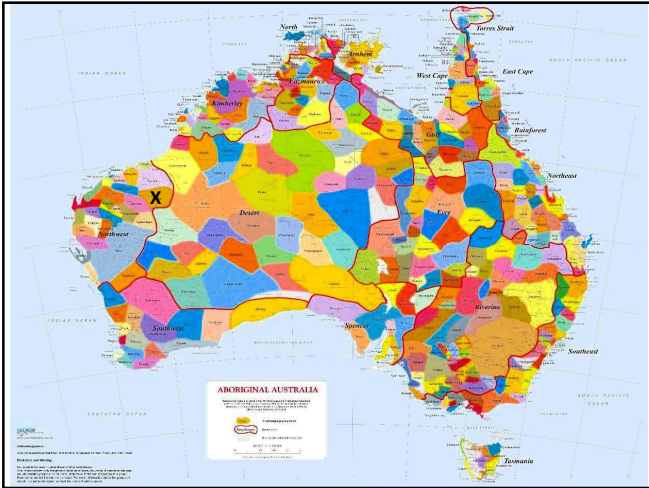
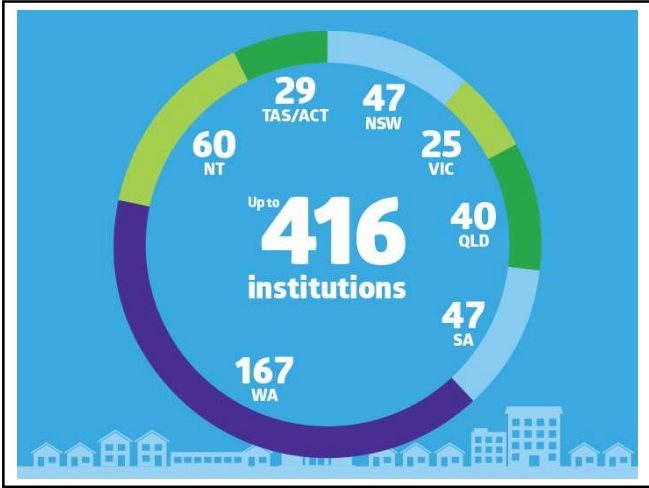




Facing Genocide: imaging and imagining recovery





Outline

- Healing stories, stories of healing
- Healing images, images of healing
- Historical trauma
- Recovery pathways
- Healing
- A new day
- Imagining recovery

Historical Context

- Sustained Trauma and helplessness
- Profound Grief, loss and disconnection
- Extreme Powerlessness and loss of control

BTHR: Genocide



- Trauma
 - Physical
 - Psychological
 - Social
 - Spiritual
 - Cultural
 - Political
 - Economic
- Utter helplessness
- Cumulative, collective

Malignant Grief



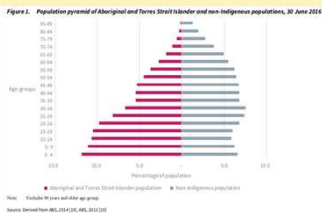
- ✓ Profound loss
- ✓ Across generations
- ✓ Across dimensions
- ✓ Dispossession
- ✓ Disconnection
- ✓ Fragmentation

Falling



- ✓ Extreme powerlessness
- ✓ No redress
- ✓ Shattered society
- ✓ Deprivation
- ✓ Denial
- ✓ Destruction

Impact



- ✓ Illness and death
- ✓ Mental health problems
- ✓ Substance use
- ✓ Violence and abuse
- ✓ Family dysfunction
- ✓ Community despair
- ✓ Collective sorrow
- ✓ Indigenous realities

Self



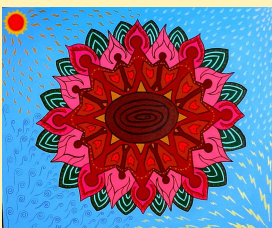
- feelings of powerlessness and loss of control;
- worthlessness, hopelessness, helplessness;
- rage and hostility; fear and anxiety; suspiciousness
- loss of identity, low self esteem, poor confidence;

Family



- difficulty forming relationships, intimacy, trust and relating to authority figures
- problems with infant attachment and parenting;
- alienation and existential despair

Society



- unresolved and transgenerational trauma and grief
- Altered social and cultural norms
- disadvantage, poverty
- Cultural and spiritual dislocation
- Racism and discrimination

Historic Trauma Response

- ✓ historic trauma causes deep breakdowns in social functioning that may last for many years, decades or even generations.
- ✓ the restoration of traditional systems of belief and practice
- ✓ the resurgence and reclamation of languages
- ✓ the growth of an Aboriginal sense of national identity
- ✓ the reconstruction and deconstruction of Indigenous people's history.
- ✓ Developing appropriate healing pathways
 - The Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series, North America
- ✓ "time does not heal all wounds; there are those that remain painfully open"
 - Wiesel 1978

Endless Struggle

- ✓ Acknowledgement
- ✓ Recognition
- ✓ Validation
- ✓ Identity
- ✓ Cultural Security
- ✓ Place
- ✓ Future
- ✓ Is it safe to heal yet?

Strength of Survival

- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Spirituality and culture
- ✓ Family commitment
- ✓ Collectivism and inclusiveness
- ✓ Autonomy and self-reliance
- ✓ Endurance and tolerance
- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Humour
- ✓ Attachment and reflections of self

Current context

- Post-genocide population in a post-colonial society
- Double standards, Hypocrisy, Denial
- Wealth over people
- Prosperity, resources
- In healing what is the role of:
 - Government
 - Services
 - Society
 - Individuals

What language are we using?

Pathways to healing and recovery

- Restoration and community resilience
- Reconnection and community life
- Self-determination and community governance

- Identifying and rebuilding strengths
- Responsibility, relationships, respect
- Across ages and generations
- Here and now plus building the future

Restoration and community resilience



We are part of the dreaming. We have been in the dreaming for a long time before we are born on this earth and we will return to this vast landscape at the end of our days. It provides for us during our time on earth, a place to heal, to restore purpose and hope, and continue our destiny.

To live without spirit is to sleep without dreams and wake to oblivion

Restoring Life and Spirit

Reconnection and community life



Healing from grief

In order to heal ourselves, we have to bear witness to other peoples pain and weep for them. In turn others weep for us
For healing, we have to find out where the threads are broken and join them back together for self, family, community and country, weaving the fabric of life that sustains us forever, allows us to cope with grief and soar on the wings of eagles.

Self-determination and community governance



Walking Our Chosen Path

For children to fulfil their potential as human beings and contribute to society, they must be able to develop the confidence in knowing they will be valued, respected and autonomous, safe and secure in their development, and see their parents and elders as important participants and in positions of power in society.

Healing

- ☞ 'Becoming well'
- ☞ Duality
- ☞ Healing rights, rights to healing
 - Right to an Aboriginal childhood
- ☞ Healing childhood, childhood healing
- ☞ Heal the Nation, Nation of healing

The Apology

- We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.
 - A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.
 - A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.
- http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Speech/2008/speech_0073.cfm

Prerequisites



Recipe for a long life

- Opening hearts, minds, spirit to possibility for change
- Imagining the future
- Expecting recovery

Major themes

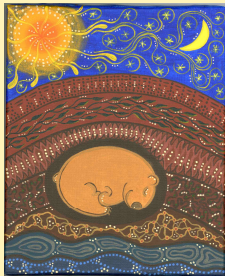


- Babies and parenting
- Engaging young people
- Leadership and governance
- Individual/family/community healing
- Supporting elders
- Strengthening culture and knowledge

Mental Health Services

- ☞ Mental health services has a history and inheritance
- ☞ Do our service environments reflect Australia
- ☞ What is the experience of Aboriginal families in our systems of care
- ☞ Do we understand the magnitude of grief and trauma?
- ☞ How do we handle abandonment?
- ☞ Do we take the time to plan, develop and maintain respectful relationships and improve service delivery?
- ☞ Are Aboriginal people still a 'curiosity' in mental health services?
- ☞ What are the attitudes and biases?
- ☞ What knowledge base do we value
- ☞ What is the role in recovery/healing?

Creating the vision



The Dreamer

- Dreaming together
- Priorities
- What else is required to support healing?
- Circles within circles
- Evidence and accountability

The Healing Journey



- ☞ With the dawning of each new day we must choose the road we walk
- ☞ who we walk with
- ☞ And how to walk together

Talking to the moon: imagining recovery



- what will we say
- What have we done
- Next steps

How do we heal?



- Children need strong, safe, enduring relationships with carers
- Strong culture and identity is protective
- Early, comprehensive and collaborative intervention is essential
- Aboriginal healing practices must be part of the solution
- Prevent the cascade of impacts
- Safe, nurturing childhoods will improve health

Currently



- Too many children are still suffering trauma
- Can we guarantee they will have a safe place?
- Will they have the best care available?
- How will we achieve this?
- How does your service engage with community, generational healing?

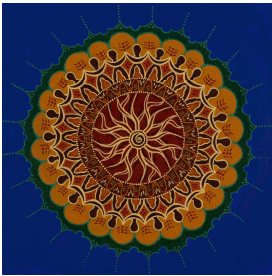
A new (old) psychotherapy



The Joker

- Understanding self through story, image and totem
- Purpose, place
- Strength
- Relationships
- Tangible Reality
- Experience, dreaming

Connection



Wellbeing

- Spirit: Transcends time and place
- Nature and totem: ever present
- Character: strength and weakness
- Future: value and purpose
- Story: continuity and coherence
- Image: positive mirror
- Culture: enduring
- Childhood: Play and imagination, innocence
- Eternity



Mudlark and Sun

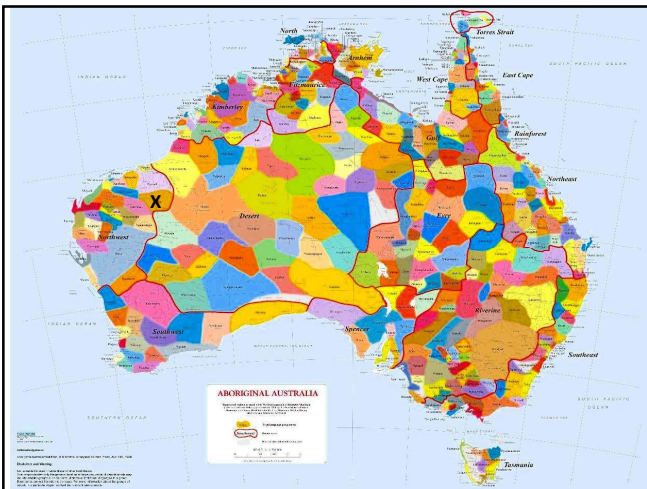
Foundations for a stronger future



- Creating the right story
- Within strong relationships
- Understanding context
- Through a cultural lens
- Responsive service system
- Trauma informed and competent care
- Compassionate society

- Once upon a time ...

The impact of trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities



Talking to the moon



Today's address will cover ...



- Royal Commission overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander engagement
- Understanding generational trauma
- Pathways to recovery and healing

During our five-year inquiry:

At 1st December 2017

- **16,953 people** contacted us who were within our Terms of Reference
- we heard from **7,981 survivors** of child sexual abuse in **8,013 private sessions**
- we also received **1,344 written accounts**
- we have referred **2,562 matters to police.**
- private sessions were held in:
 - every capital city
 - 25 regional locations
 - 62⁺ correctional facilities.

 **Royal Commission**
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Royal Commission overview



- To bear witness
- To look at a 'just response'
- To help build safer communities for children in the future

- Private sessions
- Public Hearings
- Research and policy

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 **Royal Commission**
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Community Engagement

- Employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers
- Visiting urban, regional and remote communities
- Inmate engagement.




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 **Royal Commission**
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

The three pillars

1. Private sessions



- 8,000 private sessions held
- 14.3% survivors identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 54.3% male, 45.4% female
- 4.5% children or young people

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 Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

1. Private Sessions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- 79.8% pre 1990
- 13.5% from 1990 onwards
- 4.8% reported having a disability
- 23.4% were inmates at the time
- 75% out-of-home care
- 43.5% religious institution.
- most told us they were sexually abused on multiple occasions
- more than one-third said they were sexually abused for between one and five years
- multigenerational



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 Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

1. Private Sessions

- Like many others who attended private sessions, most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors told Commissioners they experienced other forms of abuse before, during and after being sexually abused, including physical and emotional abuse. In addition, they spoke about racism and cultural abuse
- Additional and compounding factors included: denigration of identity and culture, including destruction of language; stigma of sexual abuse causing disconnection from family, community, cultural traditions and country; widespread institutionalisation of children that fractured whole communities, disrupting relationships and traditional ways of healing.
- Additional barriers to disclosure and less chance of receiving an adequate response
- Almost one-fifth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors who talked about who they disclosed to, told us they disclosed for the first time to the Royal Commission.

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 Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Three pillars

2. Public hearings




- 57 public hearings across every state in Australia
- Findings available for most case studies
- Retta Dixon, Bethcar, OOH, HSB

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Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Three pillars

3. Research and policy program



- Focuses on prevention, identification, response and justice for victims
- Published 49 research projects
- Held public and private roundtables
- Released 11 issues papers
- Received over 700 submissions

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Engagement strategy

General Principles

- **safe and supportive** – being alert to the impacts of childhood trauma; not re-traumatising or compromising physical, psychological, emotional or cultural safety; offering support when needed
- **respectful** – listening to survivors and taking their accounts seriously; being transparent in our purposes and processes
- **strengths based** – recognising and promoting the strengths and resilience of survivors and communities
- **offering hope** – promoting participation in the Royal Commission as a contribution to change, to make institutions safer for children
- **providing choice and control** – offering survivors as much informed choice and

Child sexual abuse in institutions: Learnings from the Royal Commission

Engagement strategy

Cultural Principles

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples expertise to drive design and processes**
- **Understanding historical, cultural and contemporary context**
- **Retention of a skilled and stable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff group across the RC**
- **Engagement was everyone’s work**
- **Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, external champions**

Child sexual abuse in institutions: Learnings from the Royal Commission

Structure and Resources

General Principles

- high-level, decisive leadership to steer flexible, community-driven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement
- an expert team of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement officers with capacity to travel and autonomy in relationship building
- specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counsellors
- cultural supervision from an external consultant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- mechanisms to allow knowledge sharing and cultural advice between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and other areas of the Royal Commission-knowledge circle

Child sexual abuse in institutions: Learnings from the Royal Commission

Engagement

Specific strategies

- Community and services group consultation
 - Public forums, community meetings or events, private meetings, conferences
- Healing events
 - Culturally safe environments, ceremony, mix of activities, private sessions, open and closed group discussions, yarning circles and healing activities
- Engaging individual, expert advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Child sexual abuse in institutions: Learnings from the Royal Commission

Impacts

Understanding impacts

The impacts of child sexual abuse are different for each victim.

Throughout our inquiry, we learned that:

- impacts may be **complex** and **interconnected**.
- child sexual abuse can affect **many areas** of a person's life.
- institutional **responses** may have significant impacts.
- child sexual abuse has **ripple effects**.

Child sexual abuse in institutions: Learnings from the Royal Commission

Understanding impacts

- **Complex and profound:** Difficult to isolate one impact from another.
- **Differ by individual:** Complex association between sexual abuse, reaction, and wellbeing throughout life.
- **Change over time:** Triggering events, life stages, cumulative harm.
- **Influenced by many factors:** Characteristics of abuse, relationship of victim to perpetrator, institutional contexts, victim's circumstances, resilience.

What we heard in private sessions

Impacts on wellbeing, as at 31st May 2017

In private sessions, 93.3% of survivors discussed the impact of the abuse. Of these:

- **94.9%** identified impacts on mental health
- **67.6%** described difficulties with interpersonal relationships
- **55.7%** identified poor educational outcomes, economic insecurity
- **24.2%** spoke about difficulties with physical intimacy and affection.
- Chronic disease common

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors

Nature of the abuse

- Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from family, and isolated from protective adults and culture, often in violent and harsh conditions

each time you spoke your language you were flogged. Any time you did something cultural: meaningful for yourself- you were flogged... It seemed to me that we had a terrible lot of beltings... They were brutal. Very brutal. Carl

He grabbed me from behind and dragged me outside the house and then up to his room... That's where he assaulted me. Hazel

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors

Circumstances at the time

- Racist policies, isolation from protective adults and legacy of intergenerational trauma
I don't know why I got taken away, 'cause I'd been going to school every day – clean clothes, home-packed lunch. Jonas
... What was it that every white man thought he could have you any time he wanted? Rainey
- Protecting themselves and each other
We ran away because of what was happening there. All I remember is chucking my sister over a high fence and running. Coral

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors

Experiences of disclosure

- Child protection workers were unable to protect children from abuse and socially racist views prevented children from disclosing
And then the DOCs would leave and then all the bad things would still be happening... I got bashed and raped - so I never spoke again. Christine

They (the biological sons) told me: '...they won't believe you. We're their children and you're just black kids'. Hazel
- Changing attitudes toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their disclosures
My naivety was that it would take an hour or two to tell this story. It took a couple of days. It was the first time in my life when the police were nice to me. It was very rare if you're Indigenous for a copper to be nice to you. Neridah

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors

Wellbeing

- Some survivors talked about using drugs or alcohol to self-medicate the trauma of the abuse
I just used drugs so I didn't have to think... that was my band aid, in a way so I didn't have to think of what happened, and why. And blame myself. Coral
- Survivors described the impacts of the abuse on their relationships with family, friends and dislocation from culture
I was 15. I couldn't have my daughter in my life. I had to give her up ... I grieve for her, because she was my first. I don't see her as that, [as a] paedophilia's child. Leah
I missed out on my culture. I missed out on being Aboriginal. Naomi

Trauma and Risk

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and child sexual abuse in institutional contexts

Report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse



- Many generations of removals have resulted in cumulative, collective and intergenerational trauma
- While previous inquiries have shown that all children were vulnerable to sexual abuse in residential institutions, it is likely that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children faced additional vulnerabilities to child sexual abuse, relative to non-Aboriginal children.
- Removals continue and are increasing

Child sexual abuse and suicide

- CSA is a significant risk factor for attempted and completed suicide; fatal overdoses (accidental)
- Suicidal ideation is common among child victims of CSA
- Risk of suicide continues across the life span
- CSA survivors females 4x, males 11x more likely to attempt suicide cf nonCSA

Cashmore J, Shackel R: The long term effects of child sexual abuse
Australian Institute of Family Studies

CSA and mental health



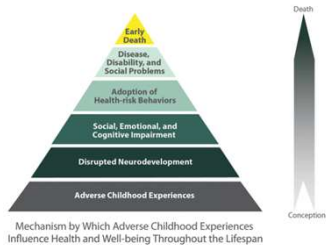
- Risk for adverse outcomes across all domains of development
- Depression, PTSD, Anxiety, psychosis, eating disorders, personality problems, sexual disorders
- Alcohol and substance abuse (in childhood)
- Feelings of mistrust, isolation and alienation
- Fear, rage, risky behaviours
- Shame, guilt, blame, stigma
- Delayed/non disclosure, denial

Learnings from Private Sessions

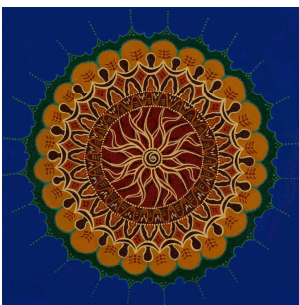
- Lifelong impact
- Permanency of traumatic memories
- Triggers common
- Chronic hypervigilance, burnout
- Loss of joy, peace, love
- Difficulty in relationships, parenting, attachment
- Decompensation
- Transgenerational trauma
- Multiple system failures

Developmental trauma and health

The ACE Pyramid represents the conceptual framework for the ACE Study. The ACE Study has uncovered how ACEs are strongly related to development of risk factors for disease, and well-being throughout the life course.



Learnings from Private Sessions



- Safe person to talk to
- Enduring relationships
- Hope
- Mastery
- Purpose

- Healing journey
- Transition points
- Turning points
