



Frequently Asked Questions – Healing Circles

The Frequently Asked Questions have been developed to provide further information to First Nations people, families and communities on healing circles, and the approach to consultation.

What is a Healing Circle?

A Healing Circle is a way to ensure First Nations families are provided with information they require that may not be included in the coronial inquest process. It provides an opportunity for families and individuals to have a voice, get answers and responses to questions and concerns (that may otherwise not form part of the coronial inquest) and provide support to these families during their healing process.

A healing circle could provide an audience with key senior public servants and staff to ensure that concerns and issues raised by First Nations families are addressed efficiently and that important support services are provided to these families and people. It could be a means for First Nations people and families to identify ways to progress their healing journeys and key supports that should be offered to them that allow for healing to be progressed.

How did the concept of healing circles come about?

The concept of healing circles came about after an evidence-based expert report was prepared by Vanessa Edwige, a registered psychologist and Chair of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association and Director on the Board of Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia.

The idea behind healing circles is to ensure that First Nations people and families have an opportunity to voice matters and concerns that are important to them, and to find answers to their questions that may not be answered through a



While the structure of healing circles is still open-ended and to be determined by consultation, they may provide an audience with senior public servants or other staff that are key decision makers and responsible for providing services and support.

It is acknowledged that healing circles will not entirely heal families' trauma, however could help minimise and mitigate the harm done.

Who and what is involved in healing circles?

Healing circles could involve Elders, professionals including psychologists and trained facilitators and mediators, public servants and representatives from different public sector agencies and organisations.

The structure, stage of the coronial process, and representatives involved in healing circles is yet to be decided upon and is open ended. The intention was for First Nations communities and families to provide feedback and guidance on who they believe should be involved, what the scope should be, and where in the coronial inquest process they should be included.

This way healing circles can be truly designed and led by First Nations people, families' and communities. The concept of healing circles isn't set in stone either. If community and families decide that it wouldn't be appropriate, this will be included in recommendations moving forward.

Who is Impact Policy and why are they involved in the project?

Impact Policy is an 100% owned Aboriginal business that has been engaged to conduct consultation in NSW with First Nations families with lived experience and First Nations communities.

We are social policy specialists and aim to embed and centre First Nations perspectives and aspirations in every project we do. Our four key principles are:

- Access
- Equity
- Inclusion
- Justice.



What consultation is being done?

In-person workshops are being held by Impact Policy. An Expression of Interest form is available for any Aboriginal person from NSW wishing to participate in the workshops. Locations for the workshops will be based on the Expression of Interest responses.

Impact Policy will also be running online information sessions and workshops and has created an online submission portal to receive written submissions. Phone calls will also be offered as well as email submissions and online surveys will be available via the website and circulated via email.

How is my feedback being used?

Impact Policy will produce a report capturing First Nations feedback. The report will be circulated to everyone that participated in consultation for endorsement and approval to ensure that recommendations and information reflect the feedback they provided.

Recommendations on whether Healing Circles are valuable and culturally appropriate, structure, remit, and stage of the coronial process for inclusion will be included in the report.

Who is funding this project?

The Paul Ramsey Foundation is funding the project. The Paul Ramsey Foundation is one of the largest philanthropic organisations in Australia whose purpose is to help end cycles of disadvantage in Australia by enabling equitable opportunity for people and communities to thrive.