to new spaces, to support their business activities and contact with Survivors, with longer-term aspirations to develop facilities to better meet Survivors' needs.

Our healing journey has meant reclaiming our identity and culture as Aboriginal people, connecting with our families, and dealing with trauma and the grief and loss we suffered since the time we were stolen.

## Stolen Generations Healing Fund

A grant-based Stolen Generations Healing Fund of \$5 million was established in 2018–2019 as part of the NSW Government’s 10-year commitment to make financial (and non-financial) reparations available to Stolen Generations Survivor-led collective healing proposals. The *Stolen Generations Healing Fund Policy and Operational Guidelines* (the Guidelines) guide the implementation of the Healing Fund.

The Healing Fund targets proposals that demonstrate: elements of effective healing models designed with Survivors; approaches that revitalise cultural identity; cultural and trauma-informed capacity; commitment to positive change; and the ability to facilitate positive healing outcomes in individuals, families and communities. The Guidelines prioritise proposals aligned with Unfinished Business commitments and provide scope for review over the duration of the Healing Fund.

In its first year of operation, the Healing Fund considered priority submissions for collective healing activities led by recognised Stolen Generations Organisations in NSW. Stolen Generations Organisations are required to demonstrate governance benchmarks, a healing approach and organisational capacity. Submissions were assessed by an assessment panel in accordance with the Guidelines, a priority assessment framework, and probity plan.

As of 30 December 2020 the Healing Fund has provided a total of \$375,000 to three eligible Stolen Generations Organisations for healing activities including:

- healing camps, gatherings and art workshops for members
- reunion gatherings focused on healing relationships for Survivors and their descendants

- recording the stories of Survivors on Country, including an oral history project.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, activities were delayed and Stolen Generations Organisations are rescheduling healing activities in 2021. In 2020–2021 Aboriginal Affairs will again invite priority applications from the four recognised Stolen Generations Organisations to support collective healing aspirations aligned with Unfinished Business commitments.

## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

Our healing journey has meant reclaiming our identity and culture as Aboriginal people, connecting with our families, and dealing with trauma and the grief and loss we suffered since the time we were stolen. It is up to us to deal with our trauma in our own ways, but we need government to support us in the ways that we ask. We don’t want to see this trauma passed on to our families any longer.

We speak with the unique experience and perspectives of Stolen Generations Survivors. As Aboriginal children we were removed from our families based on race and we were taken away to be assimilated by being placed in institutions or fostered and adopted by non-Aboriginal people. We were disconnected from our families, our identity and our culture.

We have been working hard to build our organisations to best support Survivors. It has been important for the different voices of Survivors to come together within our own organisations and through the Advisory Committee. We can piece together our own stories and develop an understanding about what healing means to us.

With the funding provided through the Healing Fund we have been able to develop our own programs, tailored to the needs of Survivors, which support collective healing. Sharing our stories and truth-telling can help our communities reconnect and understand intergenerational trauma, and this will help prevent the same thing from happening again. Healing is a legacy that can be passed on to descendants and future generations.

We are proud of the work of KBHAC, who established its own project to develop a Mobile Education Centre based on the experiences of Survivors of Kinchela Boys' Home. This bus will travel across NSW, visiting schools and communities and expand the understanding of the Stolen Generations, working towards our aspirations for Unfinished Business.

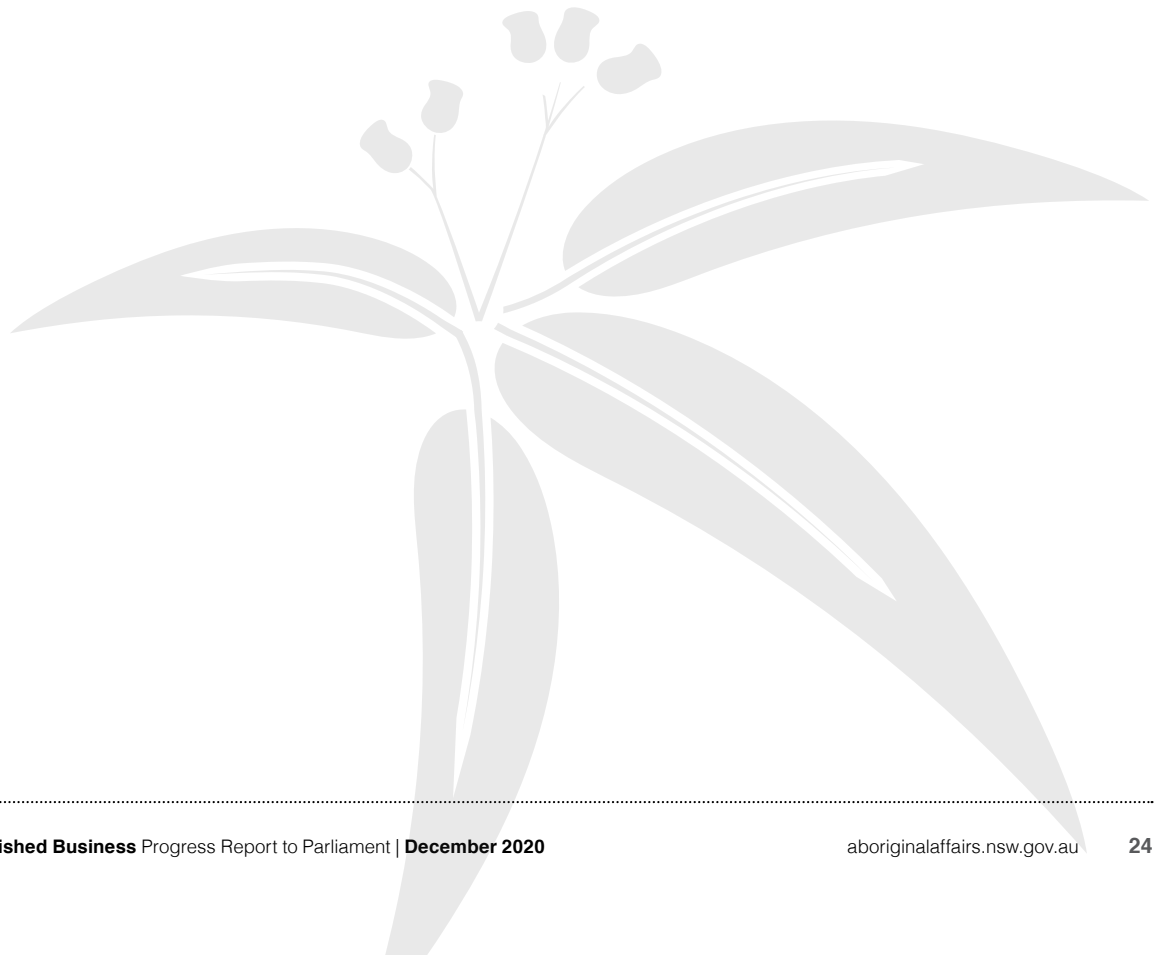
Stolen Generations Organisations are interested to develop our own projects in the future, like the Mobile Education Centre. We would like to see government continue to commit resources and support to those initiatives, to support the leadership and significant efforts of Survivors to develop our own healing responses for our families.

Stolen Generations Organisations are also concerned about the trauma burden carried in families and communities. Healing is difficult when we are caring for others who are struggling to survive in crisis and grief. Stolen Generations Organisations

are receiving requests from distressed families for financial assistance not provided for through the Unfinished Business commitments. Grief, loss and Sorry Business have significant impacts, emotionally and financially. Communities are struggling with the costs of funerals and memorials to pay their respects and remember their loved ones.

Stolen Generations Organisations are also being asked to support families and communities who want to come together for reunions and gatherings that are focused on healing relationships and restoring culture. We need government to recognise the importance of resourcing Aboriginal people to lead healing in their families through reunions that focus on healing relationships beyond the search for family histories. ■

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## Tailored Supports

The NSW Government's response to *Unfinished Business* recognised that specialised service responses are required to address the unique needs of Survivors and the social and health impacts they experience as a result of their childhood removal and ongoing trauma.

The government recognises that the scale and impact of improvements required to deliver trauma-informed services for Stolen Generations Survivors, and descendant generations impacted by intergenerational cultural trauma, is significant.

Survivors find it difficult to trust or engage with services that don't understand Aboriginal cultural perspectives or Stolen Generations Survivors and the trauma impacts experienced by Survivors and their families.

The government is committed to improve service responses for Survivors, including health and housing supports, and to advocate with the Commonwealth for improvements across aged care, health services and health benefits, and for social and emotional wellbeing counsellors and programs.

The NSW Government is also funding coordinator positions at Stolen Generations Organisations to support Survivors' access to DCJ service systems. Coordinators will also be put in place to support Survivors to access NSW health services. The coordinator roles funded by DCJ are already in place in the Stolen Generations Organisations. Pathways have also been developed for Survivors to receive priority housing access.

Survivors have been supported to have their voices heard by the Commonwealth at specific roundtables on Commonwealth services that impact them, including health, aged care, and social and emotional wellbeing supports.

The NSW Government has also commenced work on Everyone's Business, a workforce training toolkit for the NSW public service, to raise cultural awareness and understanding of intergenerational trauma.

## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

Tailored supports have been identified as a priority focus area, but Survivors are concerned that not much has changed in the service response for Survivors, which is based on existing services. Stolen Generations Organisations want to see government agencies engage more closely and regularly with Stolen Generations Organisations on these issues.

Government agencies have commenced roundtable conversations with Stolen Generations Organisations, but the discussions are focused on existing service systems and case management approaches. Agencies and service providers are not yet understanding Survivor perspectives and needs. We need agencies to start adapting to better ways of doing business for Survivors and to provide for the unique needs of Survivors accessing services.

Stolen Generations Organisations want to see government responses, underpinned by policy and operational frameworks, driving holistic, trauma-informed approaches to support and providing services specifically designed with and for Survivors and their families.

Stolen Generations Organisations are concerned about the lack of cultural capabilities in the existing services systems and workforce. Trauma Survivors need services and service settings that are culturally safe, accessible and flexible, to support Survivors' self-determination and independent decision-making. Stolen Generations Organisations have emphasised the need to work more closely with Survivor knowledge to build cultural capability and trauma awareness into the design and delivery of services and the workforce.

Stolen Generations Organisations have also advocated that the Commonwealth and NSW governments should fund Stolen Generations Organisations to develop capacity to deliver their own service models, directly informed and led by Survivors, to meet the specific needs of Survivors and their families.

The existing services systems are complex and confusing for Survivors to navigate and difficult to access. Survivors have requested additional information and assistance to support them to access services, and that services be better

coordinated, culturally safe and designed to meet the complex needs they are facing in their ageing stage of life.

The elaborate funding arrangements existing between Commonwealth and NSW government agencies have made it difficult to identify responsible service providers and accountabilities for service delivery across the health, disability, aged care and housing sectors. Survivors have expressed concerns about waiting times, service delays, service gaps and costs. Survivors have also described that assessments are failing to meet their complete needs for housing, aged care, health services or disability supports. There are different interests driving discussions between Survivors and government about service delivery expectations. ■

## Health

NSW Health acknowledges and extends appreciation to Survivors for their time sharing their lived experience and enabling the work to build cultural safety for all Aboriginal communities in NSW through roundtable discussions.

NSW Health has heard directly from Stolen Generations Organisations at roundtable conversations aimed at better understanding the scope of improvements that government could make to improve NSW health system services caring for aged Survivors. At a roundtable held in September 2019, Stolen Generations Organisations raised concerns about health services, aged health care and chronic medical conditions, and state support in aged care, including Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessments.

The roundtable discussion highlighted the need for better care coordination, navigation and cultural safety, including capability to influence key policy-making processes. As a result of the roundtable, NSW Health agreed to implement specialised Health Care Coordinator positions, with knowledge and understanding of Survivors' health issues and services. The positions will work closely with each organisation and individual Survivors to facilitate access to health assessments and existing services. The positions will support trauma-informed health services and prioritised access to services for Survivors.

Survivors have expressed to government that this work should be realised rapidly to best support Survivors. They have also asked that the support be broadened to assist their families. This response is at an early stage of implementation, with NSW Health working to finalise a framework for the funding and mentoring of these Health Care Coordinators for rollout by 30 June 2021.

Survivors have expressed concerns about waiting times, service delays, service gaps and costs. Assessments are failing to meet their complete needs.

To assist Stolen Generations Organisations to identify appropriate services and have priority access to health services, NSW Health has committed to scoping local service directories for Stolen Generations Organisations information and has started planning to utilise existing 'flags' in the NSW health system to identify Survivors for priority access to services and support. NSW Health will also formalise a local partnership and governance approach for place-based planning with Stolen Generations Organisations in 2021 through the Health Care Coordinator roles.

Following the roundtable discussions, Stolen Generations Organisations also attended the NSW Health Aged Care Advisory Group to discuss ACAT issues. ACAT team leaders and workforce trainers from across the state were interested to have further discussions with Stolen Generations Organisations to understand Survivor needs and knowledge.

NSW Health has committed to consulting with Stolen Generations Organisations on future directions for health services, including suggestions made through the Royal Commission on Aged Care Quality and Safety, once the final report from the Royal Commission is considered by the Australian Government.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

'Tailored services' have yet to be designed for Stolen Generations Survivors. Funded Health Care Coordinator positions sitting in the Stolen Generations Organisations is a first step towards this. Survivors ask that NSW Health urgently progress work to prioritise Survivors' access to health services and implement Health Care Coordinator roles, taking on board their concerns about implementation and role descriptions.

Survivors are affected by media reports that millions of dollars are invested nationally on services for Aboriginal health, yet Survivors continue to experience difficulty accessing appropriate health services and support to meet their needs, when they need it and where they need it.

Survivors find it difficult to trust or engage with services that don't understand Aboriginal cultural perspectives or Stolen Generations Survivors and the trauma impacts experienced by Survivors and their families.

The standards of service and quality of care delivered across health districts and medical services can be very different. Stolen Generations Organisations want to see the same high standards of care and priority access available to all Stolen Generations Survivors, regardless of their location, and with additional financial assistance and support from government to access a full range of health, aged care and disability services.

Survivors find it difficult to navigate the services systems and are concerned about service delays. Survivors are distressed that services are under resourced. Delays and waiting lists mean that some people don't receive services when they need them. ■

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## Health care card

Stolen Generations Organisations have continued to advocate for the Commonwealth Government to implement and provide a Stolen Generations health care card nationally to provide priority access to services, no-gap payments, and additional financial assistance and subsidised health supports and services for their care and wellbeing.

The Commonwealth has reported that the issue of concession cards falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Department of Social Services and that access to concession cards is determined on the basis of financial need. As such, income and assets tests would apply and are considered a fair way to ensure that available funds are directed to those in the community with the greatest need.

NSW Health has committed to consulting with Stolen Generations Organisations on future directions for health services, including suggestions made through the Royal Commission on Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Stolen Generations Organisations have requested information from the Commonwealth about priority access to health services, including Australian examples of priority service cards relevant to health and ageing. They have requested a further roundtable discussion with the Commonwealth specifically on the issue of the 'gold card' concept. The Commonwealth committed to provide more service information to each Stolen Generations Organisation to understand existing supports available, via visits with each organisation. These visits are aimed at enabling NSW and the Commonwealth to further understand how government could improve access and tailor supports for Survivors. The visits were unable to proceed during the COVID-19 pandemic and are to be rescheduled in 2021.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

Due to limited engagement during 2020, Survivors feel that Commonwealth agencies have not progressed the commitment to engage more closely with Stolen Generations Organisations since the roundtable discussion.

While focusing on tailored health supports, Stolen Generations Organisations want the scope for subsidised health, aged care and disability services for Survivors to be explored by the government, and specifically Commonwealth Government service systems. Governments should take responsibility for the trauma inflicted on us by past governments.

We refer to the health care card as a 'gold card' because we want recognition as a priority group with complex needs. Governments should act responsibly and provide access to information and a level of services and assistance to meet complex needs, based on Survivors' experience and advice.

These are priority issues for ageing Survivors. Stolen Generations Organisations are frustrated by the lack of information and engagement by Commonwealth agencies. Survivors do not know where or how to find the services and care they need in the Commonwealth health, ageing and disability sectors.

Survivors are ready to continue the conversations and want Commonwealth agencies to engage in a follow-up roundtable discussion to map what services are already available, what healthcare benefits are available and suitable for Survivors, and how services will engage with Stolen Generations Survivors to tailor services that meet their complex needs. ■

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### Aged care

Survivors have complex healthcare needs and Stolen Generations Organisations have explained that aged care services are inaccessible to many Survivors and otherwise inappropriate for people with lived experience of institutionalised trauma.

Stolen Generations Survivors have advocated to have urgent and prioritised access to flexible aged care options, with programs and services that are trauma-aware and culturally safe. Survivors have advised that coordinated disability, aged care and healthcare services should be focused on supporting older Survivors to maintain their

health, independence and safety at home and in the community. Linked to this, Survivors are also concerned about having stable and appropriate housing to receive the appropriate services and support they need and to comfortably accommodate themselves, their carers and family support.

In December 2019, the Commonwealth and Stolen Generations Organisations discussed these concerns at a roundtable involving Survivors and the Commonwealth Department of Health, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and NSW Health.

The Australian Government has reported that it supports diversity in aged care. This is set out as part of the Aged Care Diversity Framework outcomes that guide aged care providers to develop action plans to support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ensure their needs are appropriately addressed.

Trauma Survivors need services and service settings that are culturally safe, accessible and flexible, to support Survivors' self-determination and independent decision-making.

The Commonwealth Department of Health has published resources to support service providers working with people who have experienced trauma in the 'Caring for Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and Stolen Generations Information Package'. The resource was developed with wide-ranging consultations, including with Stolen Generations Survivors.

During the reporting period of this report, the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established in October 2018 to examine aged care services and supports for older Australians and their carers. The Royal Commission's Final Report, *Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect*, released 1 March 2021, found that the aged care system fails to meet the needs of its older, vulnerable citizens, stating it does not deliver uniformly safe and quality care, is unkind and uncaring towards older people and, in too many instances, it neglects them. The Final

Report made 148 wide-ranging recommendations for the fundamental and systemic reform of the aged care system.

The Royal Commission's Interim Report, *Interim Report: Neglect*, released 31 October 2019, noted that, on the evidence and submissions received, aged care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needs to be delivered in ways that are flexible, adaptable and culturally safe. This includes provision of assessment pathways, aged care integrated with other services, and facilitating aged care on Country, where possible. The Royal Commission looked at exploring ways to support aged care services to be staffed and managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The NSW Government continues to highlight the urgency and priority of Unfinished Business recommendations relating to health and aged care services, including the urgent need to respond to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

NSW Health will renew its approaches in working with the Australian Government and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

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### **Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment**

Aged care remains an urgent priority for Stolen Generations Survivors who have continued to advocate to state and Commonwealth governments for culturally appropriate, trauma-informed aged care services for Stolen Generations Survivors, and improved access to aged care services and the aged care system.

Survivors are concerned by their experience with services, the reported systemic failures in the aged care sector, and gaps in health and disability services. They are very worried about the lack of suitable services and supports for older people who have survived institutional trauma and abuse in the past, and the additional vulnerabilities they face as they age, including risks of being re-traumatised when they require greater levels of assistance. There are significant delays in waiting for assessments and for services to support Survivors to remain independent, to maintain their wellbeing and to be cared for at home.

Ineffective arrangements for access to aged care and health services mean that Survivors may not know where to turn to for help. Survivors and their families are increasingly turning to Stolen Generations Organisations for assistance at times when they are having to make decisions which are difficult in practical, emotional and financial terms, without the benefit of accurate and timely information or support services. In some cases, Survivors do not receive the care they need, when they need it. This compounds the lifetime impacts of trauma for them and their families, at a stage in their life when they are feeling more vulnerable. ■

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### **Social and Emotional Wellbeing**

The NSW Government has committed to advocate to the Commonwealth about Commonwealth-funded Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) services. This has been an ongoing discussion at the Advisory Committee, where Survivors have requested information about the current status of SEWB counsellors and program support, which was a recommendation in the Bringing Them Home Report more than 20 years ago and a commitment by the Australian Government.

Survivors are concerned that the resources committed as a key part of the Bringing Them Home Report have been redirected and are no longer available for Survivors or their families where or when they are needed. Stolen Generations Organisations have reported difficulties in identifying and locating SEWB services, counsellors or programs. Survivors have also raised experience-based concerns about cultural capabilities and trauma awareness in the workforce.

At the NSW Health roundtable in 2019, Survivors raised concerns about SEWB-related services with representatives from the health network and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council, the peak organisation for Aboriginal Medical Services. Survivors were invited to contact their local Aboriginal Medical Service, but this can be difficult for individual Survivors living in different communities throughout NSW.

Stolen Generations Organisations also raised their concerns about the SEWB Program at the Commonwealth roundtable in December 2019, explaining that the complex needs of Survivors were not being addressed by the current system. The Commonwealth undertook to look into the

opportunity to reallocate funding for SEWB positions and committed to work with the current providers to help them understand and accommodate the needs of Stolen Generations Survivors.

The Commonwealth has reported that it has a continued focus on practical support to improve the lives of Stolen Generations members by providing healing and support services across the country. This includes:

- providing over \$54 million in 2020–2021 to fund more than 100 mainly Aboriginal community health services to support members of the Stolen Generations and their families through the NIAA. These include:
  - › over \$7 million for national projects through the Healing Foundation and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Family History Unit
  - › over \$12 million for family tracing, reunion and support services through eight Link-Up organisation in the Northern Territory, Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, and a further \$0.5 million for family tracing and support services in the Australian Capital Territory region
  - › over \$28 million for SEWB support services that provide holistic support to improve Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing, including through individual and group counselling, case management work and referrals to other relevant support services. These SEWB activities work closely with Link-Up Services and other relevant services and organisations to assist the needs of clients affected by past government policies, in particular Stolen Generations Survivors, to provide culturally safe, holistic, person-centred care
  - › over \$5.8 million for workforce development, training, professional development and support for NIAA-funded SEWB and Alcohol and Other Drugs workforces, including Link-Up workers and counsellors.

The Commonwealth also reported that, as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, additional funding was provided through the NIAA to maintain essential services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and businesses. Around 50 Indigenous Advancement Strategy-funded providers received additional funding to maintain or boost SEWB and/or Alcohol and Other

Drugs treatment services to provide support for them to adapt their delivery methods, and/or to meet increased demand due to the pandemic. This included additional funding of \$290,000 to the Healing Foundation to provide practical resources and support to Stolen Generations Survivors during this challenging time.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

Survivors have unique needs that are not currently being met by mainstream services. Services need to be tailored specifically for Survivors and descendants. Many Survivors are not receiving the levels or types of care and support they need and, due to their advancing age, time is running out to address these issues. Survivors would like to see SEWB resources redirected to Stolen Generations Organisations for direct Survivor support, as recommended in the Bringing Them Home Report. SEWB resources are currently awarded to service providers for generalist support services such as alcohol and other drug treatment. Stolen Generations Organisations believe we are best positioned to provide direct SEWB support to Survivors. ■

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## Housing

Following machinery-of-government changes, housing policy and strategies now sit across DCJ and the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO), and the latter is now part of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). AHO works in partnership with DCJ, and operates under the *Strong Family, Strong Communities* Aboriginal Housing Strategy.

Housing strategies have been discussed in Advisory Committee meetings and at a roundtable discussion with (then) FACS (now DCJ). The roundtable canvassed both social housing and the AHO functions that are now in DPIE. Advisory Committee representatives have also assisted Stolen Generations Organisations with referrals for priority assistance for Survivors in urgent circumstances.

DCJ has worked with interested Stolen Generations Organisations to establish a DCJ Services Coordinator position to support each organisation working with DCJ service systems. The DCJ Services Coordinator works with Survivors to understand their unique needs, supporting Survivors



with referrals to services or requests for assistance in dealing with agencies and issues in the DCJ cluster, including housing services.

DCJ has committed to giving Survivors priority access to public housing to address their unique needs. Affordable and stable housing is a key factor in maintaining health and wellbeing and is part of the response to deliver tailored services and supports for Survivors.

DCJ has developed a new priority housing category for Stolen Generations Survivors on the NSW Housing Register. Rather than having to demonstrate that they are in need of priority housing, like other applicants, Stolen Generations Survivors can be fast-tracked through priority identification.

Eligibility for priority housing as a Stolen Generations Survivor requires applicants to be:

- eligible for social housing, and
- a Stolen Generations Survivor, and
- unable to resolve their housing need themselves in the private rental market.

Stolen Generations Survivors do not need to demonstrate they are in urgent need of housing for this priority housing category. However, if an urgent housing need is demonstrated a higher priority category is considered.

Evidence to demonstrate that an applicant is a Stolen Generations Survivor includes a letter from the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme confirming a successful reparation claim, or a letter from a Stolen Generations Organisation acknowledging the client as a Stolen Generations Survivor.

The AHO does not have any programs to specifically support Stolen Generations Survivors. However, Stolen Generations Survivors have access to a range of housing services and supports, provided by AHO, that are tailored specifically for Aboriginal clients and will benefit Stolen Generations Survivors. This includes the AHO Services Our Way program, and building of granny flats and seniors housing. In addition, the AHO engages with the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee. Most recently the AHO undertook a review of its Confirmation of Aboriginality Policy and invited feedback from the Stolen Generations Organisations.

The AHO is working on initiatives in collaboration with Aboriginal communities to address housing needs ranging from transitional housing through to home ownership options, to address some of the systemic issues that disadvantage Aboriginal families when accessing stable and affordable housing.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

Survivors are pleased that a priority category has been developed for Stolen Generations Survivors accessing NSW Government housing services.

Since the category was introduced in September 2019, it has been used only a handful of times and Stolen Generations Organisations would like to see the number of Survivors using this priority category increased, to enable them to obtain stable housing and to remove any obstacles or delays when a Survivor's accommodation needs or locations change. Survivors are concerned that, due to housing stock shortages, the priority category does not in itself ensure Stolen Generations Survivors' housing needs will be met.

Survivors have found that DCJ staff have little awareness of the priority category and access to the process can be difficult in different areas. Stolen Generations Organisations would like to continue discussions with DCJ to look at ways to increase awareness of the priority category among staff and Survivors.

Survivors are concerned that there is still no priority access to housing for descendants, and this continues to impact on Survivors when their family wellbeing and accommodation needs are not being met.

Unmet housing needs and housing crises cause trauma across Stolen Generations families. Forty per cent of Survivors have reported having experienced homelessness in the past 10 years. Survivors are also 1.7 times more likely not to own their own home compared to Aboriginal people in the same group who did not report being removed.<sup>2</sup> Survivors would like to see priority access to housing for Survivors and descendants across a range of

options and circumstances, including emergency housing, short-term and long-term housing, and home ownership and investments. Survivors would also like to see more proactive initiatives led by DCJ and AHO that address systemic issues for affordable housing and investment, to ensure the next generation has greater access to stable housing and home ownership.

Survivors are also interested to continue discussions with government about housing issues and initiatives beyond government housing providers, including community housing and home ownership initiatives.

Survivors recommend that the Commonwealth and state governments should collaborate to achieve home ownership for Survivors who were removed from their homes and families as children, as a core commitment for reparations for the Stolen Generations and intergenerational trauma. ■

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Survivors are also interested to continue discussions with state and Commonwealth governments about housing issues and initiatives beyond government housing providers, including community housing and home ownership initiatives as a core commitment for reparations for the Stolen Generations and intergenerational trauma.

<sup>2</sup> The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants – numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes – 2018*

## **Incarcerated Stolen Generations Survivors in overseas jurisdictions**

Stolen Generations Organisations have advocated that Aboriginal children who were removed from Australia as a result of assimilation policies, who are now adult prisoners incarcerated in overseas jurisdictions, should be returned to Australia. Return to Country should be applied as a reparation principle to transfer those prisoners to Australia.

DCJ provided advice to the Advisory Committee that legal requirements for the transfer of prisoners from international jurisdictions to Australia are administered by the Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department. This included that the transfer of prisoners incarcerated overseas back to their home jurisdiction to serve the remainder of their sentences is permitted under the *International Transfer of Prisoners Act 1997* (Cth). The Act requires the consent of the Australian Government, the government of the foreign country, the government of the Australian state or territory to which the prisoner seeks to transfer, and the prisoner. To be eligible, an offender must have community ties with a state or territory.

Stolen Generations Organisations were informed that requests for home country transfers are dealt with according to individual legal circumstances, including whether international treaty arrangements exist for the transfer of prisoners from the specific jurisdiction. Requests for transfer and the related legal proceedings on behalf of the prisoner must be pursued by family members in Australia making the request to the Attorney-General's Department. Stolen Generations Organisations agreed that they will consider how they might be able to support family members dealing with these circumstances if they are approached in future for assistance.



## Guarding Against Repetition

An important part of the NSW Government making reparations to Stolen Generations Survivors is to guard against the repetition of past government mistakes and the harmful practices that saw Aboriginal children separated from their kinship systems and culture.

Survivors have told the NSW Government that they want to see Aboriginal families supported with the resources and assistance they need to raise their own children. The continued removal of Aboriginal children from their homes causes ongoing trauma for Survivors and their families and communities.

Survivors believe that government is not guarding against repetition and that the trauma of removal is continuing across generations. Survivors are determined to see the system change to ensure the trauma that happened to them doesn't continue to happen.

In *Unfinished Business* the NSW Government committed to a range of measures intended to support Aboriginal families to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children, to prevent removal and, where a child is in out-of-home care, to ensure that they remain connected to family, community and culture. Government committed to continue early intervention programs and initiatives that were agreed to as a result of the *Independent Review of Out of Home Care in New South Wales: Final Report* (the Tune Report), released in 2016.

DCJ has introduced a range of policies and programs that address the recommendations of the Tune Report, including the Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2017–2021, the Permanency Support Program reform and the Aboriginal Case Management Policy. These are in various stages of implementation.

The NSW Government is committed to creating communities where Aboriginal children are safe and can grow up in families and thrive. This includes continuing to reduce the removal of children from their families into out-of-home care. In 2020–2021 the NSW Government is investing over \$158 million in early intervention, child protection and permanency services delivered by Aboriginal organisations.

DCJ has reported that there was a 43% reduction in the rate of all children entering out-of-home care in NSW in 2019–2020, compared to 2015–2016. During this period, there was a 33% reduction in Aboriginal children entering out-of-home care. Across all jurisdictions, NSW had the lowest rate of entries into out-of-home care for all children (equal with ACT), and the second lowest rate of entries for Aboriginal children (equal with Tasmania, and behind the Northern Territory). One of the targets in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is to reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031.

## Early intervention and prevention

The NSW Government recognises that evidence strongly supports investment in early intervention and prevention, and is responding to this evidence through the following investments in resources, supports and services, with Aboriginal children and families a key priority group:

- Permanency Support Program (PSP) – investment in family preservation packages to keep families together and prioritise family restoration, where it is safe to do so
- Program Level Agreements requiring service providers to address family preservation outcomes, including the delivery of culturally appropriate supports
- Family Group Conference, to keep families strong and prevent the entry of children into care
- Family Preservation Services, providing safe harbours for families and increasing the safety and wellbeing of children at risk of significant harm.

In 2019–2020, family preservation programs provided more than 4,500 contracted places for families, which delivered services to more than 16,000 children – around one-third of whom were Aboriginal children. Of these:

- two Aboriginal-specific services, Intensive Family Based Services and Nabu, are supporting almost 450 Aboriginal children
- 55% of Permanency Support Program Family Preservation packages are provided by Aboriginal organisations or partnerships (209 of 380 packages).

In 2020–2021, DCJ will provide total funding exceeding \$158 million to Aboriginal organisations, including:

- \$13.2 million for Targeted Earlier Intervention Aboriginal community–controlled organisations and investment in Aboriginal Child and Family Centres
- \$13.4 million across a range of family preservation programs, including: \$2.8 million for Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN) and Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (FFT-CW),<sup>3</sup> \$2.6 million for Brighter Futures,<sup>4</sup> \$3.3 million to Waminda South Coast Women’s Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation for the Nabu pilot program, and \$4.7 million for Aboriginal Intensive Family Based Services
- \$129.4 million (approximately) for the Permanency Support Program delivered by 14 Aboriginal community–controlled organisations plus four Aboriginal partnerships<sup>5</sup>
- \$2.41 million for the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec) as a key DCJ partner to deliver various programs and projects in areas such as sector development and capacity building, permanency support and family preservation.

Funding for other specialist services include Youth Hope (\$11 million in 2019–2020, 406 places across six locations) and Resilient Families intensive home visiting services (\$1.5 million, 100 families – 18% self-identified as Aboriginal).

DCJ is also working towards a 30% investment target in Targeted Early Intervention programs for Aboriginal service delivery, as part of the department’s Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2017–2021. In 2020–2021, \$10.7 million in Targeted Earlier Intervention program funding was committed to 40 Aboriginal organisations, with a similar investment anticipated in 2021–2022. In 2020–2023, increased investment of \$1.7 million per annum, in the nine NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Centres, will continue progress towards the 30% target.

<sup>3</sup> Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation FFT-CW – \$1.7 million. Wandiyali MST-CAN – \$1 million.

<sup>4</sup> Brighter Futures Aboriginal agencies are: KARI, \$732,000; Tharawal, \$903,000; and Wandiyali, \$969,000.

<sup>5</sup> Family Preservation Programs exclude PSP Family Preservation packages because they are counted under the Permanency Support Program. Aboriginal organisations include Biripi Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre, Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation Inc, Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc, Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation, KARI Ltd, Muloobinba Aboriginal Corporation, Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation, Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Child and Family Network Inc, Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation, South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation, Wandiyali, Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Incorporated, Woomera Aboriginal Corporation Albury, Yerin Aboriginal Health Services.

## Family Preservation Improvement Program

The NSW Government is improving family preservation programs over the next few years. The new family preservation program will help increase the safety and wellbeing of children by providing evidence-based treatment to address trauma, and intensive family support to promote parenting skills and child development.

Survivors would like to see reconnection to family prioritised and resourced in Aboriginal service delivery, to provide support and services for Aboriginal families and communities to reconnect and heal.

DCJ will bring existing programs together into a single program structure. The new system will have three program streams:

1. Family preservation
2. Intensive family preservation
3. Aboriginal family preservation.

By integrating current family preservation programs into a single continuum of care, vulnerable families can access the right supports at the right time, and the system can respond to the range of needs across all areas of safety and wellbeing.

This integrated system will better meet the needs of vulnerable families who need different timing, intensity and frequency of services as their circumstances change.

There will be less restrictive program eligibility, with all programs delivering services to children and young people aged 0–17 years. It will also mean simpler contracts for providers that offer multiple programs.

Recommissioning will occur in stages. The first stage will be completed by 30 June 2021. It will re-contract and bring together the current suite of programs into a single system – establishing a foundation for further change. The second stage will be completed by 30 June 2024 to fully implement the system vision.

## Family is Culture Report

The Advisory Committee met with Professor Megan Davies during her independent review into Aboriginal young people in out-of-home care, to provide advice about their first-hand experience of the trauma of childhood removal and the impact on their families of continuing removals.

The *Family is Culture Report*, an independent review of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in NSW, was released in 2019. The report contains a range of recommendations to improve implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles and strategies to reduce the high rates of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care.

Further information is available at [www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/out-of-home-care/nsw-response-to-the-family-is-culture-review/nsw-response-to-the-family-is-culture-review](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/out-of-home-care/nsw-response-to-the-family-is-culture-review/nsw-response-to-the-family-is-culture-review)

## Aboriginal Case Management Policy

The Aboriginal Case Management Policy was developed and released in October 2018. It provides a framework for Aboriginal-led and culturally embedded case management practice to safeguard the best interests of Aboriginal children and young people. This includes providing guidance for caseworkers on using Aboriginal community-controlled mechanisms in the development and endorsement of cultural planning and cultural plans. It also involves the Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in the implementation of cultural plans through community-controlled cultural activities and services. The policy is aimed at empowering families and communities to reduce the incidence of harm early, and to work with caseworkers to shape their case planning and identify priorities and solutions together to keep children safe and with their family and community.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles

The NSW Government, with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, is leading the development of a nationally consistent approach to measuring the application of the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles: prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Working Group (led by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care) provides oversight and advice.

DCJ is working with AbSec to support ongoing implementation of the placement principles.

During 2019 and 2020, DCJ redesigned initial training packages for new caseworkers, known as the Caseworker Development Program, with significant input from Stolen Generations representatives and DCJ's specialist Aboriginal Outcomes teams. The rewrite focused on the importance of ensuring that caseworkers understood the impact of intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal children and families, and also improving capacity for culturally safe practice.

DCJ is also working to ensure cultural capability in its funded services. For example, services funded under the department's Permanency Support Program are required to:

- embed cultural capability within strategic frameworks, policies and procedures
- provide tools, training and support to staff implementing cultural plans with children in out-of-home care
- provide culturally safe services that facilitate self-determination, and
- facilitate recruitment of Aboriginal staff and carers.

DCJ is committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal children and families and to building cultural capability in the department's work practice. DCJ's Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework guides a deeper understanding and respect for the significance and importance of Aboriginal culture, identity and pride.

## Family and Community Services care and cultural plan

The NSW Government is reviewing the Family and Community Services care and cultural plan as part of the evaluation of the Permanency Support Program, which has begun. This will involve direct interviews with Aboriginal clients, supported by a range of mechanisms to ensure cultural safety. A final report of the evaluation is due for release in late 2021, with early interim findings available in early 2021.

## Relationship between Stolen Generations Survivors and DCJ

In the First Progress Report, Stolen Generations Organisations requested a more formal and ongoing relationship with (then) FACS (now DCJ) that would enable them to inform and influence the development and implementation of child protection policies and to be fairly resourced for their contribution.

A roundtable held in November 2018 involving Stolen Generations Organisations, the Secretary of Family and Community Services, Michael Coutts-Trotter, and executives from across the department aimed to develop an ongoing relationship between FACS (now DCJ) and the Stolen Generations Organisations and to ensure that Survivors' voices were represented in policy development and the implementation of the NSW child protection system.

As an outcome of the meeting DCJ has made funding available for three and a half years for a DCJ Services Coordinator for each Stolen Generations Organisation. The DCJ Services Coordinator positions were filled in 2019 and they are assisting Survivors and their families to better access services.

Furthermore, DCJ has developed an Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework and implemented an Aboriginal Impact Statement process which supports relationship building and aims to improve the cultural capability of DCJ staff. Cultural capability training is being delivered across the department with Survivors generously sharing their stories to help staff understand the lived experience of Stolen Generations Survivors and use these learnings to influence how they work with Aboriginal families today. The training focuses on respect for Aboriginal culture, identity, family and community and ensures that this is at the forefront of DCJ's work.

In 2019 and 2020, DCJ worked with Stolen Generations Organisations representatives to redesign the training package curriculum for new caseworkers that focuses on the impacts of intergenerational trauma and improving capacity for culturally safe practice, including Survivors sharing their stories.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

The government says it has a commitment to guarding against repetition of the Stolen Generations, but this is inconsistent with the continued removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Aboriginal people are still experiencing racism, trauma and intergenerational trauma caused by the implementation of government policies. The government needs to focus on supporting Aboriginal people and families to rebuild their cultural strengths and family relationships.

The Stolen Generations Organisations representatives are concerned that there continues to be inadequate resourcing and focus on early intervention supports to reduce the number of Aboriginal children being removed from their families. They are concerned about Aboriginal children who are being removed from their families and not being placed in culturally appropriate kinship or other placement arrangements. This includes where children are placed with non-Aboriginal family members, including interstate. Stolen Generations Organisations want to understand how these children are supported to connect and stay with their Aboriginal families, culture and Country.

Survivors would like to see reconnection to family prioritised and resourced in Aboriginal service delivery, to provide support and services for Aboriginal families and communities to reconnect and heal.

Survivors believe that they are best placed to do this kind of work given their experience and expertise as Survivors.

Families and their supporters (including Stolen Generations Organisations) are excluded from decision-making or designing strengths-based solutions at critical times when interacting with services or the justice and child protection systems. Cultural capability and trauma awareness is being labelled but is not being practised. Survivors are concerned about government accountability and failure in duty of care to the children being removed and their families, and for family members in custody.

Many Survivors and their families are dealing with intergenerational distress and are experiencing ongoing trauma caused by the forcible removal of Aboriginal children. There needs to be early intervention policies and systems in place, specific to Survivors and their descendants, which recognise this. Aboriginal families need to be resourced before a crisis occurs. This requires a reset in how the system operates and a redirection of resources to support families who are dealing with the consequences of cultural and family breakdowns and the ongoing intergenerational trauma caused by child removals and incarceration. Survivors would like DCJ assessment tools to recognise the Stolen Generations history of descendant families, and the resulting impact of intergenerational trauma. Survivors would like trauma experienced by Stolen Generations descendant families to be acknowledged in assessments, and for Survivors and their descendants to be supported through trauma-informed practice.

Survivors have noticed a disconnect between policy and implementation. Stolen Generations Organisations have engaged several times with DCJ at a policy level. However, they have noticed that the changes made at a policy level do not always filter to the ground and are applied inconsistently. Stolen Generations Organisations need to be involved in co-designing policies and programs that are meant to support them and their families.

Survivors emphasised the importance of continuing to tell their stories and raise awareness of what happened to them. Survivors are committed to truth-telling and raising public awareness about assimilation and racism. Stolen Generations Organisations are interested to contribute to and participate with education resources for schools, especially in their local communities. Survivors are keen to continue to work with government agencies to get their stories across and to partner with government on training aimed at creating a trauma-informed workforce.

The Stolen Generations Organisations would like DCJ to ensure their organisations are a key consultation stakeholder on issues relating to early intervention and protection, and that they are genuinely consulted before changes are made to policies or practices. Stolen Generations Organisations have expert knowledge as Survivors

with lived experience of the impacts of removing Aboriginal children from their families and descendants. Survivors believe DCJ should continue to work with Survivors to develop ways to better support Aboriginal people and families to rebuild their cultural strengths and family relationships.

The needs and advice of Stolen Generations Survivors should be identified through the Aboriginal case management process, but there is no mechanism to ensure that their specific needs are addressed and that they are involved in the program design or delivery.

Survivors can offer valuable advice because of their own experience of forced removal and loss of family connection. Stolen Generations Organisations want to be resourced to provide support and services for Aboriginal families and communities to reconnect and heal. ■

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### **Government capacity – trauma-informed workforce**

The NSW Public Service Commission (PSC) is developing an online training toolkit, Everyone's Business, to raise cultural awareness across the NSW public sector workforce. It provides Stolen Generations Survivors with a platform to tell their stories and gives NSW Government employees the opportunity to reflect on the impacts of past forcible removal policies and practices on Aboriginal communities.

The toolkit's interactive website is suitable for engaging with the broad workforce needs across the public sector. The filmed resources include:

- Aboriginal staff who are working for NSW sharing their stories about living with intergenerational trauma in their families and communities, and
- messages from senior Aboriginal leaders in the public sector about the importance of learning the history of the Stolen Generations and impacts on effective service delivery.

The PSC is developing the toolkit in conjunction with Stolen Generations Survivors and Aboriginal people in the public sector. In 2018, the PSC established an interagency working group, including Aboriginal representatives, to guide the development of the training package. The PSC also engaged directly with Stolen Generations Organisations,

Survivors and the Advisory Committee. In January 2019, the PSC contracted an Aboriginal-owned training company, Mirri Mirri, to develop the online training package.

Work has progressed on a specialised Stolen Generations e-learning training module for the toolkit. The PSC has worked with Stolen Generations Organisations to develop content for the training module, including filming Survivors who are ready to tell their stories to support workforce training. PSC developed agreements with Stolen Generations Organisations to address Survivors' intellectual property rights and provided a project contribution payment to Stolen Generations Organisations.

PSC determined that a three-tiered learning approach would be taken to provide sector-wide online training (foundational, intermediate and extension levels), with agencies assuming responsibility for implementation, tailoring the package to suit their workforce, and providing workforce support.

During 2020–2021 the PSC is working with Burruga Foundation, an Aboriginal-owned and managed organisation, to develop the web-based interactive cultural awareness platform. The PSC will continue to work with Stolen Generations Organisations and Aboriginal staff across the sector to uplift workforce cultural and trauma-informed capabilities through this training. This collaboration and consultation with Stolen Generations Organisations will include outlining the purpose of the training and advice regarding the use of film content.

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## Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment

We have supported the efforts of the PSC to develop a public sector workforce awareness package to raise cultural awareness and recognition of the Stolen Generations and the impacts of cultural and intergenerational trauma. Workforce capabilities are everybody's business. All agencies must take these issues seriously and take responsibility for raising standards across their business and the capabilities of their specific workforce.

Stolen Generations Organisations have expressed the importance of ensuring that any culture awareness resources are properly contextualised. It is imperative that the training toolkits help the workforce understand the impacts of past forcible removal policies and practices and develop the capacity of public sector staff to work with people dealing with trauma. Survivors emphasise that SEWB supports must be in place and available for Aboriginal public service staff who may find the training distressing or triggering.

Stolen Generations Organisations representatives are concerned about the impact and use of their filmed stories and would like to work more closely with the PSC to understand and determine how their stories will be shared and presented for training in different situations. ■

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Source: Cassandra Hannagan, Parramatta City Council

## Cultural Renewal

*Unfinished Business* highlighted the loss of connection to identity and culture that Survivors have experienced as a result of forcible removal and assimilation policies. The NSW Government has committed to support Survivors and their descendants to access records about their Aboriginal identity and recorded family history, and to support cultural renewal activities, including revival of Aboriginal languages.

### Aboriginal identity

Aboriginal Affairs assists Survivors and their descendants to access archived records relating to their family history. The Family Records Service delivered by Aboriginal Affairs has been implementing changes to streamline and improve access to records, to reduce wait times and improve the quality of service.

Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other Aboriginal organisations can assist Aboriginal people who are enquiring about having their Aboriginality recognised by community. Aboriginal community-controlled organisations determine their own approach and policies when considering requests to provide confirmation of Aboriginality.

Stolen Generations Organisations are Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and are interested to develop and implement their own policies to support Survivors and their descendants who are requesting confirmation of Aboriginality.

Healing and cultural identity are important for Aboriginal people's wellbeing and our recovery from trauma. Aboriginal people and cultures are resilient – the oldest living cultures in the world.

The Family Records Service is improving access to archived records. This may assist Survivors and descendants to better understand and explain their family connections when they are approaching a Stolen Generations Organisation or other Aboriginal community organisation for assistance with confirmation of Aboriginality.

Aboriginal Affairs has provided advice to Stolen Generations Organisations about the types of information available in archived records, to assist

Stolen Generations Organisations to consider their own policies and documentation requirements in support of requests.

### Improved records access

The NSW Government has committed to streamline access to the former Aborigines Welfare Board records, to enable links to be made between the historical records and Survivors' accounts, and to refer those accessing files to available support services and other record repositories.

The historic information recorded in the Aborigines Welfare Board archives collection includes sensitive personal information and information that is incomplete and inaccurate, often misrepresenting circumstances and family information. While Survivors want their personal information and privacy to be respected, they also want their descendants to be guided by Survivors' own perspectives, to understand the context and significance of historic records and the history of the Stolen Generations.

Aboriginal Affairs has considered feedback from Survivors and recommendations from independent reviews to streamline the Family Records Service. Aboriginal organisation, Jumbunna, has been commissioned to design a more accessible and culturally safe application form and Aboriginal Affairs has increased up-front phone support for applicants and improved business processes to reduce search waiting times.

Aboriginal Affairs has also increased the capacity of its Aboriginal Historic Records team, to focus on priority projects and Unfinished Business commitments as well as delivering Family Records Services. A new Manager role was established and filled in 2018 to manage Aboriginal history research and records projects.

Aboriginal Affairs is in the first phase of creating a culturally focused reading room at its office in Mascot, to support Survivors and their descendants to access information provided by the Family Records Service. The aim is to develop a space that is comfortable, culturally safe and supportive for Survivors managing trauma and the sensitive information referred to in the records and discussions about Stolen Generations. The room will have multi-purpose functions, also providing a memorial space for exhibitions to enable visitors to learn and reflect about the history of Aboriginal people in NSW and the Stolen Generations.

### Support for Aboriginal languages

The NSW Government response to *Unfinished Business* recognised that the Aborigines Welfare Board systemically and deliberately undermined the speaking of Aboriginal languages. In recognition of the importance of languages to the whole community, the NSW Government committed to develop legislation to recognise and protect the importance of Aboriginal languages, and to consult on the establishment of a NSW Aboriginal Languages Centre to support language revival in Aboriginal communities.

We have had to struggle to have our rights restored and we hope to see our families have opportunities to learn their languages and culture.

On 24 October 2017, NSW became the first Australian state to formally recognise in legislation the importance of Aboriginal languages to Aboriginal culture, identity and wellbeing. The *Aboriginal Languages Act 2017* includes the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Trust managed by a Trust Board. The inaugural Trust Board was appointed by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on 17 February 2020, commencing its five-year term on 9 March 2020.

A first priority for the Trust Board is to develop a strategic plan for the growth and nurturing of Aboriginal languages in NSW in consultation with Aboriginal communities. The strategic plan will guide the work of the trust to revitalise Aboriginal languages in NSW. A draft strategic plan is due to be submitted to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs by 5 March 2022.

The NSW Government is investing significantly to support Aboriginal languages. While the government did not accept the Unfinished Business recommendation to expand the number of Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests in schools, an independent evaluation of the existing Language Nests was completed in 2018. OCHRE funding provided approximately \$1.67 million per annum for five Language Nests. Over the past two years, two additional satellite Language Nests (Gomerai and Dunghutti) were added. Dunghutti is established,

and Gomeroi is in the establishment phase, with community meetings being held and teaching in schools to begin soon.

The number of schools participating in Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest lessons has increased by 42 schools over 2019–2020 (from 57 schools to 99 schools) and the number of language educators has also increased to 29. The Language Nests are capturing, analysing and reporting on student-level variables, such as the number of students participating. A report on these figures is expected after the end of Term 1, 2021.

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### **Stolen Generations Organisations representatives comment**

Survivors are pleased that the government is investing in Aboriginal languages and cultural renewal. Healing and cultural identity are important factors for Aboriginal people's wellbeing and our recovery from trauma. Aboriginal people and cultures are resilient – the oldest living cultures in the world. We have had to struggle to have our rights restored and we hope to see our families have opportunities to learn their languages and culture.

The Stolen Generations Organisations realise that Survivors' voices and their stories are a significant part of history and the personal healing journeys for Survivors, their families, descendants and communities.

Supporting Survivors to access records and to understand and express their stories is a key focus for our organisations, including opportunities to guide and support those who are interested to record their stories, memories and testimonies, individually or collectively.

Stolen Generations Organisations are interested to engage with the design and function of the cultural reading room and memorial space project at the Aboriginal Affairs Mascot office, to support Survivors and their families to access historic records and exhibitions about the history of Aboriginal people and Stolen Generations in NSW.

Survivors encourage Aboriginal Affairs to continue developing Family Records Services improvements. Stolen Generations Organisations are looking forward to further discussions with Aboriginal Affairs to resolve any confusion for Survivors about access to records for different purposes, including family history, research, and eligibility requirements for the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, and their concerns about records called for by the National Redress Scheme. ■

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## 5. Next steps

Over the next two years, the NSW Government will progress important work with Stolen Generations Organisations, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, communities and other important stakeholders to preserve Stolen Generations sites of significance. The government has concluded initial work to understand the aspirations of Stolen Generations Organisations to preserve the former Aborigines Welfare Board children's homes and establish keeping places as sites of remembrance, education and healing. The NSW Government has committed \$3 million in new funding to develop a business case on the future of the sites, support Stolen Generations Survivors to record their stories, progress respectful investigation into accounts of missing children at the sites of the former children's homes and undertake urgent remediation across these sites.

The NSW Government recognises Survivors' concerns that this work should progress without delay. Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Regional NSW and Heritage NSW are working together to progress Survivor aspirations. This will build on work already begun with Stolen Generations Organisations to preserve Survivor stories, including documenting memories and experiences of missing children.

Aboriginal Affairs will continue to work with the Stolen Generations Organisations in their ongoing commitment to progress healing and advocating on behalf of Survivors and their families. Collective reparations offered through the Stolen Generations Organisations Reparations Funding and the Stolen Generations Healing Fund will continue to support this important work.

Stolen Generations Organisations have recommended that the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee be extended for the remaining duration of the government's 10-year commitment to Unfinished Business to continue its important work providing advice on priority issues. The NSW Government is considering this request and is committed to ensuring that it continues to hear the voices of Survivors throughout the implementation of Unfinished Business.

A focus for Advisory Committee discussions will likely be the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which is due to be tabled in Federal Parliament by 31 May 2021, and the rollout of the Australian Government's immediate response package of \$452.2 million.

The Advisory Committee will also likely seek a continued focus on the issue of ongoing Aboriginal child removals and to explore opportunities for Stolen Generations Organisations to support decision-making and more culturally sensitive, trauma-informed approaches to support families to heal.

Discussions with Survivors and the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee will also likely consider how the Closing the Gap reform priorities can support progress.

Discussions have commenced with NSW and Commonwealth government agencies involving health, aged care, disability and housing, and child safety, but Survivors are concerned that progress has been slow. Government representatives on the Advisory Committee will continue to work to improve the relationship between government departments and Stolen Generations Organisations to understand Survivors' concerns and address implementation issues.

The NSW Government's creation of Health Care Coordinator and DCJ Services Coordinator roles, and the implementation of priority access pathways will help meet the individual needs of Survivors in the NSW health and housing service systems. Further discussions are being progressed to understand service needs and supports, including Commonwealth assistance for health and aged care.

Workforce capability will remain a key focus in Unfinished Business commitments. The PSC will continue to work with Survivors and government agencies to finalise and launch the Everyone's Business training toolkit to improve cultural safety and understanding of trauma and the Stolen Generations across the public sector workforce.

The NSW Government will continue to respond to the call for governments to develop memorials in prominent sites as places for truth-telling, commemoration, reconnection and healing. Transport for NSW will consult with Stolen Generations Organisations to continue installing Stolen Generations memorial plaques at significant regional railway stations, in conjunction with commemorative healing events.

The NSW Government will focus on ensuring that the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme draws to an effective closure. There is a sense of urgency that the scheme should resolve claims for reparations from Survivors who were removed from their families and culture due to racist assimilation policies and practices. The scheme is due to close to new applications on 30 June 2022, with the conclusion of the scheme in December 2022.

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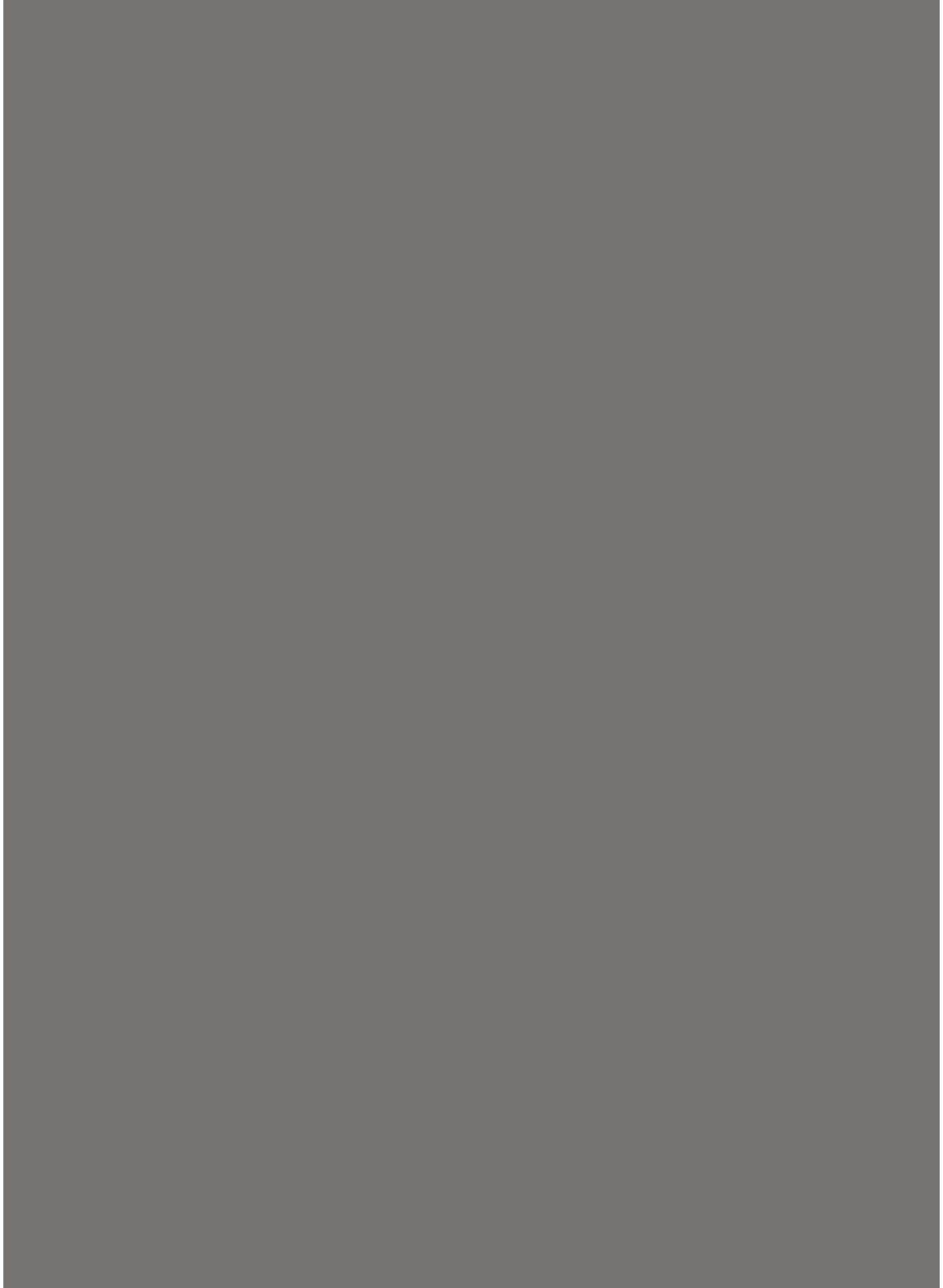
## 6. Conclusion

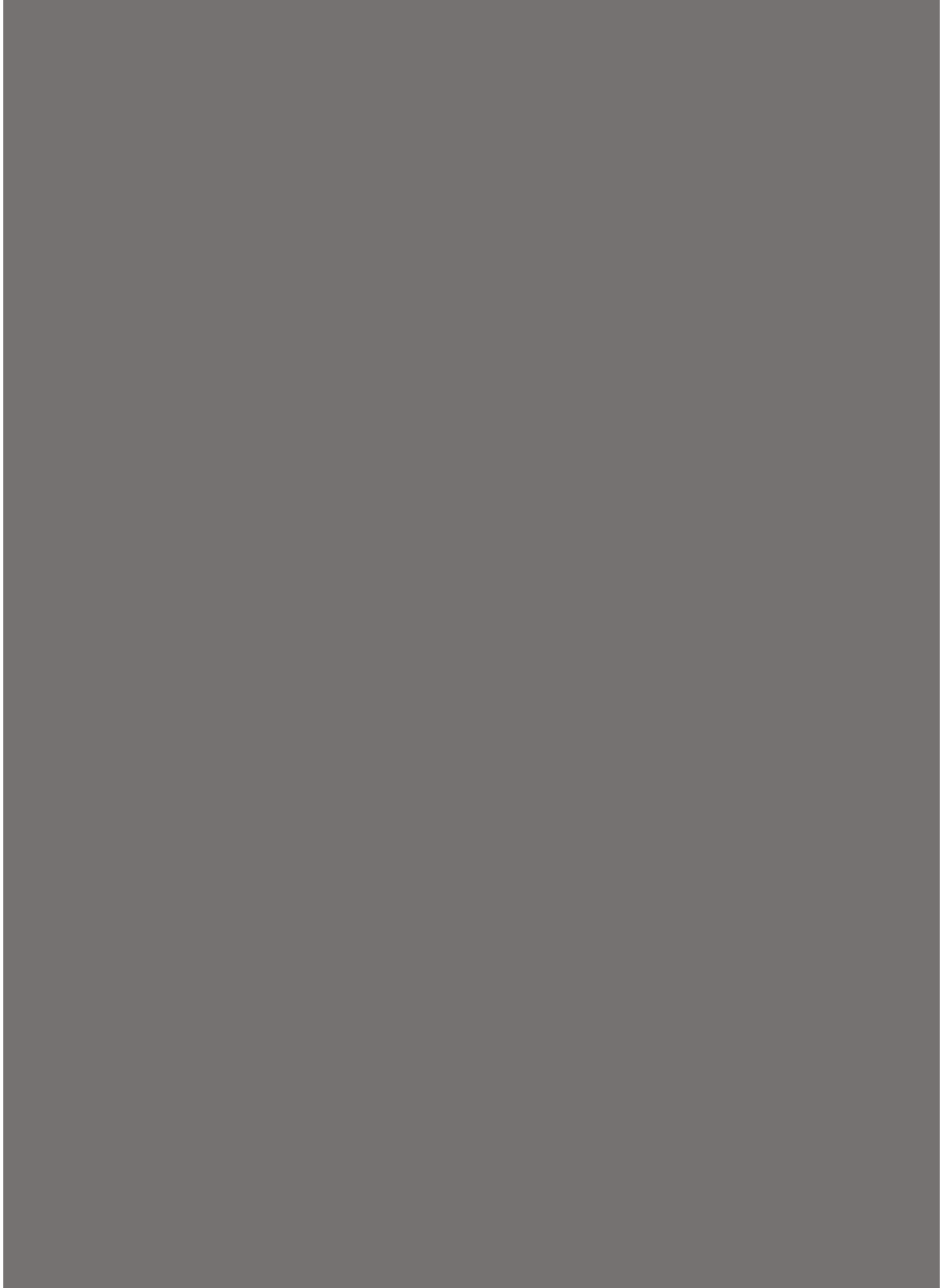
*Unfinished Business* recognised the devastating harm and trauma caused by past governments' assimilation policies and practices. This report provides an overview of progress made four and a half years into the NSW Government's delivery of its response to *Unfinished Business*, focusing on the period from July 2018 to December 2020. The response has been guided by the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee, which has provided clear advice on its key priorities.

Implementation has now commenced on all commitments. Significant initiatives have continued, and more complex commitments have been implemented over the past two years.

The valuable leadership and contributions by Stolen Generations Survivors and their representative organisations in supporting the delivery of the NSW Government response to *Unfinished Business* is acknowledged with great gratitude.

Government will continue to work alongside Survivors to address unresolved issues and the challenges ahead, to improve the way services are tailored and delivered in response to the needs of Survivors and their families, and to work in ways that are culturally sensitive and trauma informed.





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## Appendix 1

### Status of NSW Government commitments in response to Unfinished Business

This table provides the progress status for each individual NSW Government commitment made in the NSW Government Response to the *Unfinished Business* report. The table does not include the recommendations that were not accepted by the NSW Government.

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<b>Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Recommendation 1</b> The Advisory Committee will be established initially for two years with a focus on implementation of the government's response. Committee to be appointed by the Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and will include two representatives from each Stolen Generations Organisation.	<b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b>	<b>In Progress</b> The Stolen Generations Advisory Committee was formally appointed at the end of May 2017. Since then, the term of the Advisory Committee was extended to May 2021 to ensure the committee continues to oversee the implementation of Unfinished Business and build the relationship with the NSW Government to progress its priorities.  The Advisory Committee met three times a year from its establishment until 2020, when it was unable to meet in person due to COVID-19. The Advisory Committee adapted to new ways of working to complete the second <i>Unfinished Business Progress Report</i> and will revise its operating model in 2021 to reflect these new ways of working.

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will establish a Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, providing ex-gratia payments of up to \$75,000 to those removed by the Aborigines Welfare Board up until the time the board was repealed in 1969.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>The Reparations Scheme commenced in July 2017, to run for five years. Applications close on 30 June 2022 with the scheme ending on 31 December 2022.</p> <p>An interim review of the scheme is being undertaken to assess progress, identify issues and impediments and consider the resources needed to ensure the scheme is fully implemented.</p> <p>As of 31 December 2020, 1,874 applications had been received, 720 of these were found eligible, and the scheme had paid \$52.7 million to eligible Survivors. This includes claims submitted by Survivors involved in civil proceedings against the NSW Government, whose applications were fast-tracked and paid in the first weeks of the scheme, and 183 claims from Survivors whose applications were initially assessed as ineligible or out of scope but then succeeded following reassessment or review.</p> <p>As the Reparations Scheme has progressed, improved access to archival records and emerging research has enhanced the Reparations Scheme's understanding of the operation of the Aborigines Welfare Board. This additional information about the broader context of claimants' removals has made the scheme fairer, especially for Survivors who were previously excluded because they had neither records nor witnesses to confirm their eligibility.</p> <p>Successful claimants receive a general written apology from the Minister at the time reparations are approved and may also request a personalised apology. As of 31 December 2020, 175 Survivors have received personalised apologies, including four who received face-to-face apologies.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Financial support to Stolen Generations Organisations</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations 8, 26, 27, 30</b></p> <p>Financial support for the independent Stolen Generations Organisations (Stolen Generations Organisations) will be provided over the next 10 years (funding will vary between the organisations depending on role/function).</p> <p>This funding will assist the Stolen Generations Organisations to undertake collective healing initiatives, including to increase capacity for these organisations to facilitate reunions for Survivors, and go towards the recording of testimonies and the development of educational materials that can be used by the broader community.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>Under the Stolen Generations Organisations Reparations Funding Policy Guidelines, Aboriginal Affairs has provided collective reparations funding to support Stolen Generations Organisations’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisational capacity building, including training to address governance benchmarks</li> <li>• collective healing gatherings and activities for Survivors and descendants</li> <li>• grief support and assistance for families experiencing Sorry Business</li> <li>• project development for healing and cultural renewal projects</li> <li>• office and meeting space restoration</li> <li>• administration and operational costs, including auspice fees and staff salary contributions.</li> </ul> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations are undertaking further work to develop and document their governance models and administration, to enable them to commence negotiations for longer-term reparations funding agreements.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations have established office spaces, or are transitioning to new spaces, to support their business functions, with longer-term plans to develop facilities to better meet Survivor needs.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on Stolen Generations Organisations’ ways of doing business and activities during 2020. Stolen Generations Organisations have adapted to new ways of supporting Survivors and their families and communities, particularly those who are socially isolated and vulnerable.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations are negotiating revised timeframes for current reparations funding agreements for activities that were impacted and delayed by COVID.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Healing Fund</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations 3, 26, 27, 30</b></p> <p>A grant-based Stolen Generations healing fund will be established to support priority healing initiatives, such as healing centres, keeping places, memorials, survivor reunions, the recording of testimonies and the development of educational materials that can be used by the broader community.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>A grant-based Stolen Generations Healing Fund totalling \$5 million was established in 2018–2019 as part of the NSW Government’s 10-year commitment to make financial (and non-financial) reparations available for Stolen Generations Survivor-led collective healing.</p> <p>At the time, the NSW Government commitment recognised that further work would be required with Survivors, to scope and design those significant commitments focused on their healing aspirations, including healing centres, memorials, keeping places, and Survivor healing reunions and gatherings.</p> <p>The Stolen Generations Healing Fund Policy and Operational Guidelines were established in 2018–2019 in response to Recommendations 3 and 8 of Unfinished Business.</p> <p>In June 2019 a total of \$375,000 in grant funding was provided to three eligible Stolen Generations Organisations for priority proposals assessed against the funding guidelines by an assessment panel. Healing activities funded included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• healing camps, activities and art workshops, for Survivors, their families and communities</li> <li>• reunion gatherings focused on healing relationships, for Survivors and their descendants</li> <li>• recording the stories of Survivors on Country, including an oral history project.</li> </ul> <p>Due to COVID-19, Stolen Generations Organisations are rescheduling healing activities into 2021.</p> <p>In 2021, Aboriginal Affairs will invite applications for funding for priority proposals from Stolen Generations Organisations aligned to Unfinished Business healing commitments.</p>
<p><b>Central Station office for Coota Girls</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations 3, 8</b></p> <p>The NSW Government, through Transport for NSW, has offered premises at Central Station to Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation (Coota Girls), for four years due to the upcoming redevelopment of Central Station, for their important work in supporting Survivors and their families.</p>	<p><b>Sydney Trains</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>In December 2018, Coota Girls moved into premises refurbished by Transport for NSW located in a heritage section of the Central Railway Station precinct.</p> <p>The facilities are used as a contact and meeting centre for Stolen Generations Survivors and an office hub for Coota Girls support staff.</p> <p>The premises are available under a four-year licence agreement while major construction and redevelopment work is progressed for the Sydney Metro Project.</p> <p>Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation is requesting an extension of the licence agreement.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<b>Scholarships</b>	<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>Aboriginal Affairs will scope existing scholarship programs available to Aboriginal people in NSW and work with Stolen Generations Organisations to explore and advocate access for Survivors and descendants.</p>	<b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>Scholarship programs for Aboriginal people in NSW have been discussed with the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee and discussions are continuing with Stolen Generations Organisations.</p> <p>Information about existing scholarship programs and grants is regularly circulated to the Stolen Generations Organisations.</p> <p>Aboriginal Affairs has requested Stolen Generations Organisations provide further advice, through the Advisory Committee, regarding any further advocacy required to support scholarship opportunities.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations have been invited to consider scholarships in their own business planning process, including funding proposals for the Stolen Generations Healing Fund.</p>
<b>Advocate with the Commonwealth for better health care services</b>	<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will advocate with the Commonwealth Government regarding recommendation 5 (below):</p> <p>The NSW Government seek the support of the Australian Government to create a health care card for Stolen Generations Survivors, similar to other Commonwealth health care cards, that will provide better access to medical services (including mental health services) and reduced costs of medication and gap fees payable under Medicare.</p>	<b>Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)</b> <b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b>	<p><b>Progress Delayed</b></p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations have identified health and aged care as a priority focus.</p> <p>The NSW Government continues to highlight the urgency and priority of Unfinished Business recommendations relating to health and aged care services to the responsible Commonwealth Government portfolios.</p> <p><b>NSW Health</b></p> <p>In September 2019, NSW Health held a roundtable with Stolen Generations Organisations with a focus on understanding and developing tailored health supports for Survivors in the NSW health system.</p> <p>NSW Health agreed at the roundtable to improve care coordination for Stolen Generations Survivors using NSW health services, suggesting Health Care Coordinator positions be placed in Stolen Generations Organisations, and using the existing system to prioritise Survivors' access based on their individual healthcare needs. NSW Health is working with the Stolen Generations Organisations to establish a framework for funding and mentoring these positions in 2021.</p> <p><b>Commonwealth Health Care Card</b></p> <p>In December 2019, a roundtable discussion was held by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and the Department of Health and Ageing with Stolen Generations Organisations. Commonwealth representatives agreed to meet with individual Stolen Generations Organisations to discuss services and Survivor health needs. Commonwealth meetings were delayed due to COVID-19.</p> <p>Commonwealth representatives also committed to provide information for Stolen Generations Organisations about other existing health care cards and health assistance provided for Aboriginal people through existing programs and benefits. The Commonwealth committed to have a discussion to map survivor needs and expectations, to identify any existing program gaps.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Trauma-informed workforce</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations 6, 29</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will establish a bespoke e-learning training package, including mandatory information about the impacts of past forcible removal policies and practices on Aboriginal communities, to build a trauma-informed public sector workforce. The training package will be developed with Aboriginal people, including Stolen Generations Survivors.</p>	<p><b>NSW Public Service Commission (PSC)</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>PSC is developing the toolkit in conjunction with Stolen Generations Survivors and Aboriginal people in the public sector. In 2018, the PSC established an interagency working group to guide the development of the training package and has also engaged directly with Stolen Generations Organisations and Survivors through the Advisory Committee.</p> <p>PSC determined that a three-tiered learning approach would be taken to provide sector-wide online training (foundation, intermediate and extension) with agencies assuming responsibility for implementation, tailoring the package to suit their workforce, and providing workforce support.</p> <p>In January 2019 PSC contracted an Aboriginal-owned training company, Mirri Mirri, via an open tender process, to develop an online training package. PSC worked with Mirri Mirri and Stolen Generations Organisations to develop content including filming Survivors' stories about their own experience and Stolen Generations history. PSC entered agreements with four Stolen Generations Organisations confirming intellectual property rights and a contribution payment for participation in the project.</p> <p>During 2020, PSC updated the scope of the training to develop an online training toolkit. The toolkit will raise cultural awareness, incorporating statements from public sector leaders and including information about the impact of forcible removal policies and practice on Aboriginal communities. The resources include an interactive website suitable for engaging with broad workforce needs across the public sector and a specialised Stolen Generations e-learning module that incorporates Survivors telling their own stories.</p> <p>PSC has scheduled work in 2021 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finalising the e-learning training content</li> <li>• developing a communication and implementation plan to support sector readiness to implement the training in a culturally and emotionally safe way</li> <li>• obtaining final approval from the Stolen Generations Organisations for use of their content and historical photographs</li> <li>• testing and piloting the training</li> <li>• delivering masterclass sessions to the sector to prepare for delivery of the e-learning training program.</li> </ul>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellors</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will advocate with the Commonwealth Government regarding recommendation 7 (below):</p> <p>The NSW Government request the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to consider amending the role and title of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellors to ensure there is a clear focus on the provision of support to Stolen Generations Survivors and their families.</p>	<p><b>DPC</b></p> <p><b>Commonwealth</b></p>	<p><b>Progress Delayed</b></p> <p>Through the Advisory Committee, Stolen Generations Organisations have requested additional information from the Commonwealth Government about funding for Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) counsellors and programs.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations are concerned that Survivors are finding it difficult to identify and locate funded counsellors or services provided by other organisations that receive Commonwealth funding.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations have raised concerns about workforce capability and the Commonwealth Government Bringing Them Home funding commitment for SEWB being assigned to other types of services including alcohol and other drugs, and youth.</p> <p>A roundtable discussion was held in December 2019 by the Commonwealth Government and the NIAA with Stolen Generations Organisations. NIAA undertook to examine the current funding allocation of organisations funded to provide SEWB-related services. NIAA has also encouraged Stolen Generations Organisations to identify any specific concerns about SEWB program services or positions, to enable NIAA to address those with the funded organisations.</p> <p>NIAA has also encouraged Stolen Generations Organisations to develop their own funding proposals for Commonwealth funding, including SEWB.</p> <p>NIAA committed to meeting with individual Stolen Generations Organisations during 2020 to discuss services for Survivors and any funding proposals from Stolen Generations Organisations. However, further discussions and meetings were delayed during COVID-19. During 2020 NIAA provided COVID-related funding to around 50 Indigenous Advancement Strategy-funded providers to maintain or boost SEWB and/or alcohol and other drug treatment services to provide support to adapt their delivery methods, and/or to meet increased demand due to the pandemic. This also included additional funding to the Healing Foundation to assist Survivors with essential support during the public health crisis. Stolen Generations Organisations accessed this funding for activities through the Healing Foundation.</p>
<p><b>Statement in Parliament for the anniversary of the tabling of Bringing Them Home</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 9</b></p> <p>The Premier will make a statement on the anniversary of the tabling of the Bringing Them Home Report in May 2017.</p>	<p><b>DPC</b></p> <p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>In May 2017, a statement was made by the Premier and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the anniversary of the tabling of Bringing Them Home. The importance of recognising the 20th anniversary of Bringing Them Home was also promoted to local government via Local Government NSW.</p> <p>The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs makes regular speeches each year in Parliament to commemorate anniversaries of the Apology and Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<b>Acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture and heritage in Parliament</b>	<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p> <p>The Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will request that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the President of the Legislative Council acknowledge and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage at the commencement of each new Parliament.</p>	<p><b>DPC</b></p> <p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>On 7 May 2019, the first session of the 57th Parliament of NSW opened with an acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture and heritage for the first time in its history.</p> <p>The NSW Government committed to acknowledge and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage at the commencement of each new Parliament.</p> <p>NSW Parliament has established an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer role to assist elected representatives in their engagement with Aboriginal people and cultural issues.</p>
<b>Central Station Memorial</b>	<p><b>Recommendations 11, 12, 13</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will work with Stolen Generations Organisations to explore the development of a memorial as part of Central Station Precinct redevelopment, as well as a keeping place/museum based in Sydney.</p> <p>The Stolen Generations Healing Fund will assist with the establishment of other memorials and keeping places.</p>	<p><b>Transport for NSW</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>Transport for NSW, Sydney Trains, NSW TrainLink and Aboriginal representatives are managing the NSW Railways – Stolen Generations Memorial project.</p> <p>The Stolen Generations Memorial at the Grand Concourse at Central Station was opened on 3 December 2018, incorporating four artworks from Stolen Generations Organisations. A proposal for a Stolen Generations statue for Central Station Platform 1 is being developed by Balarinji Indigenous Design and Strategy. Balarinji will consult with the Stolen Generations Organisations during the concept and development stage. This phase was delayed during COVID-19 and will progress in 2021.</p> <p>A memorial plaque was installed at Kempsey Railway Station, with a commemorative event held on 27 October 2018. Memorial plaques for the railway stations at Berry, Bombaderry, Bourke, Cootamundra, Grafton, Mittagong, Parramatta, Wagga Wagga and Yass were delayed due to COVID-19. Transport for NSW is working with Stolen Generations Organisations to progress installation at these sites between August and October 2021, with associated events.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Investigation of former Aborigines Welfare Board sites to locate remains of any Aboriginal children</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 14</b></p> <p>The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and Aboriginal Affairs will work with Stolen Generations Organisations to implement recommendation 14 (below):</p> <p>The NSW Government work with relevant organisations to investigate and search the sites of the former Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Training Home, Kinchela Aboriginal Boys' Training Home and Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home to locate the remains of any Aboriginal children.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b> <b>Heritage NSW</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress – Scoping</b></p> <p>Stolen Generations Survivors have requested that the sites of the former homes of the Aborigines Welfare Board be investigated and searched to locate the remains of any Aboriginal children or onsite burials. The NSW Government has committed to progress this work.</p> <p>A healing ceremony was held in Parramatta on 7 December 2020 in remembrance of missing children who were removed and never returned home to their families and communities. The event was linked to smoking ceremonies that took place at the sites of the Aborigines Welfare Board former homes involving Survivors and their families.</p> <p>This work is particularly sensitive and complex, being directly linked to Survivors' childhood memories of trauma and abuse associated with their removal and these sites. Survivors and their families continue to struggle with unresolved grief, loss and lost connections to family members and other children who were at the homes and their unresolved fears for those who were never reunited.</p> <p>Consultant firm Cox Inall Ridgeway has been commissioned to consult Survivors on how they want to remember and document the missing children. This will include documenting their experiences and memories, or memories of other witnesses, during their childhood or as adults, of missing children on or near the Aborigines Welfare Board homes. This work will inform further decisions being made in consultation with Survivors regarding any possible site investigations and onsite memorials.</p>
<p><b>Funeral Assistance Fund</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 15</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will establish a Stolen Generations funeral fund. The fund will provide payments of \$7,000 to contribute to the costs of funerals for Stolen Generations Survivors.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>The Funeral Assistance Fund commenced in July 2017, as part of the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme. Those who receive a reparations payment may choose to receive a funeral assistance fund payment at the time of their reparations payment, or may choose to defer the payment, to be paid to a nominated family member when required. As of 31 December 2020, \$4.8 million has been paid from the Funeral Assistance Fund to 685 eligible claimants.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Improved access to records for proof of Aboriginality</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 17</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will work with Aboriginal organisations to identify records that may assist Survivors and descendants in proof of Aboriginality.</p> <p>The NSW Government will also improve access to family records, which may assist Survivors and their descendants meet documentation requirements for proof of Aboriginality.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p> <p>Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other Aboriginal community-controlled organisations can assist people who are enquiring about having their Aboriginality recognised by community. Aboriginal organisations determine their own approach and policies for considering requests for confirmation of Aboriginality.</p> <p>Improved access to archived records may assist Survivors and their descendants to understand and explain their family connections when they are approaching an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation for assistance.</p> <p>Aboriginal Affairs assists Survivors and their descendants to access archived records relating to their removal and family history. The Family Records Service has been implementing changes to streamline and improve access, to reduce wait times, and to improve quality of service (also see response to Recommendation 25).</p> <p>As community organisations, Stolen Generations Organisations are interested to develop and implement their own policies to support Survivors and their descendants who are requesting confirmation of Aboriginality. Aboriginal Affairs has provided advice to Stolen Generations Organisations about the types of information available in archived records, to assist Stolen Generations Organisations to consider their own policies.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Social housing</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 18</b></p> <p>Family and Community Services (FACS) will explore priority access for Survivors as part of its development of an Aboriginal Social Housing Policy.</p> <p>To ensure that Stolen Generations Survivors and their descendants are able to access housing when required, the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Department of Family and Community Services are committed to working closely with the Stolen Generations Organisations, other non-government organisations, Aboriginal communities and alliances to provide the information and resources that will assist Aboriginal people to become and remain housed.</p> <p>The AHO, through its goal of creating 1,000 new housing opportunities, will continue to provide stable housing to ensure better outcomes for Aboriginal people who are impacted by disadvantage, including intergenerational trauma associated with the forced removal of children. The AHO currently provides the housing component in partnership with agencies that support Aboriginal young people leaving care and women exiting the justice system.</p>	<p><b>Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) – Housing (formerly Department of Family and Community Services)</b></p> <p><b>Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO)</b></p>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p> <p>Following machinery-of-government changes, housing policy and strategies now sit across the Department of Communities and Justice and the Aboriginal Housing Office. The latter is now part of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). AHO works in partnership with DCJ, and operates under the Strong Family, Strong Communities Aboriginal Housing Strategy.</p> <p>DCJ committed to deliver priority access to public housing to address the unique needs of Survivors.</p> <p>DCJ has developed a new priority housing category for Stolen Generations Survivors on the NSW Housing Register. Rather than having to demonstrate that they are in need of priority housing, like other applicants, Stolen Generations Survivors can be fast-tracked through priority identification.</p> <p>Eligibility for priority housing as a Stolen Generations Survivor requires an applicant to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eligible for social housing, and</li> <li>• a Stolen Generations Survivor, and</li> <li>• unable to resolve their housing need themselves in the private rental market.</li> </ul> <p>Stolen Generations Survivors do not need to demonstrate they are in urgent need of housing for this priority housing category. However, if an urgent housing need is demonstrated, a higher priority category is considered.</p> <p>DCJ and Stolen Generations Organisations have identified further work needed to ensure this policy is fully implemented and understood across the workforce and all locations. Stolen Generations Organisations have requested further consideration to enable descendants to be included in the priority category, to provide stable housing across Survivors' family circumstances, including care arrangements.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations have requested that government continue developing and implementing housing strategies and investments, and implementing opportunities that support affordable home ownership options for Survivors and their descendants.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Improved aged care services for Stolen Generations Survivors</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations 19, 20</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will work with and advocate that the Commonwealth Government adopt recommendations 19 and 20 (below):</p> <p>The NSW Government, in consultation with Stolen Generations Survivors, partner with the Australian Government to identify and deliver innovative and culturally appropriate aged care services for Stolen Generations Survivors. The NSW Government explore opportunities for Stolen Generations Survivors to better access existing aged care facilities.</p>	<p><b>DPC</b></p> <p><b>Commonwealth</b></p>	<p><b>Progress Delayed</b></p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations have identified this as a priority focus area, advocating to have urgent prioritised access to flexible aged care options and aged care packages, with services that are trauma-informed and culturally safe. Stolen Generations Organisations are particularly concerned about Survivor vulnerabilities, lived experience and re-traumatisation.</p> <p>The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established in 2018 to examine aged care services and supports for older Australians and their carers. The Royal Commission report, released on 1 March 2021, makes 148 wide-ranging recommendations for fundamental and systemic reform of the aged care system.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Government will consider and respond to the Royal Commission recommendations in 2021.</p> <p>Representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Health and NIAA met with Stolen Generations Organisations in a roundtable discussion in December 2019 to discuss health, aged care and disability support services and Survivor needs. Commonwealth representatives also committed to meeting with individual Stolen Generations Organisations, but this was delayed during 2020 due to COVID-19.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations met with NSW Health in September 2019 to discuss state health services, aged health and disability services.</p> <p>In February 2020, Stolen Generations Organisations attended the NSW Health Aged Care Advisory Group network meeting to discuss aged care supports and Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessments. ACAT team leaders and trainers attended from across the state. Based on consultation with Stolen Generations Organisations, NSW Health is reviewing existing ACAT resources and assessment processes, to raise trauma awareness and cultural capabilities.</p> <p>NSW Health has advised that Stolen Generations Organisations' priorities have been included in the Commonwealth Health Partnership Forum work-plan to allow a collaborative approach with key partners including NSW Health, the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council, NIAA, Public Health Networks and Commonwealth agencies.</p> <p>NSW Health has committed to consulting with Stolen Generations Organisations on future directions suggested through the Royal Commission on Aged Care Quality and Safety.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Incarcerated Stolen Generations Survivors in overseas jurisdictions</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 21</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will work with and advocate that the Commonwealth Government adopt recommendation 21 (below):</p> <p>The NSW Government encourage the Australian Government to negotiate the return of incarcerated Stolen Generations Survivors from overseas jurisdictions.</p>	<p><b>DCJ</b></p> <p><b>Commonwealth</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>In 2018, the NSW Attorney General wrote to the Commonwealth Attorney-General and noted the report's finding that the trauma experienced by Survivors, by being forcibly removed and disconnected from their families and community, should be taken into account in negotiations for international transfers.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Attorney-General responded, advising that the Australian Government already has the legal mechanisms and systems in place to address the recommendation made by the NSW Parliamentary Committee.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Attorney-General advised that any Indigenous Australians incarcerated overseas can avail themselves, if they choose, of consular assistance from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Improved access to coordinated services</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations 22, 23</b></p> <p>The resourcing of Stolen Generations Organisations will enable advocacy for the needs of Survivors and descendants.</p> <p>Aboriginal Affairs will work with Service NSW and Stolen Generations Organisations to establish points of contact.</p> <p>Resourcing will also be provided to Stolen Generations Organisations (via responses to recommendations 3 and 8) to enable advocacy for the needs of Survivors and their descendants.</p> <p>The NSW Government will also respond to this recommendation through the planned establishment of a Child Protection Academy by Family and Community Services to build and sustain the capability of a world-class and professional workforce.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p> <p><b>Services NSW</b></p>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p> <p>Discussions have continued through the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee and roundtable discussions between agencies and Stolen Generations Organisations, to understand the needs of Survivors and improve access to services.</p> <p>Resourcing is being provided to the Stolen Generations Organisations (Recommendations 3 and 8) to assist them to build the capacity of their own organisations to advocate for the needs of Survivors and their descendants. Funding provided through the Stolen Generations Organisations Reparations Funding supports the organisations to engage with Survivors and with government agencies and service providers.</p> <p>The roundtable discussion with DCJ (formerly FACS) and the AHO developed commitments to improve DCJ responses for Survivors, including a priority housing category (Recommendation 18). DCJ Services Coordinator positions were established for some Stolen Generations Organisations in 2019, to facilitate access and engagement with agencies and services based on Stolen Generations Organisations' and Survivors' needs.</p> <p>Following the roundtable discussion on health, NSW Health also committed to fund Health Care Coordinator positions for each of the Stolen Generations Organisations, to facilitate priority access and coordinate support for Survivors using NSW health services. The roles are being established in 2021.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations have been supporting Survivors who are interested in adopting the use of digital technology to stay in contact, including new developments by Service NSW. This was particularly important during COVID-19 as a means of engaging and staying connected with Survivors during social isolation. Aboriginal Affairs will continue to maintain contact with Service NSW to promote any of its new developments through the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee.</p> <p>DCJ has not progressed its planned work on a Child Protection Academy. In July 2020, DCJ launched its redesigned internal Caseworker Development Program, a mandatory, blended learning and capabilities-based program for all new caseworkers who join DCJ. The independent review of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care made 125 systemic recommendations. DCJ is working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to address all of the recommendations.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<b>Cultural renewal – languages</b>	<b>Recommendation 24</b> The expansion of the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests is dependent on the evaluation of OCHRE initiatives and cannot be resourced at this time. In recognition of the importance of Aboriginal languages to the whole community, the NSW Government will develop legislation to recognise and protect NSW Aboriginal languages, and consult on the establishment of a NSW Aboriginal Languages Centre to support language revival in Aboriginal communities.	<b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b>	<b>In Progress</b> The <i>Aboriginal Languages Act 2017</i> commenced via proclamation on 5 March 2020 and includes the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Trust. The inaugural Trust Board was appointed by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on 17 February 2020, commencing its five-year term on 9 March 2020.  A key priority for the board is to develop a strategic plan for the growth and nurturing of Aboriginal languages revitalisation in NSW in consultation with Aboriginal communities. A draft strategic plan is due to be submitted to the Minister by 5 March 2022. Consultation on the strategic plan will commence in 2021.  An independent evaluation of the OCHRE Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests was completed in 2018. In addition to the five original Language Nests, two satellite nests were added – Dunghutti is established and Gomeroi is in the establishment phase.  The number of schools participating in Language Nests increased by 42 over 2019–2020 (from 57 schools to 99) and the number of language educators has increased to 29.
<b>Improved access to family records</b>	<b>Recommendation 25</b> The NSW Government will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• streamline access to the former Aborigines Welfare Board records</li> <li>• establish a new ongoing role of Aboriginal Research Historian to contextualise the Aborigines Welfare Board records and enable links to be made with contemporaneous information from Stolen Generations Survivors, and</li> <li>• build capacity within Aboriginal Affairs to refer those accessing files to other support services.</li> </ul>	<b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b>	<b>In Progress</b> Aboriginal Affairs has considered feedback from Survivors and recommendations from independent reviews to streamline the Family Records Service.  Aboriginal Affairs has commissioned Jumbunna to design a more accessible and culturally safe application form, implemented changes to increase up-front phone support for applicants, and improved business processes to reduce search waiting times.  Aboriginal Affairs has also increased the capacity of its Aboriginal Historic Records team to focus on priority projects and Unfinished Business commitments as well as delivering Family Records Services. A new Manager role was established and filled in 2018 to manage Aboriginal history research and records projects.  Aboriginal Affairs will continue scoping work over the coming year, focusing on opportunities to develop links to contemporaneous information from Survivors and to contextualise the records relating to removals, as well as undertaking further research on the historical context of records archived in the Aborigines Welfare Board collection.  Aboriginal Affairs is in the first phase of creating a culturally focused reading room to support Survivors and their descendants to access information provided by the Family Records Service. The aim is to develop a space that is comfortable, culturally safe and supportive for Survivors managing trauma and sensitive information referred to in the records and discussions about Stolen Generations.

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Stolen Generations survivor reunions</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 27</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will work with the Commonwealth Government and advocate that it adopt recommendation 27 (below):</p> <p>The NSW Government request the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to provide additional funding to Link-Up NSW so that it can provide an increased number of reunions for Stolen Generations Survivors each year.</p> <p>See response to Recommendations 3 and 8.</p> <p>Financial support for the Stolen Generations Organisations will be provided over the next 10 years that will increase capacity for these organisations to facilitate reunions for Survivors.</p> <p>The establishment of a Stolen Generations healing fund (\$5 million over 10 years) will support priority healing initiatives including survivor reunions.</p>	<p><b>DPC</b></p> <p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>The Commonwealth Government has provided some information to the Advisory Committee confirming funding is being provided to Link-Up NSW and other available sources of Commonwealth funding for services.</p> <p>Link-Up NSW is one of the organisations participating in the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and is involved in the development of jurisdiction plans and funding for the national agreement on Closing the Gap.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations Reparations Funding and the Stolen Generations Healing Fund deliver collective reparations to Stolen Generations Organisations as a source of funding for healing activities, including proposals for reunions supporting Survivors, families and communities in healing.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations determine priority proposals to submit for funding and have indicated they are also interested in developing Survivor-led reunion models for additional funding for their own organisations, as well as the services provided by Link-Up NSW.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
School curriculum	<p><b>Recommendation 28</b></p> <p>Existing History curricula already includes the Stolen Generations for all Year 7 to 10 students.</p>	<p><b>NSW Education Standards Authority</b></p> <p><b>Department of Education</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>The Advisory Committee recommended that the history of the Stolen Generations should be a compulsory component of secondary school curricula.</p> <p>The NSW Government accepted this recommendation, noting that the content is already part of the school History curricula for Years 7–10. The Advisory Committee met with a representative from the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) in 2018 and discussed curriculum requirements.</p> <p>In 2019, the Kinchela Boys’ Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) developed the Mobile Education Centre (MEC) bus project. NESA provided advice about curriculum standards to assist KBHAC in developing interactive multimedia resources in the MEC to support teaching in schools about the history of Stolen Generations. The MEC bus was launched in February 2020, with Uncles delivering stories about their experiences and survival to school students and communities across NSW. Stolen Generations Organisations are interested in further opportunities to continue working with NESA, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc, Department of Education and other project partners to develop sustainable education resources and local information kits about Stolen Generations history, to support Survivors’ speaking engagements and healing activities at schools and community events.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Improved early intervention services for the child protection system</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 31</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will continue the operation of current early intervention programs and will proceed with the initiatives agreed to as a result of the review of out-of-home care in NSW (Tune Report).</p>	<p><b>DCJ</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>The DCJ Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2017–2021 set a target of 30% of Targeted Early Intervention funding committed for Aboriginal children and families by 2021.</p> <p>In February 2019, the investment in Aboriginal early intervention services had increased to 14.7% (from 14.1% in April 2017).</p> <p>Another snapshot of Aboriginal investment will be taken in July 2021, to see the impact of the 2020 Targeted Early Intervention recommissioning process.</p> <p>DCJ has provided \$500,000 to Aboriginal organisations to support the building of evidence in early intervention, and to support Aboriginal Targeted Early Intervention organisations to transition to the new Targeted Early Intervention program.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations are supporting Survivors and their descendants in healing and family issues and are identifying and filling gaps in early intervention support. Survivors have requested that more resources be provided to support families at an earlier stage, before a crisis situation escalates.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations would like to be resourced to provide early intervention assistance to Survivors’ families and communities, to support family reconnection and prevent the continuing intergenerational trauma caused by child removals.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Improvements to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 32</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will introduce a new client management system, ChildStory, to support caseworkers in implementing the Aboriginal placement principles and, as part of the Improving Aboriginal Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care Outcomes research project, test frontline worker understanding of the Aboriginal child placement principles and review systems/procedures.</p> <p>The NSW Government will also work with the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care to implement a national reporting and compliance framework.</p>	<p><b>DCJ</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>The Family is Culture Report, from Professor Megan Davies' independent review of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in NSW, was completed and released in 2019.</p> <p>The report contains a range of recommendations to improve Aboriginal self-determination and implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles. The NSW Government is working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to address the recommendations in the review.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Case Management Policy was developed and released in October 2018. The policy provides a framework for Aboriginal-led and culturally embedded case management practice to safeguard the best interests of Aboriginal children and young people.</p> <p>This policy includes providing guidance for caseworkers on using Aboriginal community-controlled mechanisms in the development and endorsement of cultural plans and implementation through community-controlled cultural activities and services. The policy is aimed at empowering families and communities to reduce the incidence of harm early and to work with caseworkers to shape case planning and identify priorities and solutions together, to keep children safe and with their family and community.</p> <p>The NSW Government, with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, is leading development of a nationally consistent approach to measuring the application of the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles: prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group (led by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care) provides oversight and advice.</p> <p><b>ChildStory</b></p> <p>ChildStory is an information technology system that places a child or young person at the centre of their story. The system integrates various components for caseworkers and service partners to view and update information and provides access to information for the child or young person and their carers.</p> <p>Adherence to Aboriginal placement principles is not currently directed by ChildStory. ChildStory is making enhancements to the placement record to guide and provide the ability to record how Aboriginal placement principles have been met. This work is due for completion in 2021.</p> <p>Stolen Generations Organisations are interested to be involved at an early stage to support descendants and families to stay together, raise their own children safely and remain connected to culture. Survivors have a role as Elders to support family members to understand intergenerational trauma and healing and to raise children safely in their own family.</p>

Description	Standing Committee Recommendation number <sup>1</sup> and related NSW Government commitment	Responsible portfolio	Second Progress Report status and update
<p><b>Review of the redesigned care plan for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people in care</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 33</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will review the Family and Community Services Care and Cultural Plan one year after implementation and will develop a monitoring and evaluation framework.</p>	<p><b>DCJ</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p> <p>The NSW Government is reviewing the Family and Community Services Care and Cultural Plan as part of the evaluation of the Permanency Support Program, which has begun.</p> <p>This will involve direct interviews with Aboriginal clients, with consultation mechanisms supported to ensure cultural safety. A final report of the evaluation is due for release in late 2021, with early interim findings available during 2021.</p>
<p><b>Unfinished Business Progress Report to Parliament</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations 34, 35</b></p> <p>The NSW Government will establish a Stolen Generations Advisory Committee for an initial period of two years to support the implementation of the NSW Government Response to the Standing Committee's recommendations, including an Implementation Report to Parliament in 2018. This report will also consider the commitments made in the NSW Government response to the Bringing Them Home report in 1999.</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Affairs NSW</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>The second <i>Unfinished Business Progress Report</i> will be tabled in Parliament in 2021.</p> <p>This report was developed in conjunction with Advisory Committee representatives from government agencies and Stolen Generations Organisations.</p> <p>Survivors have recommended the Advisory Committee be extended to continue to oversee implementation and provide advice on priority issues for Survivors for the remaining duration of the NSW Government's 10-year commitment to Unfinished Business.</p>

## Appendix 2

### Stolen Generations Organisations information

#### Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home

“

We must acknowledge and pay respect to all former children who passed through this place and may the rest of us walk, work and celebrate in the spirit of unity, hope and healing on the land where we once lived.

”

In early 2015, ex-residents and Survivors commenced the journey of establishing Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Inc. The foundations of Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home have now been laid and our organisation is moving ahead through significant partnerships with Baptist Churches NSW, the NSW Government Heritage Council and Aboriginal Affairs.

Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home is committed to meeting and supporting the needs and aspirations of its ex-residents and their descendants. We will develop a formal process to capture and act on information provided to Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home via its membership through holding forums identified by the Board and membership itself. Information about membership aspirations and needs will be used to inform and improve Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home practices, including developing services and programs, e.g. housing, aged care, funeral assistance and healing programs.

Our purpose, vision and values are:

- **Purpose:** Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home aims to enhance the quality of life of all its members through reconnecting families, restoring cultural identity, and addressing their social and emotional wellbeing needs.
- **Vision:** To support the needs, identity, dignity, and integrity of the Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home membership.
- **Our Values:** What is important to us is:
  - › to grow and empower our membership
  - › to encourage and value the participation of all members
  - › to embed membership skills and contributions into our work
  - › to ensure the sustainability of Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home's future
  - › to share our history with the broader community
  - › to collaborate with our partners and others to help achieve our goals
  - › to act with honour and integrity, behave with dignity and humility, and care for, share with and respect each other and those we work with in pursuit of our Vision.

#### Healing

Collectively, we have now started on our healing journey. Our approach is to give effect to the 'doing' and not just the 'talking' that followed in the wake of the 2008 Australian Government Apology to the 'stolen generation'. To this end we intend to look after our Survivors by focusing on:

- healing and associated holistic programs
- wellbeing – physical and mental health
- aged care programs
- housing – including care and maintenance of housing environments
- reconnecting with family and each other
- education and training – jobs and skills development.

## History of the Bomaderry Children's Home

In 1908 the Aborigines Mission established the Bomaderry Children's Home (BCH) of the United Aborigines Mission as a home for orphaned and neglected children. It is often referred to as the 'birthplace of the Stolen Generations in NSW', as it predates other children's homes established under the *NSW Aborigines Protection Act 1909*.

The very first home was purchased by the Aborigines Mission authorities and occupied by a Matron and six children. The number of original homes increased over time and by 1924 the fourth home was officially opened.

By September 1921, it was recorded that there were 46 children resident at the dormitory-style home – 33 girls and 13 boys. The two eldest girls of the group were apprenticed to the home and the remaining 44 children ranged in age from 2 to 14 years. Once the children reached a certain age some children were sent on to either the Kinchela Boys' Training Home, the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls, or other institutions. Some children were also adopted.

Sadly, the total number of children taken into the former BCH from across NSW is unknown. However, one local source states that the home, at one point, housed upward of 52 children, while at other times numbers were much less. The BCH was closed in 1988 and the property purchased by the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

At present the property is in the care of the Nowra Local Land Council, which works closely with Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home.

Today, many ex-residents of the former BCH still experience mixed and deep emotional ties to the former home and staff. These emotions include hurt, trauma, fondness, and deep affection toward the old home. As a result, the healing of and assistance to former residents and their descendants is required on many levels.

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## Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation represents, supports and advocates for Survivors of the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls, and their descendants, in their journey towards healing.

The Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation was founded in 2013 by a courageous group of Coota Girls, former residents of the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls (1912–1969).

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation aims to address the complex healing needs of Coota Girl Survivors and their families, who are impacted by forced removals under the *Aborigines Protection Act 1909*. We work in partnership to meet the social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and support the needs of Coota Girls Survivors and their descendants. We do this in a practical, holistic manner, in collaboration with community and funding partners, to address Stolen Generations' trauma.

We deliver healing programs, meet practical needs, advocate for policy change, share the Coota Girls story for truth-telling, raise awareness of the impacts of intergenerational trauma, and link Survivors and families to support services.

Our Board of Directors is made up of Coota Girls Survivors and their descendants.

## Healing

Based on the three pillars of trauma-informed care adapted for the Aboriginal community, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation supports collective healing of Coota Girl Survivors and descendants with a focus on healing relationships and facilitating trauma education. Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation aims to apply trauma-informed practice to deliver collective healing activities that build strong, supportive relationships and offer trauma education, as Survivors and descendants move towards healing in mind, body and spirit.

Coota Girl Survivors and their descendants have expressed different healing needs, which Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation aims to support. Survivors have identified that their healing takes place through gathering, yarning, reflecting and celebrating their resilience. Descendants have expressed healing needs that include family reconnection, knowing their family's Stolen Generations history, and understanding the impacts of intergenerational trauma.

Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation has started and will resume (when COVID-safe) important initiatives for collective healing. These include regional member forums, trauma education workshops, an annual family fun event, gatherings and reunions of Survivors and their families, and documenting Coota Girls Survivor stories.

Alongside provision of collective healing initiatives, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation will continue to:

- develop our own holistic supports for healing
- advocate for policy change impacting Survivors and their families
- share the Coota Girls story for truth-telling and to prevent repetition
- raise awareness of the impacts of intergenerational trauma
- link Survivors and families to support services.

## History of the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls

In 1912, the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls was established as a training institution for Aboriginal girls who had been forcibly removed from their families under the Aborigines Protection Act. The home acted as a place to hold and train Aboriginal girls until they turned 15 years old and could be put out to work as domestic servants.

Aboriginal girls from across NSW were placed in the home after forced removal from their families under the Act. Children were commonly removed by police officers and their parents were prevented from maintaining contact with them. The children remained under the control of the Board until they were 18 years old.

When placed in the Cootamundra Girls' Home, the children were not allowed to know anything about their families or their Aboriginal heritage. Some of their names were changed and they were punished for speaking in language. Children were told they were unwanted and rejected or their parents had passed away. The children were taught to reject their Aboriginality and to fear and avoid Aboriginal people.

At the home the children were taught to clean, cook, sew, wash and iron. Many were subjected to harsh treatment, including abuse as well as neglect, with lasting effects on their health and wellbeing.

Many generations of Aboriginal women passed through Cootamundra Girls' Home during its 57 years of operation.

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## Aunty Isabel Reid

### NSW Senior of the Year 2021



Former member of the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee and former Chair and founding member of Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation, Aunty Isabel Reid, has been recognised for her service to community as NSW Senior Australian of the Year 2021.

Aunty Isabel has spent her life as a leader and advocate for Stolen Generations Survivors, following her removal as a child to Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls. Aunty Isabel spent her adult life caring for her own family, raising 13 children and reconnecting herself with the culture she was taken away from as a child.

Aunty Isabel was Chair of Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation until August 2017. During this time, Aunty Isabel's leadership of Coota Girls contributed to the development of the NSW Government's \$73 million reparations package, providing individual and collective reparations to Survivors in NSW.

Aunty Isabel has an active role as a respected Elder in the Wagga Wagga community, including through the Mawang Gaway Aboriginal Consultative Group. Aunty Isabel's generosity in telling her own story has raised awareness about the experience of the Stolen Generations. She has supported the education of many young people and adults through her visits to schools, TAFE, universities, juvenile justice centres and other community groups.

Aunty Isabel's recognition as NSW Senior of the Year is acknowledgement of her leadership as an Elder, and her strength, resilience and advocacy for all Stolen Generations Survivors.

## Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation

Our mission is to encourage and support Aboriginal men, their families and communities in developing sustainable healing programs that address the legacy of physical, sexual, psychological and cultural abuse in the Kinchela Boys' Home, including intergenerational impacts. We encourage and empower positive, healthy peer support models that allow greater social inclusion in community life.

Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation was established for Survivors of the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home (KBH), a 'home' run by the NSW Government for over 50 years to house Aboriginal boys forcibly removed from their families.

Our vision is to improve the social, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of KBH Survivors and their families in meaningful ways. This takes a strength-based focus on persistent grief, trauma and intergenerational trauma experienced by each KBH Survivor and his family. Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation is committed to empowering positive and healthy peer support models that enable greater social inclusion in community life. These models address the rebuilding and strengthening of identity and family structures.

The members, board and staff of Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation are committed to upholding and promoting the values below. These values are embedded in our practice, our interactions with one another and in the way we engage and work with community, our partners and stakeholders.

- **Cultural Integrity** – We are open, honest, accountable and transparent and acknowledge that culture is at the centre of all that we do.
- **Respect** – This is at the core of all our relationships with members, community, partners and wider society.
- **Inclusion** – We actively create opportunities for community engagement with our activities and priorities. We listen to our members and the communities we work with and value their input.

- **Dignity-based, healing and trauma-informed** – We uphold dignity for all our members and are knowledgeable of and sensitive to trauma and intergenerational trauma-related issues. We create environments where people feel valued and which emphasise hope, healing, safety (cultural, physical, psychological and social), choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment.
- **Partnership** – We are committed to working in mutually beneficial and enriching partnerships with our community, our partners and our stakeholders.

Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation has developed a unique Survivor-led approach to its governance and healing described as:

- **Survivor led** – an approach to organisational governance and practice built on and informed by the guidance and unique insights offered by Survivors and which contributes to the social and emotional wellbeing of Survivors, their communities and cultures. The KBH Survivors and Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation own their stories and healing, leading from a place of self-determination.

Our Guiding Principles are:

- Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation acknowledges and respects that each KBH Survivor has his own experience of KBH.
- We, the members of Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation, will listen to and respect our elders, our partners, our sisters, our brothers and our staff, and respect our country and each other.
- We, the KBH Survivors and our families, know our problems, our pain, our isolation and the issues we struggle with.
- We, the KBH Survivors, will work hard to connect with our families, our communities, our culture and our neighbours.
- We, the KBH Survivors and our families, will honour ourselves, and each other, in support of our individual and collective journeys of healing.
- We, the KBH Survivors, know and accept what is in our own heart, soul and mind. We know who we are, and where we come from. We are Strong, Proud and Black.

- We, the Survivors of KBH, will help educate the Australian community about understanding the grievances of Stolen Generations issues and other deep local and national concerns impacting on Australia's First Peoples.
- We, the KBH Survivors, will continue to support the human dignity of all Stolen Generations.
- We, the Survivors of KBH, acknowledge the National Apology to Stolen Generations. Therefore, we will continue to pursue unfinished business and all issues of justice, genocide and reparations for all members of the Stolen Generations and our families.
- We, the Survivors of KBH, will honour and remember all our brothers who went before us.

## Healing – KBH mob looking after KBH mob

The Kin Connect Program supports KBH Survivors, their descendants and families. Using empowering Survivor-led models with a deep understanding of the issues KBH Survivors and their descendants experience, Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation has developed a holistic model of care to support KBH Survivors, their descendants and families, which underpins the services provided in the Kin Connect Program.

This program encourages and supports sustainable healing programs that address the legacy of physical, sexual, psychological and cultural abuse experienced by the KBH Survivors as well as the intergenerational trauma experienced by their descendants.

The Kin Connect Program delivers the following services:

- **KBH Uncles Support:** provides trauma-informed, culturally safe and effective support to the KBH uncles. This includes social and emotional wellbeing support and counselling, family reconnection support, ageing and disability support, and collective healing support and activities.
- **KBH Descendants Support:** provides trauma-informed, culturally safe and effective support to the children, grandchildren and other direct descendants of KBH Survivors. Through a holistic model of care, the KBH Descendants service helps children and grandchildren of KBH Survivors work towards addressing some of the intergenerational

trauma that continues to negatively impact on their lives. This includes social and emotional wellbeing support and counselling, family support referrals, ageing and disability support, and collective healing support and activities.

- **KBH Partners and Family Support:** provides trauma-informed, culturally safe and effective support to KBH Survivors' partners and families. This includes social and emotional wellbeing support and counselling, family support referrals, ageing and disability support, and collective healing support and activities.
- **KBH Kin Connect Healing Yarn Ups and Gatherings:** these take place during the year and bring together KBH Survivors, their partners, descendants and immediate family members. They are held in NSW and interstate.

## History of Kinchela Boys' Home

From 1924 to 1970, under the authority of the NSW Aborigines Protection Board and its successor, the Aborigines Welfare Board, between 400 and 600 young boys (and a small number of girls in its first year of operation) were incarcerated at the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home (Kinchela Boys' Home) on the Mid North Coast of NSW.

These children were among thousands across Australia who were systematically kidnapped from their families and communities under accepted government and church policies and practices that created the Stolen Generations. The intent was to re-program them to become 'white', an act tantamount to cultural genocide.

KBH is one of the most notorious institutions associated with the Stolen Generations. Conditions in the institution were harsh and hostile. This was a place where physical hardship, punishment, cruelty, alienation and abuse (cultural, physical, psychological and sexual) are documented as having been part of the day-to-day life endured by the boys who were kept and made to work there.

Upon 'leaving' KBH, the boys' troubles did not end. Institutionalisation and the legacies of their treatment have resulted in ongoing pain and trauma for Survivors, their families and communities.

The devastating effects continue to be felt by the descendants and families of the men, who struggle with intergenerational trauma.

Today, the former KBH site is a place of deep significance to Survivors, their families, the communities they were taken from, the communities in the Macleay Valley and the broader community. As part of a long and complex healing process, the site and its deeply personal values must be shared with wider Australia.

Remaining buildings, landscape features and important spaces offer insight into the operation and conditions of the institution. This physical evidence of the reality and legacy of KBH now provides the basis for truth-telling. Envisaged to become a museum for the rich collection of oral and historical material that has already been gathered, the site is entering its next phase. The story of KBH is once again set to become visible there at the site after having been silenced and made invisible.

### Contact details

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## Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT Inc.

“Our members are Survivors, bound together by the shared traumatic decimation of their respective families and the long journey back to family and community. It is an inclusive body of wonderful, positive people who live to enjoy previously elusive happiness.”

The Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT has a proud history of advocacy for the wellbeing of Stolen Generations Survivors, their descendants and families.

The Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT is made up of Survivors of the Stolen Generations, and a special category of membership provided for descendants of Stolen Generations members and for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who are dedicated to advocating for recognition and reparations for Stolen Generations Survivors.

Our Survivors include Aboriginal children removed from their families under the guise of assimilation, protection and welfare. This includes those who were removed from their families, and from missions and reserves by police and child welfare officers in situations where this was known and supported by the Aborigines Welfare or Protection Boards.

In addition to those in the Aborigines Welfare Board homes, the Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT's Survivor membership includes people who were removed to non-government and church homes, and those run by the former Child Welfare Department, as well as people who were fostered and adopted. The Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT has been involved in advocacy for legal action for Stolen Generations Survivors at a state and national level.

The council's objectives include:

- providing support services, counselling, family first initiatives and family unit strengthening
- advocating on behalf of Survivors to ensure their housing, medical and counselling needs are met
- providing opportunities for Survivors to gather for workshops and healing sessions to share their experiences and develop a sense of community.

The organisation was incorporated in June 2009 at a time when there was limited public knowledge of the Stolen Generations. The council provided a place for Survivors of the Stolen Generations to meet with people with a shared experience and support each other.

## History of the homes

Survivors who are members of the Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT were removed from their families and many came to be placed in a range of institutions and children's homes across NSW and the ACT. Some of the homes included, for example, Bidura and Royalston in Glebe and Mittagong. Other institutions were at Berry, Bowral, Castle Hill, Parramatta, Hay and Mt Penang, and there were denominational homes such as Marella, Boystown, Grafton and many more.

Between 1939 and 1969, when the Aborigines Protection Act was revoked, 825 Aboriginal children had been sent to Kinchela and Cootamundra, with over 1,300 Aboriginal children sent to government and non-government homes and 1,100 removed to foster homes.

## Healing

The impact of trauma upon Survivors of the Stolen Generations is profound and lifelong. The Kessler 10 mental health indicators resulting from responses by claimants in the Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT's legal group action indicated that 90% were experiencing extensive ongoing trauma. The Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT is working towards collective gatherings of members to support healing. It advocates for support for individual counselling throughout all Stolen Generations Organisations as well as tailored support services that address the specific needs of Survivors who are experiencing complex issues related to health, ageing, disability and housing.

## Contact details

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## Doctorate Awarded to Aunty Matilda House

Ngambri-Ngunnawal Elder, Matilda House, Chairperson of the Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT Inc., was awarded Degree of Doctor of the University, honoris causa, from the Australian National University (ANU), for her outstanding contribution to Indigenous Australians and for her ongoing support of Indigenous students. Dr House's ties with ANU have been an extension of her determined pursuit of social justice for Indigenous people in the wider community over many decades.

# Appendix 3

## Stolen Generations Advisory Committee

### Stolen Generations Advisory Committee members

#### Stolen Generations Organisations representatives

- Aunty Christine Blakeney, Children of Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated
- Aunty Pamela Dixon, Children of Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated
- Uncle James (Michael) Welsh, Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation
- Uncle Lester Maher, Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation
- Aunty Fay Moseley, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation
- Aunty Janet Smith, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation
- Aunty Matilda House, Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT
- Uncle Richard Dawes, Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT
- Aunty Elaine Hughes, Stolen Generations Council of NSW & ACT (alternative representative)
- Aunty Rachel Berecz, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation (alternative representative)
- Aunty Lorraine Peeters, Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation (alternative representative)
- Uncle Richard Campbell, Kinchela Boys' Home Aboriginal Corporation (alternative representative)

#### Government (ex-officio) representatives

- Ms Lillian Gordon, Aboriginal Affairs NSW and Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Ms Jody Broun, Aboriginal Housing Office (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment)
- Ms Geraldine Wilson Matenga, NSW Health
- Ms Jayde Ward, Department of Communities and Justice (formerly FACS)
- Mr Stephen Bray, Department of Communities and Justice
- Mr Leon Donovan, National Indigenous Australians Agency (Commonwealth – ex-officio)

## Vale – Uncle Matthew Byers

In 2019, the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee mourned the sad and unexpected loss of Uncle Matthew Byers of Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home. Uncle Matthew is fondly remembered and sadly missed. We honour his life and acknowledge his contribution to the government's response to Unfinished Business and the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee.

Uncle Matthew Byers was an inaugural member of the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee – an appointed representative for Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Incorporated (CBACH).

Members of the Advisory Committee and Aboriginal Affairs staff members who worked closely with Uncle Matthew and CBACH were deeply saddened by the news of his unexpected death, when Matthew passed away suddenly at his home in Bomaderry.

Matthew grew up in the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home. He was cared for by older children in the home and maintained a close affection for his people there, eventually leading him to return to and settle in Bomaderry. Matthew was a well-known figure in the local community, supporting Survivors and local community members who were surviving trauma and living with disabilities.

A private smoking ceremony was performed at the site of the former home on the day of Matthew's funeral. His ashes were scattered in the memorial garden of the home in March 2020 in a moving ceremony led by Pastor Ray Minniecon, who knew Uncle Matthew.

Uncle Matthew was an ex-serviceman who served with the army and as a cook at HMAS Albatross. Members of the Defence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network (DATSIN) – Shoalhaven Chapter and the HMAS Albatross Command team were invited to share in his memorial with family and previous residents of the home.







