

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING IN THE ACT AND REGION

May 1997 – release of report

Bringing them home – the report of the *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* was tabled in the Federal Parliament.

December 1997 – Commonwealth Response

The Federal Government responded to **Bringing them home** announcing funding for preserving and enhancing access to family records, family reunion, health and counselling services.

The Canberra Sorry Day Network was formed to plan events for Sorry Day. This was a coalition of community and church groups, Indigenous groups and individuals, government representatives and interested members of the community in the ACT and region.

26 May 1988 – Sorry Day

Sorry Day was observed nationally, with local events organised by the Canberra Sorry Day Network.

July 1998 – ACT Response

The ACT Government Response to the Bringing them home report was released. An Implementation Task Force was formed by the Canberra Journey of Healing Network (then the Sorry Day Network).

November 1998 – Consultations

The Task Force commenced discussions with local Indigenous workers in both Indigenous and mainstream organisations. Initial workers identified through our networks, and others suggested as we talked to workers. We contacted local Elders about our intentions and activities. We sought information on how services are working 'on the ground' for Indigenous people locally, with focus on health, family services, youth, adult corrections, juvenile justice areas. The Task Force undertook to report on the issues without identifying who had raised them.

13 April 1999 – Workshop of Indigenous Workers

All Indigenous workers we had talked to were invited to a half-day workshop. We reported back on what we had heard, and asked the workers to set priorities for action by the Sorry Day Network (see the ACT **Ways Forward** Report on the **Publications** Page). There was positive feedback from this process.

19 May 1999 – Draft Report

A discussion draft of **Are we Bringing them home?** Report was released at an ACT Region public forum arranged by **Racial Respect** on

“How far have we come?” The draft report was distributed to all ACT politicians, selected ACT Government bureaucrats, key community organisations, members of the Canberra Sorry Day Network, other interested individuals.

26 May 1999 – Journey of Healing

National launch of the Journey of Healing, with local events organised by the Canberra Sorry Day Network.

28 May 1999 – Workshop of Service Providers

An open half-day workshop was held of service providers (Government and Community), Network members, and others interested. Discussion covered issues involved in the Bringing them home recommendations and those raised by Indigenous workers. Some participants expressed enthusiasm for seeing what they could now do in their organisations.

A community Records Task Force was activated, and an Indigenous Convenor appointed.

May to July 1999

The Canberra Sorry Day Network became the Canberra Journey of Healing Network. The Implementation Task Force held discussions with key bureaucrats in the Commonwealth and ACT governments, and in key community organisations.

5 July 1999 – Are we bringing them home?

During NAIDOC Week we publicly launched the first Community Progress Report for the ACT: Are we bringing them home? The Report was distributed widely, as for the draft report, and also through the National Sorry Day Committee to reconciliation networks around Australia.

February 2000 – ACT Government Report

The ACT Government released an Implementation Report for 1998-99.

May 2000

Monitoring of ACT action on the Bringing them home recommendations continued. The Implementation Task Force repeated the initial process by consulting Indigenous people including workers about how services were working.

Government bureaucrats and community organisations were also consulted about their services and policies, and many attended a one-day conference of service providers on 25 May 2000 - the day before the second anniversary of Sorry Day.

July 2000

The Second Community Progress Report was publicly launched during NAIDOC Week - Are we Bringing them home in 2000?

Directions

Monitoring of services for Indigenous people in the ACT area is continuing. There is evidence that some of the issues raised by the community progress reports are slowly being addressed.

There is still far to go.

Similar action is occurring or being discussed in some other Australian States.

Acknowledgements

The Community Progress Reports were developed with valuable help from numerous sources, including encouragement and assistance from those individuals and organisations involved in the Canberra Journey of Healing Network.

The Implementation Task Force particularly thanks those Indigenous workers and community members who contributed their time and knowledge about services, despite the heavy demands on their time and attention. We also thank other people working in community organisations and government agencies for advice about policies, programs and strategies.

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Convenor