

# Dreaming big

## Voices we heard

informing the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy

October 2020





HealingFoundation

Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge and honour all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have come before us, especially the Stolen Generations survivors, who did all they could to preserve their language, culture, kinship and connection to Country.

We stand on the foundations they built and honour their knowledge and strength which remain relevant in Queensland today.

We thank the more than 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Queensland who shared their hopes for a changed and healed future, by participating in the yarning process or the online alternate engagement process.

We also thank the consultants and knowledge holders who led the co-design process, and Barry 'RAINMAN' Boland for the artwork which visually pulls together the voices of healing expressed throughout this report.

Although the stories have been told many times before, real change has not happened yet. We offer the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people committed to co-design, highlighting how accomplished our communities are in self-determination and leading lasting change.

## PURPOSE

The development of the Queensland Healing Strategy has arisen from *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-37*. It is a key action under the *Changing Tracks Action Plan 2020-2022*. It also supports *Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018-2023* which identifies a strategic priority to renew, strengthen and integrate cross-sectoral approaches to social and emotional wellbeing, including adopting healing informed approaches.

## TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Healing Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work. We also pay our respects to the Elders and Stolen Generations survivors. We recognise the intergenerational trauma that remains and our commitment to build an Australia that can heal. We acknowledge all who will carry the healing spirit into the future.

# 1. Preface

Dreaming big sets the scene and shares the wisdom gathered through conversations with over 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders towards developing the Queensland Healing Strategy.

We honour all the voices that are represented in this report. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders from 80 different cultural groups and over 50 locations had their say, shared what healing means for them, what keeps their spirit strong, dared to dream big and tell us which way now.

This report, framed by the wisdom of our Elders and knowledge holders and grounded in truth telling, research and evidence about healing, documents what healing means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland at this point in time.

People shared their dreams, visions and hopes for the future. People poured their hearts out and shared their lived experiences and stories through the yarning circles and online engagement as they told us what healing means for them.

This is a living legacy, sharing the wisdom found in the words, stories, songs, poems, postcards, case studies and survey responses.

Reading, seeing, feeling and listening to these voices is our way of navigating our pathway to healing.

As we continue walking together towards truth telling, treaty, reconciliation, justice and healing we need to continue to listen to the voices from the heart.

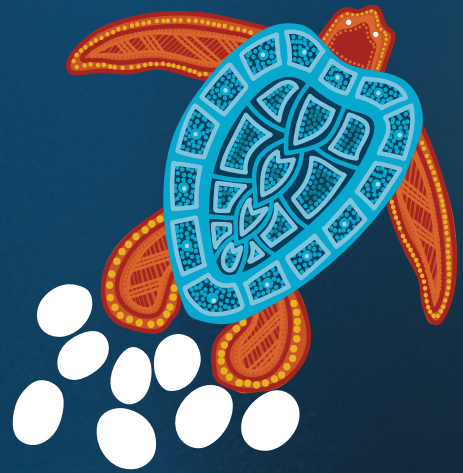
As we heard in Rockhampton “The path to healing, the path to treaty and the path to reconciliation are connected, but they each have their own path. We can walk the path to treaty alongside the path to healing. Truth is the basis for all of these paths and the journey must begin with truth.”

Dreaming big’s framework encourages the voice of the heart, to listen, to hear, to dream big, decide which way now, take stock and yarn up a future that enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to keep their spirit strong.

*We invite you to listen....*

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## 2. Background

This project represents *Action 6.11 of the Changing Tracks Action Plan 2017-2019*, the first action plan under Our Way. The Partners to this action are the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (CSYW), the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), Family Matters Queensland, and the Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC).

*Our Way*, a shared strategy to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture, outlines a genuine commitment to honouring the importance of connection to family, community and culture, self-determination and healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Healing Foundation was asked to lead engagement for the Queensland Healing Strategy as a recognised leader in healing. The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions like the forced removal of children from their families. Our work helps people create a different future.

We work with communities to create a place of safety, providing an environment for Stolen Generations survivors and their families to speak for themselves, tell their own stories and be in charge of their own healing.

The Healing Foundation is leading the way in trauma aware, healing informed practice and research into Indigenous healing. Our studies are unique, valuable and highly regarded both locally and internationally.

The Healing Foundation is leading a culturally safe, healing centred co-design process to yarn up the Queensland Healing Strategy. This process is entirely designed, delivered and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The most critical component of the co-design process was to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, including through the time of the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.

Literature affirms that relationships, respect and trust are key to effective engagement and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and often require a sustained relationship between groups of people working towards a shared goal. For this reason, The Healing Foundation selected locations where they had existing relationships, networks and healing collaborations.

### 3. People, place, time

Over 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders from 80 different cultural groups and over 50 locations have had their say, shared what healing means for them, dared to dream big and tell us which way now.

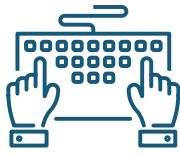


## Name of Mobs



Ankamuthi, Woppaburra, Darnley and Murray Island	Gumbaynggirr	Naime
Bidjara and Kara/Kara	Gubbi Gubbi woman – my mother is part Aboriginal and part South Sea Islander	Ngadjon-jii (grandfather) & Yidinji (grandmother)
Bidjara and Kara-Kara Central Western Queensland	Gungaloo, Bidjara and my father side Gamilaroo	Ngunawal
Bidjara, Kamilaroi, Gunggari, Kooma	Gungaloo, Willi Willi and Wakka Wakka	Palawa and English
Birri Gubba on my father side and Mandingalbay on my mother side	Gungaloo, Kungalu, Kurang	Pakana (palawa) from Tasmania, but been living in Brisbane areas for nearly 20 years now
Birri Gubba, Girringun and Burrum, Torres Strait Islander	Gunggandji	Ugarapul
Budjala, Darnley Island and Kuku Yalanji	Gunggandji from Yarrabah and Wakka Wakka from Cherbourg	Waanyi Aboriginal Nations, Erubam le and Meriam le – Torres Strait Islander Nations
Bunjalong and Thursday Island origins, born and raised in Ipswich	Gungarri – Mitchell Qld	Waikato (through husband)
Bundjalung Nation	Gurang Gurang	Wakka Wakka
Butchulla	Gurang Gurang – Baffle Creek mob	Wakka Wakka and Wangan
Butchulla woman from K'gari, Fraser Island	Gubbi Gubbi, Kullali & Wakka Wakka	Waka Waka woman and my dad was born in Cherbourg
Darnley Island	Kalkadoon and Waanyi	Wakka Wakka peoples from Cherbourg and Kuku yalanji peoples
Darrug nation mob	Kabi Kabi	Walks Wakka woman with connections across the state
Darumbal	Kalkadoon Mitakoodi Cloncurry – Mt Isa region	Wangkangurru/Yarliyandi
Darumbal and Gubbi Gubbi	Kamilaroi – Moree, Inala Qld community	Wanyurr Majay, Darumbal and mother is Torres Strait Islander from Boigu, and Erub (Darnley)
Darumbal and Bailai	Kamilaroi, Gomeroi, Kullili	Warumungu, Northern Territory
Darumbal community	Kaurareg people from Cape York and Meriam peoples comet tribe from Mer Island, Torres Straits	Wiradjuri tribe
Disrupted	Kooma/Gwamu live on 'Butchulla' Country Hervey Bay	Wooli Wooli
Dja: bugay – Far North Queensland	Kummara	Worimi
Djungan	Migunberri	Wulgurukaba
Erub – Darnley Island	Mount Isa and Dalmore Downs – Northern Territory	Wuthati
Gabi Gabi	Mununjali	Yarrabah and Palm Island
Gamilaraay	Murray Island	Yiman, Bowen, Ipswich, Katherine, Darwin, Rockhampton
Gamilaroi, Yirangali	Murri who has lived all over the State and have made Mackay my home	Yinwum
Gimuy Walubarra Yidinji		Yuin Country (NSW), however I live on Bundjalung Country Qld
Gomeroi/Gadigal Nations		
Gooreng Gooreng/Gubbi Gubbi		
Goreng Goreng/Bunjulung		

77 ONLINE SURVEY



39 POSTCARDS



420 ENGAGEMENT



290 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (162 YARNING CIRCLES + OTHER ENGAGEMENT)



8 CASE STUDIES



3 ORGANISATION RESPONSES



3 CREATIVE RESPONSES

## ONLINE SURVEY

77

Female 59

Male 17

Prefer not to say 1

Adult 63

Child 2

Elder 5

Senior 7

Aboriginal 49

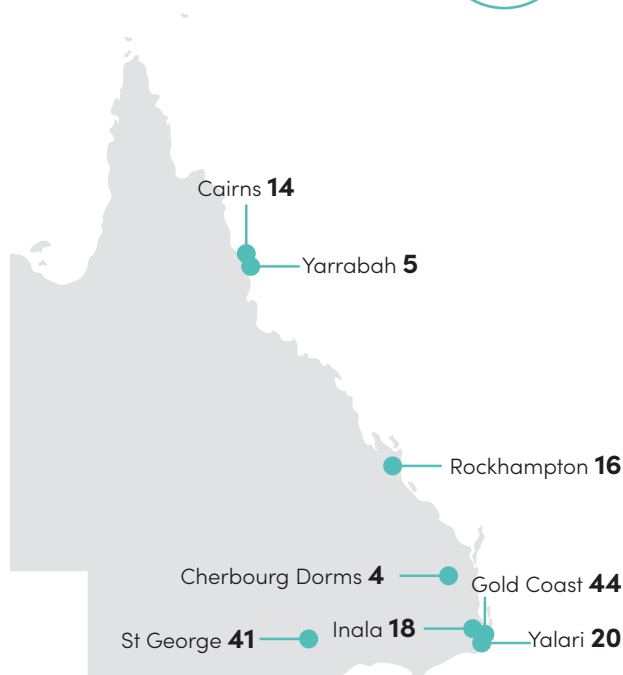
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander 5

Torres Strait Islander 6

Non-Indigenous 17

## YARNING CIRCLES

162



## OTHER ENGAGEMENT

128

Emails and website responses 22

Pre-engagement 27

Governance 28

Practice Leaders 9

Partners 7

Consultations and forums 35

## POSTCARDS

39

Aboriginal 36

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander 1

Torres Strait Islander 1

Non-Indigenous 1

## OTHER RESPONSES

14

Case studies, Organisational responses, and Creative responses



## 4. Honouring these voices

The Healing Foundation is committed to honouring and sharing the voices that we heard throughout the Dreaming big process.

Dreaming big gathered groups of people together, asking what healing means and what happy and strong feels like, to help transcend the divide between deficit based solutions and strength based outcomes.

In listening to all of the voices there was a common thread in many of the responses that culture was at the heart of healing and culture was central to everything.

It has been made clear by the yarning circles that the priority for healing through culture is creating a healthy community with connectedness to Country, land, lore, family, community and spirit.

This report shares a snapshot of the voices. More information about the journey is available on The Healing Foundation's website: <https://healingfoundation.org.au/queensland-healing-strategy/>

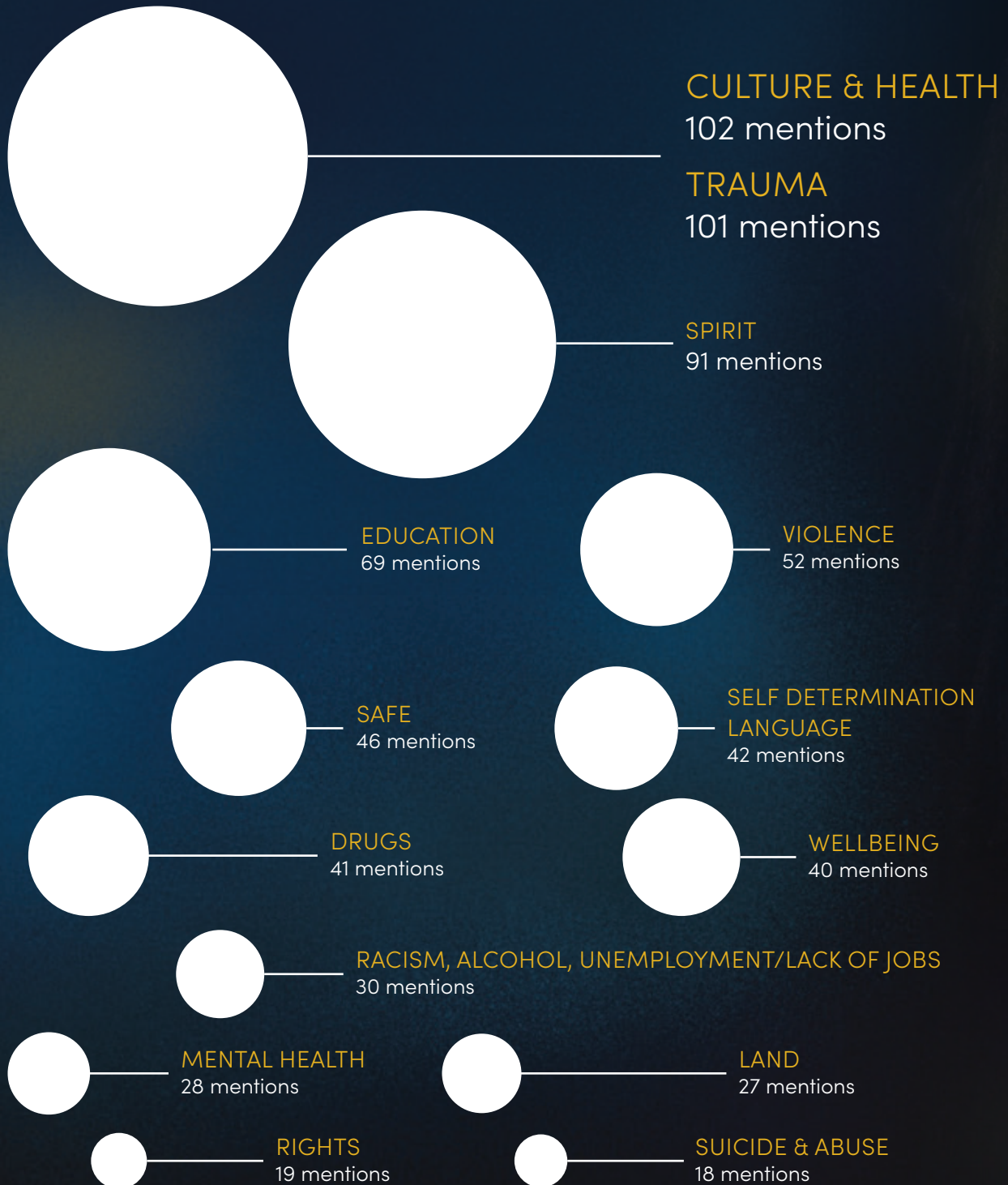
### 4.1 Important issues and themes

The Dreaming big process identified community issues and themes by the number of times key words were mentioned in surveys and yarning circles.

Issues and themes identified through this process do not stand alone or sit in isolation. Many responses talked about bundling themes and topics to inform a strength based holistic approach, saying that when culture, language, self-determination, health, wellbeing and spirit were strong, this is what kept their spirits strong. When culture, self-determination, language, health, education and spirit are lacking, along with the impacts of trauma, racism, representation, child removal, loss and identity, this had a negative impact on them.

# Important issues and themes

Community issues and themes identified by number of mentions gathered through surveys/yarning circles.



LOSS  
17 mentions

LATERAL VIOLENCE DISCRIMINATION  
14 mentions

REPRESENTATION  
9 mentions

CRIME  
8 mentions

POVERTY  
7 mentions

GRIEF  
5 mentions

CHILD REMOVAL  
4 mentions



*Walking in two worlds.*

**Gold Coast Bond University students**

*Racism. Intergenerational trauma. Deeply entrenched systemic poverty. Substance dependence. Family and domestic violence.*

*“Hurt people hurting people”.*

**Wakka Wakka, female, adult, Mysterton, 4812**

*Misrepresentation.*

**Worimi, female, adult, 4209**

*Taking young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ones away - has been done too many times. It has to stop, and it has to stop now.*

**Cherbourg Domos Yarning Circle**



*"We sit and listen to Elders, family, Country and river. We like to sit and talk to each other because coming from the same campground means we trust each other. We can share the worry we carry."*

St George Goondir Yarning Circle

## 4.2 Listening to hear

People shared their feelings and talked about keeping spirit strong. Healing is a journey, a process, a pathway, a way forward, a forever process, a cycle, a circle, growth, laying groundwork for national healing and true reconciliation.

Some talked about healing implying something is broken and needed to be fixed. You can't ever be healed. It's not about being fixed. It's a journey, a process, and a pathway where you learn to live with trauma.

Culture is the most important element for healing and people talked about the importance of knowing where they came from, identity, belonging, mob, family, connection and reconnection to culture, community, Country, land and language; safe places to practice culture, valuing and living our culture and evolving our culture.

Culture can be seen as having four elements - lore, traditions and belief; Country, land and identity; family, kinship and mobs; and spirit, beliefs and dreaming. Many of the conversations with participants have been grounded in the connection and reconnection with culture and these four elements.

The importance of being around family, kinship and community was strong, along with learning from Elders, listening to their stories, leaning on their ancestral wisdom and passing it on to future leaders.

Investing in youth leadership, mentoring, education and promoting life skills were important, along with participation in sports clubs, cultural camps, being outdoors, doing something meaningful and bringing people together to improve social cohesion.

Keeping spirit strong is about having choices and access to supports and services and adequate resources. Healing means self-determination and community leadership.

People talked about the importance of spirituality, to feeling connected and reconnecting to spirit and having a strong spirit as contributing factors to wellbeing and peace and having everything in balance.

People also spoke about healing as being a connection to Country, to land and sea and the importance of water for healing, taking time to slow down, getting on Country and cleansing the spirit.



*“As I pictured myself in the footprints of my Elders and ancestors, this knowledge was passed down to me from an old Warlpiri man to share with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As we were walking on country, the old Warlpiri man said, “I don’t own this story, of course you can share it”. This knowledge would have been passed down to the old man by his Elders and his Elders being told by their Elders. So, you can imagine how long this knowledge has been around for.*

*“As the old man was talking and drawing the circles in the sand, I was so captured in the knowledge that I found the circles started spinning in sand and that’s when I knew my spirit was connected to the story.”*

Anthony Dewis, Cairns virtual yarning circle

## Lore

*Healing is the story behind the story, it gives us purpose to fend for ourselves and to teach us. It's all different ways of learning.*

[Cairns Yarning Circle](#)

*Ways of being and doing.*

[Kummara Inala Workforce Yarning Circle](#)

*It means restoration. Cultural, health, identity and knowing.*

[Gold Coast Community Members & Health Service Providers](#)

*Healing then growth – it's forever ongoing. It a forever process. Growth enables healing to take place.*

[Gold Coast – Bond University Students](#)

*To reach our full potential and self-determine our futures with pride and confidence.*

[Murri female senior adult, Mackay, 4740](#)

*Healing is part of the process to moving forward and cleansing our spirit.*

[Bidjara, Kamilaroi, Gunggari, Kooma female, adult, Sunshine Coast, 4575](#)

*Truth telling allows you to know you're not crazy or bad. And you know your family is not bad, it was the circumstances. We know the circumstances of where it came from and what caused it and we can make a choice to deal with it.*

[Inala Elders Yarning Circle](#)

## Country

*Feeling strong and connected to culture, community and spirit.*

[Gunggari female adult, Cannon Hill, 4170](#)

*When on country. There is a medicine pool we go to. The water makes us strong as one. Brings us to our space. Healing is part of the pool, feeling the old people around you.*

[Yarrabah Yarning Circle](#)

*Bringing a community together to thank and celebrate our ancestors for being the pillars in our community and standing up for the future generation and recognition of culture.*

[Gurang Gurang, Adult, Bundaberg, 4670](#)

*I just like to start with Nangarin Ngabang Djinang Djaa which means it's the dreaming of our mothers on country, our mother earth.*

[Rockhampton Yarning Circle](#)

*Spirit feels good on Country and in everyday life. Everyone feels happy when they're on country. When we are away from Country – our spirit weighs and wants to go back.*

[Cairns Yarning Circle](#)

*Being close to running water, I connect with it on some level. I use it to cleanse my spirit and take time to slow down. World / life is so busy.*

[Young person, Aboriginal, Redbank, 4301](#)

## Family

*Family, culture, being able to practise language, lore, culture, song, dance, hunting, love and connection.* [Adult, Aboriginal, Holland Park, 4121, Postcard](#)

*Reconnecting to my mob, finding out who they really are.* [Disrupted, female adult, Pallarenda, 4810](#)

*Being around mob, family and young passionate people.* [Aboriginal adult, Nerang, 4211, Postcard](#)

*The family unit is the most important component to making your spirit feel good. The family unit includes the whole extended family and it is that connection to each other that supports people through the hard times. This is the link in the chain that was broken through the 80's and 90's and needs to be addressed immediately.*

[St George Men's Yarning Circle](#)

*Sit and listening to the Elders share their stories. That makes my spirit feel strong.*

[Yarrabah Yarning Circle](#)

## Spirit

*Healing for me it's about getting fuel for my soul, lighting up my soul and feeling whole.*  
[Gold Coast Community Members & Health Service Providers](#)

*Healing completes the circle – sometimes it feels like only half a circle and it needs more to complete it.* [Kummara Inala Workforce Yarning Circle](#)

*Getting a person to place of feeling whole and radiating positivity outwards. Not in a place of feeling incomplete, incompetent, or darkness in places in our body, mind and spirit.*  
[Kabi Kabi, female adult, Granite Vale, 4815](#)

*It means being resilient, kind, mentally and physically healthy and strong, having something to live for (empowered), and confidence to participate equally as a member of society.*  
[Kamilaroi, Gomeri, Kullili female adult, Upper Kedron, 4055](#)

*Being happy and healthy.*  
[Adult, Aboriginal, St George, 4487, Postcard](#)

*I go home for my spiritual, I need to run my fingers through the water. I need to walk on the grass. I feel re-born when I get there and when I come back out, I'm re-energised.*  
[Rockhampton Yarning Circle](#)

*Healing to me is quite large. Knowing and having that sense of belonging. Knowing who you are, where you come from, knowing who your mob is. What you've done in the past.*  
[Rockhampton Circle](#)

*We all heal differently so having options available to really recover from trauma - time, space, counselling, back to Country, time with Elders, time to grieve, massage, exercise, or combination, whatever it is that is appropriate for that individual to overcome the trauma. Healing should not be a one size fits all approach.*  
[Erub - Darnley Island, Father's family, female adult, Mount Isa, 4825](#)

## 4.3 Dreaming big

*“Healthy people; happy, laughing children; lots of cultural practices being shared and taught; a community that works together and helps one another.”*

Gunggari, Emu Park, 4170, female, adult

We invited participants to dream big about their future. We asked what does happy and strong look and feel like for them as individuals, for their families and their communities. We asked people what keeps spirit strong for themselves and their children and their communities.

These conversations gave people the permission to dream. People dipped into their own stories, remembering and sharing insights from their ancestral history and found strength in knowing their ancestors are with them and carry them forward on their healing journeys.

We heard people dreaming of a better future for their children, desires for happy and strong communities, free from violence, racism, drugs, alcohol, suicide, incarceration, children living in out of home care, lack of housing and homelessness.

People shared their stories of intergenerational trauma and their hopes of healing. We heard people talk about the loss of cultural knowledge and language and a disconnection with culture and identity on one hand but knowing that this also provided a solution for healing – reconnection with cultural knowledge and language would strengthen their communities and cultural identity and pride.

People dreamed of a reconciled Australia where truth telling and the history of colonisation, Stolen Generations and the impact of intergenerational trauma was better understood and shared through schools and across the mainstream.

Culturally appropriate services, designed and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, along with connection to land and sharing stories on Country, safe spaces, strong support networks and community connections were aspirations of healing along with contributing factors towards healing.



## Lore

*Truth telling of Australian history within schools and through the media.*

[St George Aboriginal Housing Company](#)

*Real genuine, Indigenous owned and operated grass roots entities. Funding bodies.*

*Decision makers.*

[Torres Strait Islander Submission](#)

*Happy and strong for the community would be less addictions and less needs on substances to provide these feelings. Happy and strong would look and feel like the community stepping up and realising that they can do better and move on to better things relying on others for support rather than substances to give them a feeling of strength.*

[Kamilaroi- Moree, Female, Inala, 4077](#)

*Families that are self-determining. Advocate, consult and collaborate.*

[Central Queensland Indigenous Development Submission, Hervey Bay](#)

*Solutions. Service providers to come together for longer yarn/forum session.*

[Kummara Inala Yarning Circle](#)

*Give us proper self-determination – not in a place where they can override it.*

*We should own our healing.*

[Gold Coast Yarning Circle - Bond University Students](#)

## Country

*Learning from the old people, it's a journey.*

[Cairns Yarning Circle](#)

*Sharing stories on Country, for the healing to take place.*

[Yarrabah Yarning Circle](#)

*Being connected to culture and finding your identity gives you purpose and you can become healthier when you know yourself and where you come from.*

[Bidjara, Kamilaroi, Gunggari, Kooma, Minyama, Female, Adult](#)

*Comfortable and strong in my identity.*

[Wulgurukaba, Female, Adult, Caboolture, 4510](#)

*Identity as a source of pride, not shame, for all.*

[Palawa and English, Male, Adult, Pallarenda, 4810](#)

*Thriving, happy families, spending time together on Country, standing strong and helping build each other up.*

[Bundjalung Nation, Female, Young person, Southport, 4215](#)

## Family

*Sense of belonging – culturally connected.*

*Female, Adult, Mouth Isa, 4825*

*Be able to go fishing with family. Young boys listening to stories from Elders and learning how to make artefacts.*

*Bidjara & Kara-Kara Central Western Qld, Male, Child, Alton Downs, 4702*

*Being a young person and trying to advocate for our young generations, that it could lift our young generations up and they can stand up on their own two feet and say, you know what we're gonna stand up and move this forward.*

*Rockhampton Yarning Circle*

*Being around mob, family and young passionate people. Seeing young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people achieve their goals, educational, personal and cultural.*

*Aboriginal, Adult, Southern Lamington, 4211*

*Truth telling of Australian history within schools and through the media.*

*St George yarning circle*

## Spirit

*Love, caring and sharing, working and being together as one community.*

*Kooma/Gwamu, Female, Senior, Hervey Bay, 4655*

*Spirit healing needs to take place. Self-determination. Cultural mob in that leadership position. Government needs to let us mob lead the way.*

*Cairns Yarning Circle*

*Having a population that are well and strong with links to culture, employment and other factors that provides for well adjusted family, individuals and the overall community.*

*Aboriginal, Bunjalung, Male, Adult, Aspley, 4034*

*Happy and strong to me comes from a great support system. Having a strong support system helps to get through tough times, heal and recover which in turn leads to happiness.*

*Gungarri, Female, Adult, Ringwood, 4343,*

*Visually, a smiling, laughing, healthy community.*

*Gumbaynggirr, Male, Adult, Mitchelton, 4053*

*Community with connectedness to Country, family and spirit.*

*Gungarri, female adult, Charlton, 4350*



*“Healing is for us to be the determiners of our future, for our communities, for our families, for ourselves.”*

Brisbane online submission

#### 4.4 Which way now

Community spoke strongly about being ready to lead their own healing solutions and they know how to do this through culture, connection to Country and land, strong family, kinship, community connections, celebrations of culture, self-determination, voice, community leadership, strong identity, respect, reconciliation and truth telling.

Culturally appropriate healing places and spaces are an integral part of healing – therapeutic work, cultural programs and community healing. They want safe places to practise culture.

The community coming together was another important part of healing – community celebrations, connecting and reconnecting with community, cohesive strength and numbers in community gatherings, people coming together.

Providing opportunities for education and employment was important along with building community and culturally appropriate services, strengthening cultural frameworks within the workforce and across organisations. Offering financial support for the wisdom of Elders and cultural knowledge holders was also important to ensure cultural protocols and avoid misappropriation and cultural overload on Elders.

Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strengths and the importance of culturally sound programs that offered opportunities for communities to come together for collective healing was important along with debriefing and understanding the impacts of trauma to seek solutions and strengths based outcomes.

## Lore

*Building effective strategies that provide support, guidance and culturally appropriate resources for your mob. Strategies that can also support non-Indigenous people and service providers to provide better service and be culturally competent. Bidjara, Kamilaroi, Gunggari, Kooma, female, adult, Coolabine, 4574*

*Allowing mob to grieve in a cultural way and not a western way. Having healing opportunities to share your experiences in a safe cultural way. Sometimes it's not about what you can resolve, but it's about listening and understanding. Most times Silence is the key to Healing and help the individual and community to grow through their changed behaviour and actions in moving forward. Wakka Wakka and Wangan, male, adult, Aspley, 4034*

*Our own culturally safe places that create opportunity to gather in community or to go bush to reflect and regather ourselves. Let it be run by Elders. Kabi Kabi, female, adult, Granite Vale, 4815*

*Creative initiatives to make community/grass roots people want to become involved. Streamline the planning to fruition process. Funding shortage. Waanyi Aboriginal Nations, am le and Meriam le - Torres Strait Islander Nations, male, adult, Cairns, 4870*

*More Indigenous led and local level placed based service delivery programs. Understanding what trauma is and how that impacts emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and the importance of healing and the impact of addressing trauma and how it will impact you, your children and future generations. Dauer, female, adult, Townsville, 4814*

*Being trauma-free, or at the very least learning how to process and address trauma as well as trauma-related cycles within the Self, home, family, community and Country. Gamilaraay, male adult, Charlton, 4350*

## Country

*Create a place like an 'Old Camping Ground'. The positives that we remember about the old camping ground was how the Elders were respected and maintained control and order with people. St George Men's Yarning Circle*

*Our healing has been made possible by reconnecting with our mob and spending time on country as this connection was very nearly lost entirely with grandfathers and grandmothers living in denial of their Aboriginality for fear of the horrors of government intervention given what they had seen in their lifetimes. Wakka Wakka, female, adult, Townsville, 4817*

*Our own culturally safe Places that create opportunity to gather in community or to go bush to reflect and regather ourselves. Connected to Indigenous services but not run by. Let it be run by Elders. Kabi Kabi, female, adult, Granite Vale, 4815*

*Truth telling opportunities. Acknowledgement of massacres and genocide. The return of lands to community. This isn't taking land off people, it is the returned ownership of crown land. Gumbaynggirr, male, adult, North Tivoli, 4053*

## Family

*More resources to support Indigenous families and their children, I feel the door is a revolving door that sees our people returning to a place of suppression, anguish, trauma and unresolved issues. Naime, male, adult, North Tivoli, 4305*

*Keep teenagers busy, aspirational, set goals early and inform about family responsibility and healthy parental choices early. Build confidence so don't stay in unhealthy relationships. Kamilaroi, Gomeroi, Kullili, female, adult, Upper Kedron, 4055*

*Resilience for us men and women from the dorms. It's a brotherhood and sisterhood. We support each other ... we got that connection no matter how old or young we were. Cherbourg Doms*

*We need paid positions for people to teach our languages. This needs to be in be in early childhood so that our children are learning their languages from birth to 5 or 8. St George Men's Yarning Circle*

*Truth telling allows you to know you're not crazy or bad. And you know your family is not bad, it was the circumstances. We know the circumstances of where it came from and what caused it and we can make a choice to deal with it. Inala Elders*

## Spirit

*Linking the community together to identify what support is required and a plan how to initiate this.*

*Bundjalung, male adult, Aspley, 4034,*

*Being listened to when we nominate a course of action.*

*Gurang Gurang Baffle creek mob, female, adult, Joyner, 4500*

*Intergenerational programs to change mindsets - we have Elders with their beliefs and systems and then we are two generations after them. Stakeholders working collectively for Elders, adults and youth to gather and participate in activities together.*

*Waggadagum/Daurareb, female, adult, Murray Island, 4875*

*Re-establish social connections - encourage social participation and involvement by investing into community groups. Community needs to have a purpose and a shared purpose and goals. Dja: bugay (FNQ), male, adult, Murrarie, 4172*

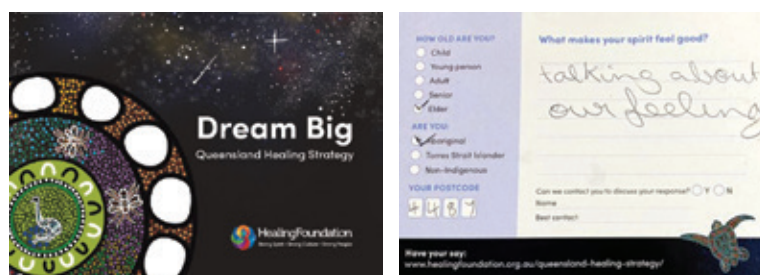
*A united community. Wiradjuri tribe, female, adult, Booval, 4304*

## 4.5 Healing initiatives already working

Community shared stories, case studies and examples of healing initiatives already working and offered solutions and ideas for what needed to happen next and the most important changes needed now. They affirmed that they need to be supported and resourced to action their own healing priorities.

Suggestions for what is working and needs to continue include:

- community coming together
- community led projects
- community responses to solve problems
- cultural camps
- cultural programs
- cultural and safe services
- Elders Groups
- healing places and spaces
- language programs
- men's and boy's programs
- programs that make us feel in charge of our healing
- women's and girl's programs
- yarning circles
- youth and sports leadership.



## 4.6 Valuing our way of healing

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have always been ready to assume leadership and ownership of their own healing solutions. There are some who are already restoring, reclaiming and revitalising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural ways and practices.

We consistently heard people responding to the importance of telling the truth, understanding the impacts of colonisation, Stolen Generations history and intergenerational trauma. We heard people tell us that you need to acknowledge the past and this is an important part of the healing journey, to move forward into the future. “Looking back to look forward” was a common thread in conversations.

## 4.7 Yarning circles

Yarning circles are a way for families and groups to come together in a safe and supported environment. They draw on cultural protocols and promote harmonious, creative and collaborative ways of communicating to encourage responsible, respectful and honest interactions between participants.

Yarning Circles were guided by experienced cultural facilitators leading discussions.

The Healing Foundation engaged with local stakeholders including family wellbeing service providers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health organisations and community justice groups.

A diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders had their say, including Stolen Generations survivors, Elders, men and women, young people, students, those with lived experience of trauma and healing, parents, community members and leaders.

Yarning circles were held in:



Brisbane	Cherbourg Domos Kummara, Inala Inala Elders	10 March 2020 19 February 2020 9 March 2020
Cairns	Virtual yarning circle Virtual yarning circle	27 April 2020 29 April 2020
Gold Coast	Bond University students Community members	17 February 2020 18 February 2020
Rockhampton	Central Queensland Indigenous Development (CQID) (Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Hervey Bay) CQID (Rockhampton and Longreach) Helem Yumba	11 May 2020 13 May 2020 7 May 2020
St George	Goolburri Goondir Elders St George Aboriginal Housing Company St George Men's Circle St George Women's Circle South West Indigenous Corporation (SWIC)	14 February 2020 12 February 2020 13 February 2020 13 February 2020 13 February 2020 11 February 2020
Yalari	Year 10 students	25 February 2020
Yarrabah	Virtual yarning circle	28 April 2020

## 4.8 Culturally safe spaces

We worked with local community organisations to ensure we created a place of safety for Stolen Generations survivors and their families and community members to speak. Facilitators had cultural knowledge, authority and permission, social and emotional wellbeing backgrounds and a trained counsellor was available at most yarning circles for participants to debrief as needed.

Safe environments were created at each of the yarning circles by using cultural symbols and protocols, including a Welcome to Country, acknowledging all people in the circle, sharing stories, a green ribbon representing 60,000+ years of Indigenous knowledge, a short animated video about intergenerational trauma, a yarning stick and a song to support people to feel comfortable.



## 4.9 Consultation questions

These questions were asked at the yarning circles, community consultations and online surveys:

### Listening to hear

What does healing mean to you? What keeps spirit strong?

What healing work is currently happening in your community?

### Dreaming big

What does happy and strong look and feel like for you and your community? What do you want the healing strategy to achieve?

What are the biggest issues facing your community?

### Which way now?

What are the most important changes that need to happen to help you and your community to heal?

What would you do first, what are the biggest priorities?



## 4.10 Site selection

The yarning circle sites were selected to get a mix of geography, culture, history and current context including urban, regional and remote; locations that provide a range of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including child safety, youth and women’s services and existing Healing Foundation networks and community connections.

Information gathered through The Healing Foundation strategies has also been considered as input into the Queensland Healing Strategy enabling further input from Healing Forums recently held in the Torres Strait Islands, with more scheduled for later in 2020.



## 4.11 #Dreambig – online engagement

We provided opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to have their say and dream big. We offered a range of flexible ways for people to have their say. Through participating in yarning circles, completing the online survey, sharing a case study about a healing initiative or program in their community, having a yarn over the phone, filling in a postcard with a message, or sharing a creative piece on what healing means for you such as poetry, art, images, songs.

Organisations were encouraged to make a submission or a case study to share healing initiatives in their community.

To promote engagement in this process we engaged Jeremy Marou, a musician with Torres Strait Islander heritage, who shared a video message encouraging Queenslanders to have their say and dream big through his social media networks and reaching 1,000 people.

## 5. Contributors

### The Queensland Knowledge Holders

The Queensland Healing Strategy knowledge holders were engaged based on their knowledge, expertise and experience as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with lived experiences of healing, thought leaders, academics and service providers with a strong connection to our people and Country in Queensland.

The knowledge holders group provided critical feedback, advice and support to the project team.

Representatives include:

- **David Wragge**, Wakka Wakka, Gungulu, Juru, Knowledge Holder, Co-Chair and The Healing Foundation Stolen Generations Reference Group Committee Member
- **Sheryl Lawton**, Bidjara and South Sea Islander/Torres Strait Islander descendent, Knowledge Holder, Co-Chair and CEO, Charleville Western Areas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services Ltd
- **Noeleen Lopes**, Ghungalu and the CEO of Gallang Place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation and The Healing Foundation Board Member
- **Matthew Cooke**, Aboriginal and South Sea Islander from the Bailai (Byellee) people, CEO, Nhulunbu Health Service Gladstone and Deputy Chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- **Tarryn Cora**, Darumbal, Youth Worker and Co-ordinator of the Danoona Dance Troupe and The Healing Foundation Youth Advisor
- **Scott Gorringe**, Mithaka, Director, Murrimatters Consulting
- **Julie-Ann Lambourne**, Torres Strait Islander descending from Mabuig and Darnley Islands, Senior Consultant, Tagai Management Consultants
- **Letitia Smith**, Goreng Goreng and Bundjalung, Placement Support Officer, CQID, The Healing Foundation Youth Advisor
- **Dr Vicki Saunders**, Gunggari, Research Director
- **Fiona Petersen**, Wuthathi (Shelburne Bay) descendant with family roots in the Torres Straits, CEO, The Healing Foundation
- **Leann Wilson**, Bidjara, Kara-Kara and South Sea Islander descendent, Deputy Chair, The Healing Foundation, Executive Director, Regional Economic Solutions.

## Partners

Local community led and Aboriginal community controlled organisations were involved as local community partners to host yarning circles.

These included:

- Central Queensland Indigenous Development
- Cherbourg Domos
- Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good
- Gallang Place
- Goolburri Family Wellbeing Program
- Goondir Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Service
- Helem Yumba
- Inala Elders
- Kummara
- South West Indigenous Corporation (SWIC)
- St George Aboriginal Housing Company
- Wuchopperen Health Service
- Wontulp Bi Buya College
- Gurriny Yealamucka Aboriginal Health Service
- Yarlari – Educating and Empowering Children
- Yarrabah Council
- Bond University
- Catholic Education Services – Diocese of Cairns
- Pryce Centre for Arts and Culture.

Presentations and discussions were held with:

- Queensland First Children and Families Board
- Queensland Family Matters Leadership Group
- Family Wellbeing Services
- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women regional Practice Leaders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Practice Leaders
- Queensland Healing Strategy Reference Group.



Queensland Knowledge Holders Group

## 6. Navigating “Our Way”

As we have heard healing or keeping spirit strong is a journey and a process and we know it is about navigating our own way.

Healing is a process that enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to address trauma, design and rewrite their story and navigate their own way into the future that will bring about long term generational change and restored wellbeing.

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**Healing is about connection and reconnection to culture**, community and Country. Healing is about embracing, celebrating, acknowledging, living, breathing and embedding culture into everything.

It's also about understanding the past, acknowledging the trauma and the impact of colonisation and dispossession of land, family, traditions and culture.

Healing is a way of being – being happy, healthy, singing, dancing, celebrating culture and being at peace, being in nature, connecting to and honouring and respecting earth, land, sea and country.

This way of being enables and supports our people to live a life that is whole and complete, with mind, body and spirit connected to culture and community, creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prosper and grow.

Telling the truth is an important aspect of healing to enable and help others to understand and acknowledge the history, the trauma, the pain and the hurt and show future generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people this truth openly so there is no shame, guilt, fear or racism.

Stopping the trauma and recognising the prevalence of trauma and the ongoing systemic disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Embedding trauma aware and healing informed care into services and systems to enable healing centred practices along with providing the tools, frameworks and resources for communities to be in charge of their own collective healing.

Healing is about addressing institutional racism and establishing healing in places where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience re-traumatisation such as hospitals, schools, prisons and youth detention centres.

Communities deciding and taking ownership to own their own healing. Healing is about community led healing initiatives, embedding cultural practices into programs that work. It's about self-determination, leadership, mentorship and encouraging a better future for all.

Honouring ancestral wisdom and passing this wisdom on – ways of being and knowing – traditions, lore and culture. Supporting Elders and cultural knowledge holders to lead culture and healing in their own communities. Creating strong positive identity and pride in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture.

Healing is about valuing, honouring and investing in solutions that are based on 60,000+ years of cultural wisdom. It's about genuinely collaborating and co-designing in a way that empowers and enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to determine their best outcomes.

Walking alongside us is about shared responsibility and it's time for government, community partners and stakeholders to sit and listen. It's about respectfully providing resourcing and support for community-driven initiatives.

Healing our way. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are telling us their stories in their own way and they are telling us they know what they need for healing.

The voices gathered throughout this process will feed into the Queensland Healing Strategy and implementation plan to outline the stepping stones, the navigational pathway, the guiding stars that will continue to tell this story and carry these voices forward on to the next part of this journey.

And just like the sea turtles in the artwork, they always come back to a familiar place to lay their eggs, Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing will be passed on through wisdom, resilience, strength and traditions so that the next generation can be born to live and discover life in the big ocean, the big world and continue to dream big.

This is our way and culture is at the heart of healing.

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## Story of the painting

The artwork used throughout this report was created by Barry 'RAINMAN' Boland.

The painting is about the journey of "Healing Stream Healing Dream". It is a sister painting to the Queensland Healing Strategy for The Healing Foundation. The importance of this painting are the celestial elements such as the stars and also the spirit beings and our ancestors and how they guided and navigated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders over the seas and the land and our Healing Dream.

The Emu in the sky, when standing straight up, means it is time for celebration and ceremony which is around June in the cooler months. In this healing place there is restoration for **Man Guwaybila Mars, Woman Murrdhi Gindamalaa Venus** and the planet for gender identity and LGBTQI multi-coloured society that is a part our world today.

The Rainbow Serpent a creator being hovering and watching over the dreams of people as they journey through their healing journey. Once they

have been restored, they can then make way to the egg that represents their future dream and purpose in life.

Healing Stream is when people journey upstream and find a place to rest and be reborn from the traumas and challenges of life in an ever-changing world. The black and white symbols represent the traditions and culture of our ancestors that embrace us and are our borders to protect us as we find a place to rest in the Healing Stream.

The sea turtle represents wisdom, resilience, strength and tradition as it always comes back to a place it is familiar with to lay her eggs so the next generation can be born to live and discover life in the big ocean, the big world.

This painting has a stereoscopic element that requires you to use 3D glasses to see within it other elements of the painting.





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Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People