

HEALING OUR SPIRIT WORLDWIDE

THE
EIGHTH
GATHERING

Monday 26 November, 2018

We've got a lot to learn from other First Nations peoples

Australia has a lot to learn about tackling disadvantage for Indigenous people, according to the hosts of this week's international gathering of First Nations leaders and advocates.

"We may be the oldest living culture in the world, but our recovery from the harmful impacts of colonisation is far less advanced than many other First Nations peoples," said Healing Foundation Board Chair Steve Larkin, who will give the opening address.

"Trauma for our people is not well understood or accepted in Australia and as a result, our policy and strategies to address alarming levels of poor health, poverty and wellbeing in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, is lagging behind the rest of the world."

Professor Larkin said this week's gathering of more than 1000 people will contribute to truth telling in Australia, which is the vital first step to healing, yet missing from Australia's Indigenous policy landscape.

"It's a timely opportunity to focus on healing solutions, following the recent release of an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report that shows the Stolen Generations and their descendants are experiencing higher levels of adversity against most health and welfare measures, compared to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"This is a direct result of Intergenerational Trauma and the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide gathering, which is focusing on youth, is an opportunity to hear what all countries are doing to address the spread of trauma across communities and generations."

"By talking about our successes, we will highlight the benefits of investing more in Indigenous-led healing programs, which build on our cultural wisdom and traditions.

"It's obvious that the current policy response isn't working in Australia, and that we need to overhaul the way we spend taxpayer dollars to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the opportunities they deserve."

Healing Our Spirit Worldwide, which is being held at Darling Harbour in Sydney, will tackle issues around health, education and economic disadvantage.

Co-chair of the organising committee Professor Juanita Sherwood, from the University of Sydney, said the event is focusing on innovative projects that are improving outcomes in communities around the world, as well as emerging research to inform future policies and initiatives.

"More than 200 speakers are covering important topics like youth suicide, domestic violence, reducing the number of First Nations children in out of home care, as well as issues around racism," said Professor Sherwood.

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“The gathering also celebrates our languages, ceremonies, connection and sharing – as well as successful healing and education opportunities that redress the harm done and inspire personal and communal responsibility for models of care that fit our needs.

“The four day program includes cultural performances and healing activities, using tools like rap music, circus performance, the haka, meditation and traditional food.”

Co-hosted by The Healing Foundation and the University of Sydney, the gathering will involve traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and healers and cultural custodians from countries like Canada, Hawaii, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and the United States, as well as trauma experts, academics, politicians and service providers.

Media Call

1pm, Monday 26 November - cultural dancers and custodians will perform in the forecourt of the International Convention Centre (14 Darling Dr, Sydney) and a range of participants will be available for interview including event organisers, performers and international guest speakers.

This Healing Our Spirit Worldwide [Media Kit](#) (click here) provides the detail you will need to plan your coverage.

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