

Stolen Generations  
Working Partnership  
**SCORECARD2012**



# Stolen Generations Working Partnership (SGWP)

## SCORECARD 2012

*The progress of the SGWP from May 2011 to May 2012*

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## SGWP Membership

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

National Sorry Day Committee (NSDC)

National Stolen Generations Alliance (NSGA)

Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA)

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Attorney-General's Department (AGD)

Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet (DPMC)

Department of Human Services (DHS)

Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sports - Office for the Arts (OFTA)

Link-Up Services



## Introduction

The National Sorry Day Committee (NSDC) was established following the tabling in Federal Parliament of the *Bringing them home* Report on 26 May 1997. *Bringing them home* documented the consequences of decades of government policies that saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children forcibly taken from their families and communities and placed in institutions, foster homes or orphanages, or adopted. The report contained 54 recommendations, most of which were supported by the State and Federal Governments and which, to this day, vary greatly in their state of implementation from fully or partially implemented to not implemented. Eleven years later, in 2008, the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered a national apology on behalf of non-Indigenous Australians, for the policies that had led to generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being forcibly removed from their families.

In 2012, 15 years after the release of the *Bringing them home* Report, many of the Stolen Generations and their supporters continue to agitate for the implementation of all of the 54 recommendations. The NSDC has embraced the Stolen Generations Working Partnership (SGWP) as a new mechanism to advocate for policy change at the federal level. Chaired by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the partnership provides an opportunity for Commonwealth departments and agencies, and other national stakeholders, to develop a policy framework for addressing issues relating to the Stolen Generations.

The SGWP is in its infancy as a model for community representative bodies and government to work together to address issues of concern to the Stolen Generations. However, there has been progress over the past two years. This Scorecard documents the progress of the SGWP over the past 12 months, from the NSDC's perspective.

## Background

The Stolen Generations Working Partnership was launched in May 2010 following intensive discussions between Stolen Generations peak organisations and government agencies. It was developed as a response to the ongoing need to address outstanding recommendations of the *Bringing them home* Report and in acknowledgement of the capacity of Stolen Generations to lead the development of solutions to their ongoing needs. SGWP members meet twice a year at forums chaired by FaHCSIA. Towards the end of each calendar year, members gather to establish priorities for the next 12 months. Another meeting is held six months after, to discuss the progress that has been made against each of the priorities, raise and discuss issues of concern and to propose strategies to address any barriers to action. These forums also showcase good work; and offer stakeholders time to reflect on each other's feedback. These forums are well attended with high-level representation from relevant departments and agencies, Stolen Generations organisations and program providers.

The inaugural Scorecard, released by NSDC on National Sorry Day 2011, critiqued a lack of progress in the SGWP's agreed priority areas by both government agencies and others. Since that time, there have been many positive developments and this 2012 Scorecard details the progress that has been made by government agencies in the past 12 months, and reflects the genuine goodwill evident at the 2012 forum held in Canberra, 2-3 April. The next SGWP forum is scheduled for October 2012.



## SGWP Priorities 2012

In November 2011, the SGWP agreed on its priorities for 2012. They are:

1. Development of immediate measures to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Stolen Generations, that are designed by Stolen Generations members, through the renewed social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework, recognising Stolen Generations as a special needs group.
2. Ensuring that the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework is a core part of the new Health Equality Plan, is party to the same budget cycle process and that progress against the Framework is measurable.
3. That establishing and maintaining cultural integrity, connection and identity are foundational elements of the renewed social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework, and that the portfolio of Indigenous arts, culture and language participates in the development of this Framework.
4. Improvements to Link-Up Services and the delivery of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counseling, as well as the development of safe and effective mental health diagnostic and treatment pathways for members of the Stolen Generations.
5. Comprehensive Stolen Generations cultural competence training for healthcare and welfare workers, the former a commitment by the Prime Minister in 2008.
6. Treatment of Stolen Generations as a special needs group in the design of new Aged care reforms, as well as existing Aged care measures such as Indigenous aged care training, community care quality, residential care quality.
7. Investigation of options for the reinstatement of family tracing support through access to client information held by the Department of Human Services.
8. Introducing a family tracing qualification, skills assessment and quality assurance process for all Link-Up staff undertaking family reunions.
9. The establishment of a joint working group to investigate options for:
  - funeral assistance for members of the Stolen Generations;
  - the creation of an identification card for members of the Stolen Generations (and other Forgotten Australians) to help improve access to services, provide Government with better information for service planning and help to overcome some of the traumatising effects of having to repeat one's story or being rejected through proof of Aboriginality processes;



- the need for and potential of increased health and welfare entitlements under a possible *Health Access Card* type scheme for Stolen Generations and Forgotten Australians.
10. Investigation and assessment of existing data that identifies Stolen Generations; including potential data linkage project involving Link-Up data and other sources.
  11. Consideration be given to extra weighting for Stolen Generations proposals under Indigenous languages and culture funding to give effect to Stolen Generations as a special needs group under the National Indigenous Languages Policy.
  12. Through the Indigenous arts and culture program and also through working with national arts institutions:
    - identify opportunities to support Stolen Generations to record their experiences and reflections – through diverse media, such as written and oral histories, art, songs and poetry;
    - honour and remember the experiences of Stolen Generations and keep these memories alive before the general population by marking the Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and National Sorry Day; also
    - consider other initiatives such as memorials, Keeping Places, essay or art exhibitions and travelling displays.
  13. Investigate the possibility of identifying members of the Stolen Generations currently in the criminal justice system and the availability of relevant offender support and reintegration including diversion programs and drug and alcohol programs for offenders or those at risk of reoffending.
  14. Treatment of Stolen Generations members as a special needs group in relation to development of the Safe Communities strategy and any new justice reinvestment strategies under consideration by the Attorney-General's Department.
  15. The development of specialist Stolen Generations teacher training to support anticipated Stolen Generations content in the new National Curriculum (history stream).
  16. Linking in existing Stolen Generations resources with a national, jurisdictional and regional focus into the national collection of teachers' resources being coordinated by Educational Services Australia.
  17. Through national leadership promoting greater consistency across the education sector of all schools marking days of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in particular, the Apology Anniversary on 13 February and National Sorry Day on 26 May.
  18. The development of a Primary School teachers' resource on the Stolen Generations that draws on a variety of learning modes and is appropriate for urban, regional, remote as well as disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged contexts.



## Implementation Status of 2012 Priorities

No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
1	Development of immediate measures to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Stolen Generations, that are designed by Stolen Generations members, through the renewed Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework, recognising Stolen Generations as a special needs group.	DoHA	DoHA has established a working group, of key federal and state departmental representatives and stakeholders including NSDC to develop the renewed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework.	The first meeting of the SEWB Framework working group established that there was widespread support for the previous Framework. The perceived failure of the Framework was largely due to a lack of funding for its implementation. NSDC is concerned that no funding has been allocated for the implementation of the new/refreshed Framework.
2	Ensuring that the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework is a core part of the new Health Equality Plan, is party to the same budget cycle process and that progress against the Framework is measurable.	DoHA	DoHA is aware of the importance to align the two separate processes involving the Framework and the Health Plan and have committed to ensuring internal discussion between relevant people.	NSDC has urged DoHA to ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework is presented for Cabinet's consideration in tandem with the Health Equality Plan in an attempt to ensure the Framework is not financially disadvantaged.
3	That establishing and maintaining cultural integrity, connection and identity are foundational elements of the renewed social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework, and that the portfolio of Indigenous arts, culture and language participates in the development of this Framework.	DoHA	Office for the Arts (OFTA) looks forward to working with DoHA on the development of the renewed Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework, and will be promoting the message about the foundational role of culture through our involvement.	Culture and language are fundamental for healing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, families and individuals. NSDC remains hopeful that OFTA will be invited to join the SEWB Framework Working Group.



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
4	Improvements to Link-Up Services and the delivery of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counselling, as well as the development of safe and effective mental health diagnostic and treatment pathways for members of the Stolen Generations.	DoHA	There is currently a review of SEWB counselling services and a national project that will promote good practice and service standards in Link Up services funded under the SEWB program.	<p>Concerns regarding the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellors, who accesses them and where they are located have been well documented. While NSDC supports any improvements made in the delivery of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counselling, the reality is that clients seek care from both mainstream and community controlled primary health care, social and emotional wellbeing and family reunification services and it will always be important to strive to ensure all services are equipped with culturally competent staff with whom Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are comfortable engaging and that clients are supported to access types of care appropriate to need.</p> <p>NSDC is concerned that training for Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellors incorporates best-practice methods for Stolen Generations and notes that there is a review process underway with respect to workforce.</p>



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
5	Comprehensive Stolen Generations competence training for healthcare and welfare workers, the former a commitment by the Prime Minister on National Sorry Day 2008.	DoHA	DoHA has funded the Aboriginal Indigenous Psychologists Association to develop and deliver a cultural competency training workshop for counsellors and others providing mental health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Department also provides funding for the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program workforce to access community based training, focused on the Stolen Generations such as that provided through Marumali.	The importance of service providers being culturally competent cannot be over-stated. It is fundamental to Closing the Gap in education, health, justice, employment and training, and every other area where Government interacts with individuals. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will avoid services that make them feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, unwanted, etc. This issue is exacerbated with Stolen Generations who may fear being asked to recount traumatic aspects of their lives or may be distrustful. Whilst it is relatively simple to move to ensure Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers are culturally competent, there is much greater need and a much harder task in ensuring cultural competence in mainstream health and welfare service providers. Investigation into the comprehensiveness of Stolen Generations competencies in relevant, registered training packages is inconclusive and the NSDC will continue to seek improvements in this area.



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
6	Treatment of Stolen Generations as a special needs group in the design of new Aged care reforms, as well as existing Aged care measures such as Indigenous aged care training, community care quality, residential care quality.	DoHA	The department is aware of NSDC's belief that the Stolen Generations should be acknowledged as a special needs group. However, the department already has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Forgotten Australians as special needs groups. NSDC recognises that the Stolen Generations are members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander special needs group and now believes that rather than be established as a separate group, the Stolen Generations' needs should be explicitly addressed in the context of any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander special needs discussion.	The needs in aged care are often exacerbated by a heavy burden of disease and trauma. For example dementia has been diagnosed at high rates in some Aboriginal communities and at a younger age of onset. Dementia sufferers tend to increasingly revert to their past. In the case of the Stolen Generations, memories of their past involve being in institutions and often experiencing trauma. Such recollections can be re-traumatising particularly if they occur in yet another institution. Since the 2011 Scorecard, the NSDC and NSGA have been part of a wider reference group of Forgotten Australians contributing to the development of an education package for the sector that introduces these issues. The NSDC has made the case for appropriate care pathways and advocacy support to meet Stolen Generations' needs as they age.
7	Investigation of options for the reinstatement of family tracing support through access to client information held by the Department of Human Services.	DHS	FaHCSIA is pursuing information about the Forgotten Australians (Care Leavers) Find & Connect Service and its application for possible use by all Stolen Generations.	NSDC and NSGA are keen to see the reinstatement of family tracing support and suggested possible options to the department at the March forum.



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
8	Introducing a family tracing qualification, skills assessment and quality assurance process for all Link-Up staff undertaking family reunions.	DoHA	There is a continuing dialogue with Link Up services and AIATSIS regarding training and support for Link-Up staff in family tracing. There is a current project promoting good practice and service standards in Link-Up services.	The NSDC is keen to see that the review process is an enabling process for the Link-Up and SEWB service and counsellor network that leads to consolidation of best practice and ongoing capacity building in the sector. The NSDC supports a minimum qualification for family tracing workers.
9	<p>The establishment of a joint working group to investigate options for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>funeral assistance for members of the Stolen Generations;</li> <li>the creation of an identification card for members of the Stolen Generations (and other Forgotten Australians) to help improve access to services, provide Government with better information for service planning and help to overcome some of the traumatising effects of having to repeat one's story or being rejected through proof of Aboriginality processes.</li> <li>the need for and potential of increased</li> </ul>	DHS	<p>DHS to provide NDSC and NSGA with</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a contact number for Centrepay and broad guidelines on whether specific funeral funds would be eligible to be considered a Centrepay organisation;</li> <li>cleared public relations information for Centrepay organisations;</li> <li>a presentation on the range of services, programs and payments delivered by DHS and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers are serviced; and, if requested,</li> <li>case studies on how DHS currently refers their clients, in particular Stolen Generations members.</li> </ol> <p>The department has significant concerns about the viability of developing programs for a proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population that is difficult to identify. It is also concerned about cost of the proposed initiatives. DoHA has asked NSDC to provide a written outline of the type of entitlements it would like to see</p>	<p>The NSDC is encouraged that discussions are continuing with respect to issues that have been identified by Stolen Generations in proving their Aboriginality. We await further information on discussions between government and relevant stakeholders; e.g., AIATSIS.</p> <p>NSDC has received objection to the concept of a Health Access Card from a range of stakeholders, including a State-wide meeting of Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellors in South Australia. Whilst statistically the Stolen Generations fare worse than the rest of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in almost every indicator of socio-economic wellbeing, many people have expressed concern about the creation of a "two-tiered" health system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>



health and welfare entitlements under a possible Health Access Card type scheme for Stolen Generations and Forgotten Australians.

provided under a Health Access Card.

10	Investigation and assessment of existing data that identifies Stolen Generations; including potential data linkage project involving Link-Up data and other sources.	FaHCSIA	Information and data analysis presented at the April forum; NSGA & NSDC are on the ABS list to be contacted for input into the 2014 NATSISS. Follow up with AIATSIS progressing.	NSDC awaits write up of the NATSISS 2008 analysis.
11	Consideration be given to extra weighting for Stolen Generations proposals under Indigenous languages and culture funding to give effect to Stolen Generations as a special needs group under the National Indigenous Languages Policy.	OFTA	The Office for the Arts review of its data collection processes is underway and includes planning for the collection of data on Stolen Generations members' involvement in activities funded through both Indigenous Languages Support and Indigenous Culture Support in 2011-12, and on collaboration between Indigenous Languages Support and Indigenous Culture Support funded organisations and Stolen Generations organisations. Once the funding round has been completed and successful projects have been announced, which is likely to be in late June, OFTA will be able to provide more detailed figures and information on the successful projects that are related to the Stolen Generations in 2012-13.	NSDC looks forward to further updates on OFTA's progress and information on projects related to the Stolen Generations in 2012-13.



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
12	<p>Through Indigenous arts and culture program and also through working with national arts institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify opportunities to support Stolen Generations to record their experiences and reflections – through diverse media, such as written and oral histories, art, songs and poetry;</li> <li>• honour and remember the experiences of Stolen Generations and keep these memories alive before the general population by marking the Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and National Sorry Day; and</li> <li>• consider other initiatives such as memorials, Keeping Places, essay or art exhibitions and travelling displays.</li> </ul>	FaHCSIA, OFTA, DoHA	<p>OFTA provides funding through both the culture and language programs to support activities assisting Stolen Generations to connect to their languages and culture and to express their reflections in different kinds of media.</p> <p>A great example is the Queensland Link-Up arts project supported through ICS involving arts, crafts and storytelling workshops; poetry, song, drawing, collage and other creative art methods. Reflections on participants' experiences have also been posted on YouTube, and plans are underway to develop them into a book.</p> <p>OFTA continues to recommend that the NSDC establish relationships directly with cultural institutions around Australia to see what role it can play in recording and preserving Stolen Generations' stories.</p>	NSDC is concerned about the Office for the Arts' narrow interpretation of its responsibility to champion Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture throughout the Australian Government.
13	Investigate the possibility of identifying members of the Stolen Generations currently in the criminal justice system and the availability of relevant offender support and reintegration including men's and women' groups, diversion	AGD	It is not possible for the Commonwealth to identify members of the Stolen Generations in the criminal justice system. Current national collections of data relating to prisoners are generally disaggregated to enable identification of Indigenous status, but not Stolen Generation membership. The kind of study	NSDC believes that such identification could be done by cross-referencing Department of Families and Community Services data with Corrective Services data in each jurisdiction and that the Commonwealth could play a role in encouraging jurisdictions to do so. NSDC and others are keen to see further work



programs and drug and alcohol programs for offenders or those at risk of reoffending.

suggested would require States and Territories to collect and report on new data, rather than more deeply analysing existing data.

undertaken on this issue.

We would like to see examples of best practice community supports post release discussed at the next forum.

14 Treatment of Stolen Generations members as a special needs group in relation to development of the Safe Communities strategy and any new justice reinvestment strategies under consideration by the Attorney-General's Department.

AGD

AGD is co-leading negotiations for the development of an Indigenous Safe Communities Strategy with FaHCSIA. Stolen Generations issues are important and could possibly be included in activities under the strategy. However detailed discussions about priorities with States and Territories are just commencing. It is expected that there will be consultations with the Non-Government Sector on the Strategy later this year. The Stolen Generations Working Partnership will be advised of opportunities to provide input into this process as they arise.

The Department is not currently considering implementation of any justice reinvestment strategies. Justice reinvestment strategies tend to take a population-wide approach rather than one which focuses on specific ethnic or special needs groups.

NSDC supports appropriate wrap around services that support families including Stolen Generations and their descendants to improve family function and community safety.

Location specific programming requires the free prior and informed consent of communities involved and cannot discriminate on the basis of race.

Such frameworks should be based on evidence and lessons learned from regional and location specific programs to date.



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
15	The development of specialist Stolen Generations teacher training to support anticipated Stolen Generations content in the new National Curriculum (history stream).	DEEWR	The autonomy of universities regarding course content means it will be some years before the Commonwealth is in a position to influence this aspect of teacher training. In the meantime, significant research is being undertaken to identify the competencies that teachers would be required to obtain in order to demonstrate their ability to effectively teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to teach all students about the Stolen Generations.	NSDC appreciates the opportunity it was given to meet with the project managers who are undertaking this work. Whilst the fact that Government cannot dictate specific content that must be incorporated into teacher training courses is understandable, the fact that university funding for courses is in part dependent on graduating teachers demonstrating the competencies framed by governments, means that in the long-term, all graduating teachers should be qualified to teach about the Stolen Generations. The approach to training existing teachers, however, is less clear.
16	Linking in existing Stolen Generations resources with a national, jurisdictional and regional focus into the national collection of teachers' resources being coordinated by Educational Services Australia.	DEEWR	The Department has asked all SGWP members to forward details of any resources they believe should be included on the national collection.	NSDC believes the national collection of teachers' resources has the potential to improve the quality of teaching regarding the Stolen Generations by increasing teachers' knowledge and confidence in the history of the Stolen Generations and the need to commemorate National Sorry Day and the Apology Anniversary and encourages the active participation in this process by the sector.



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment	NSDC Comment
17	Through national leadership promoting greater consistency across the education sector of all schools marking days of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in particular the Apology Anniversary on 13 February and National Sorry Day on 26 May	DEEWR	Activities in Focus schools are directed by the relevant education providers. The National Sorry Day Committee has provided information which was considered at the 16 December 2011 meeting of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group. This working group includes representatives of all State and Territory government education providers as well as a representative each of the Catholic and Independent schools sectors. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Bodies also have representation on the group.	NSDC has established a website where schools can register their interest in obtaining information relating to the Stolen Generations, National Sorry Day and the Apology Anniversary. It is expected that as the database grows, it will provide an opportunity to promote national themes for marking these occasions. There is also potential for the Healing Foundation to take the lead in co-ordinating a national approach to these events, given its significantly higher level of resourcing.
18	The development of a Primary School teachers resource on the Stolen Generations that draws on a variety of learning modes and is appropriate for urban, regional, remote as well as disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged contexts.	DEEWR	Any possible future resources to support teaching about the Stolen Generations should be considered in the context of the Government's \$41.2 million digital curriculum package being managed by Education Services Australia (ESA). The package will give all schools access to new online materials (including teaching and learning resources and professional development support). In particular, ESA will be sourcing and acquiring digital learning resources to fill identified gaps with particular focus on resources for teaching English, mathematics, science,	In the absence of a primary school resource kit being developed by DEEWR, the NSDC has prepared a resource kit, designed to increase the knowledge and confidence of primary school teachers regarding issues affecting the Stolen Generations. The kit will provide practical suggestions of how schools can acknowledge events such as National Sorry Day and the Apology Anniversary. NSDC is keen to see DEEWR develop an appropriate resource.



No.	Priority	Lead Agency	Departmental Comment (con't)	NSDC Comment
			<p>history, geography, languages and the arts.</p> <p>ESA is currently undertaking an Expression of Interest process to establish a register of digital resource suppliers and service providers to source suitable content. All resources acquired through this process are to be aligned to the Australian Curriculum, be of high educational value and consistent with resource priorities.</p> <p>The Department understands that work has been undertaken to ensure that there is a variety of resources, available to assist students in learning about National Sorry Day and the Stolen Generations. The sufficiency of resources for these subjects across all subjects and year levels will be assessed by ESA.</p> <p>Any new resources should not duplicate the <i>Bringing them home</i> Report developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).</p>	



## SGWP Future – 2012

While the implementation of this year's priorities may not be as fast as the NSDC and other Stolen Generations representative bodies may desire, the goodwill demonstrated by Commonwealth agencies at this year's March forum bodes well for the future of the Partnership. Members discussed the need to develop measureable performance indicators for the Partnership, and considered the Scorecard as a potential tool for measuring performance in the future. It was agreed that FaHCSIA would issue invitations to the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Healing Foundation to join the SGWP, and significant changes will be made to strengthen the Terms of Reference.

In general, the NSDC is satisfied with the pace of progress in implementing this year's priorities. However, there is a small number of themes that require further consideration.

Culture is a fundamental part of identity, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For the Stolen Generations, re-connecting with their culture is part of discovering who they are and its importance cannot be over-stated. For departments and agencies to understand the role of culture and language in healing, the agency with responsibility for culture and language needs to have a whole-of-government focus and be committed to ensuring that culture is at the heart of programs developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Office for the Arts currently has responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and language. The NSDC believes that the Office for the Arts must participate in all policy development/review processes that will affect Stolen Generations to ensure that culture is central to such processes. To that end, the Office for the Arts should be a member of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework Working Group, and should be regularly consulted about DoHA's Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program. The Office is understood to be supportive of this position.

Ensuring government programs and policies are developed and implemented by culturally competent staff would make a dramatic difference to every aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lives. Indigenous Australians are currently reluctant to access mainstream services, largely because of the legacy of previous government policies. Policies that saw them excluded from mainstream health providers and mainstream education. Policies that controlled where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could live, who they could marry, where they could congregate, that imposed curfews and "managed" their incomes. Policies that institutionalised children and removed them from their families, culture and



communities, only to treat them as second-class citizens in mainstream society, have understandably led to a reluctance on the part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to trust mainstream service providers, particularly those owned by government.

There is substantial evidence to show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples generally prefer to access services that are community-controlled. A growing body of research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services reports better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. Reasons include that they are trusted and have strong relationships with their clients. It is that trust and relationship that makes Link-Up organisations, along with AMSs and other community-controlled organisations, ideally placed to provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in general, and specifically to the Stolen Generations. For this reason, NSDC is particularly interested in the review of Link-Up that is currently being undertaken, and would appreciate being brought into the review process or being briefed on any developments/expectations of the process, etc, in next the regular update on DoHA's programming of the SEWB sector.

### **SGWP Future – Beyond 2012**

Although *Bringing them home* is 15 years old, there are still recommendations that have not been implemented. The NSDC sees the SGWP as the ideal vehicle to progress outstanding policy priorities in a strategic, contemporary manner. The high-level departmental representation, the inter-departmental nature of the Partnership and the inclusion of key Stolen Generations representative organisations makes the SGWP a sound mechanism to develop and implement innovative policy and program solutions to the issues affecting the Stolen Generations.

Ultimately the success of the SGWP will be measured by its ability to improve outcomes for the Stolen Generations. The unanimous support for performance indicators to be established for the Partnership is evidence of its growth and increasing confidence amongst its members.





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