Welcome to the Healing Foundation’s first newsletter for 2014. We really have hit the ground running this year and we’ve got lots to tell you about. We want to acknowledge what has been a remarkable sixth anniversary of the Apology all around Australia in February. Thank you to everyone who’s been involved in some way – from those that came along to our concert in Melbourne, to those who organised events in their workplaces, schools or communities.

This year’s theme was Heal our Past, Build our Future Together bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to celebrate and remember our shared history. It’s great to see that February 13th is now part of Australia’s story and our Stolen Generations won’t be forgotten.

Au Esoau (Thank you)

Charles Passi
Chair

Celebrating the sixth anniversary of the national Apology to the Stolen Generations, on Kulin country at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl in Melbourne, was a night to remember with 7,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people coming together for the event. See more over the following pages »
The evening began with a pre-concert event for members of the Stolen Generations from around Victoria with speeches from local Stolen Generations survivor Ian Hamm, Josh Frydenberg MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Healing Foundation Chair, Charles Passi, and Stolen Generations Reference Group Chair, Florence Onus.

The gates to the Music Bowl opened at 5.30pm to a long queue of excited concert goers. As people set up their picnics or headed down to the dance floor, they dropped into the Healing Foundation information tents to meet our staff and Youth Reference Group members and walked away with a free souvenir of the concert and a smile on their face. It was one of those nights when friendliness was contagious!

The big show began with a Welcome to Country by Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Di Kerr, and Senior Elder of the Yalukit Wilum of the Boon Wurrung language group, Aunty Caroline Briggs.

Miranda Tapsell and Eddie Perfect were our hosts and introduced us to a deadly line-up of outstanding Australian musicians: Kutcha Edwards, Thelma Plum, Archie Roach and the Into the Bloodstream Choir, Jimblah and Horrorshow, Blue King Brown, Yirramal and the Yolngu Boys, Christine Anu, Frank Yamma, David Bridie, Tim Rogers, Benny Walker, Clare Bowditch, and Vika and Linda Bull.

Not only did these musicians delight the audience with their special sounds, each and every one paid tribute to their own ancestors and to the Stolen Generations around the country.

You can hear some of their thoughts at Healing Foundation TV: www.healingfoundation.org.au/healingfoundationtv/

Interspersing the music were video packages with stories from Stolen Generations members and messages from the audience written on our interactive message boards.

The theme of the concert - Heal our past, build our future together - was demonstrated all around the Music Bowl. From the chatting at the information tent to people lining up to write their thoughts on the interactive message boards, there was a sense of unity all around. This was probably best expressed in the collaborations by the performers. For those of you who weren’t there, imagine Tim Rogers and Benny Walker doing a rockin’ version of Black Fella White Fella, Yirramal and the Yolngu Boys coming on to play the didg for Blue King Brown’s tribute to Treaty and the whole gang coming together to finish the concert with My Island Home!

It really was an unforgettable night!
Apology events around the country

During the month of February Australians all around the country commemorated the sixth anniversary of the Apology by organising events in their local communities. The Healing Foundation was able to provide funding to support many of these events. It’s been great to hear about all the different ways in which people have been coming together to celebrate.

We’d like to thank the organisers for sending us their stories and photos. Here is just a taste of some of the events but look out for more stories on our website.

1. Kintore NT
Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi in Kintore/Walungurru held a flag-raising ceremony to honour the Pintubi people who walked back to their country in the early 1980s.

2. Perth WA
Reconciliation WA held a community morning tea - six Year 10 students from Aurora Foundation’s The Aspiration Initiative helped to organise the event and spoke about what the Apology meant to them as young Noongar students.

3. Adelaide SA
The Living Kaurna Cultural Centre in Adelaide held an event which included the Kumangka art exhibition, storytelling and a minute’s silence to honour the Stolen Generations.

4. Ipswich QLD
Your Dreams in Ipswich organised a healing ceremony including a smoking ceremony and stories from local Stolen Generations members.

5. Picton NSW
Wollondilly Shire Council had a gathering in the Picton Village Square which included the singing of the national anthem in Dharawal language and a performance from the Koomurri dancers.

6. Wangaratta VIC
At Wangaratta High School local Aboriginal Elders, Aunty Betty and Uncle Wally, presented a plaque to recognise the importance of understanding the history of the Stolen Generations. This was followed by the planting of three Kangaroo Paws – one red, one yellow and one black.
Mununjali healing garden

Mununjali Jymbi Centre in Beaudesert, Queensland, provides support and healing to young people and families. In this issue, we highlight a program funded by the Healing Foundation to create the Mununjali Healing Garden.

Through consulting with community members the Centre wanted to create a healing space on country that would reconnect people back to the healing influences of nature, a space that would be used by all ages for a multitude of activities.

This is an amazing project involving a whole mob of local Aboriginal people, working on smaller activities, to each produce a part of the garden. The photos displayed here give a taste of how people contributed to making a garden for everyone.

Here is the journey of the garden so far ...

Community members created the formwork

Young men created a graffiti mural

Young men used their art to tell the story of the colonisation of Australia and its connection to trauma for Aboriginal people

Installation of the graffiti Mural

Community members enjoying the finished garden
Narrandera Youth Summit

The Healing Foundation ran its pilot Youth Summit in Narrandera, NSW on Wiradjuri country in February. Designed with the help of our Youth Reference Group, 21 young people from Narrandera talked about local issues relevant to them.

There was a strong focus on social media relationships and cyber bullying, family/community connections and the participants’ visions for their own future and the future of their community. Along with the discussions, there was a dance workshop and a tour of the local area, the Sandhills. The Sandhills are a significant part of Wiradjuri and Narrandera history as this was the place where many Aboriginal families lived and formed a community after the close of the mission.

Community members were invited to attend a BBQ, with the young people at Town Beach on the Murrumbidgee River, and a community forum where the young participants gave presentations about what they had experienced.

Thank you to everyone from the Narrandera community who contributed to, and supported, the Youth Summit. In particular, a big thank you to the young people who participated, tackling the difficult task of talking about issues you face and sharing with us your vision for the future.

Our own corporation!!

Our first steps to changing our futures

We would like to congratulate the ‘Coota Girls’ on the establishment of the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation in December 2013.

Their first newsletter says ‘The Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation belongs to all former residents of the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls 1912-1968’.

The corporation lists its aims as:

- To meet our needs for practical support
- To maintain our connection with each other
- To meet our needs for practical support
- To promote our cultural and spiritual needs

This is an exciting beginning and we are looking forward to seeing the CGAC go from strength to strength.

Premiere of the Young Healers song ‘Time to Heal’

At our recent Heal our Past, Build our Future Together concert we premiered the Young Healers song ‘Time to Heal’, a collaboration between our Youth Reference Group and Aboriginal artist Joel Wenitong from The Last Kinfection. ‘Time to Heal’ has taken our Youth Reference Group a number of months to write and film. The song lyrics are a message to fellow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth about the need for young people’s healing. The message is one of positivity, a call to action.

‘Time to Heal’ embodies the central message of the Healing Foundation’s program, ‘Young Healers’, the main focus of our Youth Reference Group. The initiative is all about giving youth a voice in healing and driving discussions and solutions which have come from youth.

The issues this initiative hopes to address include lateral violence, social media and bullying. ‘Time to Heal’ hopes to draw attention to the needs of youth, and hopefully convince them, they too can be a Young Healer.

You can view the video on Healing Foundation TV at: healingfoundation.org.au/healingfoundationtv