



Walking Together in Healing: Culture, Community and Truth on Sorry Day

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CQI
State Forum

What is National Sorry Day?

Understanding National Sorry Day

National Sorry Day is observed annually on 26th of May to acknowledge and recognise the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly the Stolen Generations.

It commemorates:

- The forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.
- The ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma.
- The importance of healing and truth-telling.
- The national commitment to reconciliation.

Sorry Day reminds us that healing requires action, accountability, and systemic change.



Why Sorry Day Matters in Health

The Link Between History and Health Outcomes

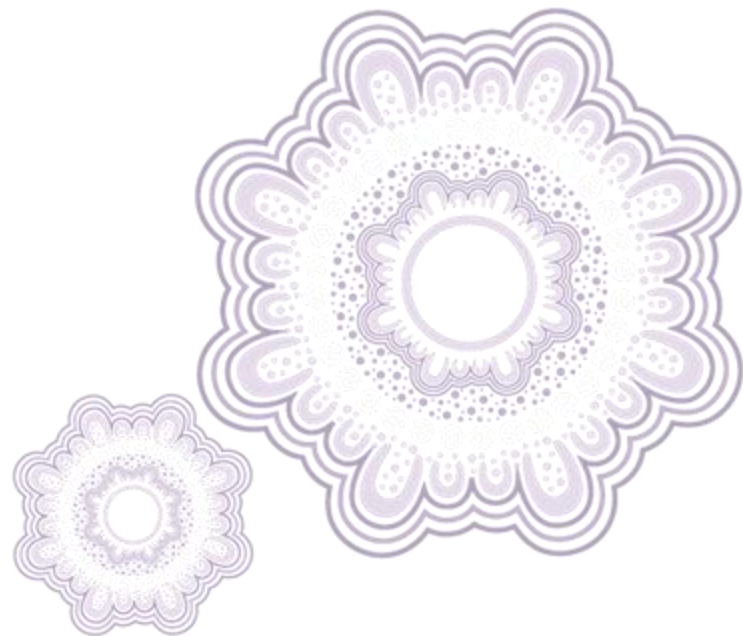
Historical government policies caused significant disruption to:

- Family and kinship structures
- Cultural identity and connection
- Trust in institutions, including healthcare systems
- Emotional, social, and cultural wellbeing

These impacts continue to influence:

- Health access and engagement
- Experiences of racism and cultural safety
- Chronic disease burden
- Mental health outcomes
- Trust in mainstream health services

Understanding this history is essential for culturally responsive healthcare.



What is CQI in Aboriginal Medical Services?

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

CQI is a structured process of ongoing reflection and improvement to strengthen service delivery and health outcomes.

It involves:

- Reviewing systems and processes
- Identifying gaps and opportunities
- Implementing changes
- Measuring outcomes
- Embedding learning into practice

In Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, CQI must be **culturally informed and community-led.**



How our history has Inform CQI

Reflection Drives Improvement

Core CQI principles:

Reflect

Acknowledging historical harms and their ongoing impacts

Review

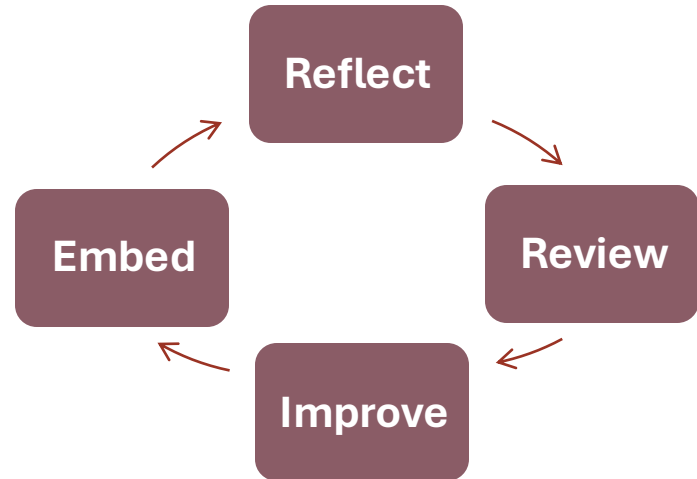
Assessing whether services are culturally safe and accessible

Improve

Making meaningful changes to policies and practice

Embed

Ensuring cultural safety becomes standard practice



Truth-telling is a quality improvement activity because it identifies what must change.

Practical CQI Actions Inspired by the history of our Stolen Generations

Turning Reflection into Action

Aboriginal Medical Services can strengthen CQI by:

- Reviewing cultural safety policies
- Auditing client feedback for experiences of cultural safety
- Strengthening trauma-informed care approaches
- Ensuring staff undertake meaningful cultural learning
- Embedding community voice into service planning
- Reviewing access barriers for vulnerable families
- Using data to identify inequities in care delivery

Sorry Day should prompt action, not just acknowledgement.



The Role of Aboriginal Community Control

Community-Led Improvement

Aboriginal Medical Services are uniquely positioned because they are grounded in:

- Self-determination
- Cultural authority
- Community accountability
- Holistic models of health

CQI in this setting means asking:

“Are we delivering care in a way that supports healing, dignity, and cultural connection?”



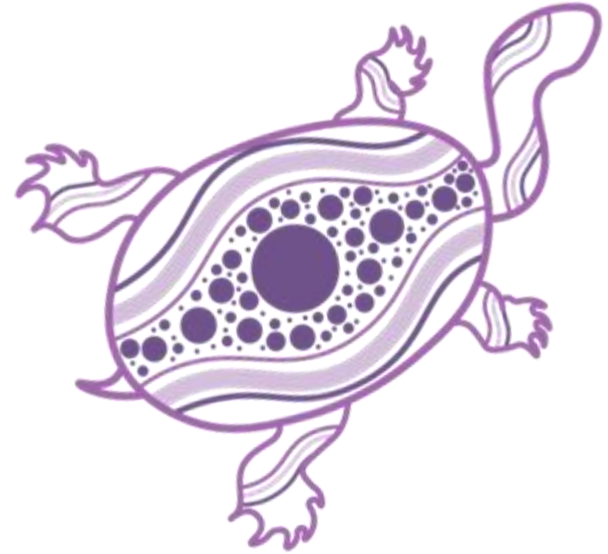
Staff Reflection Questions – Table discussion

CQI Reflection for Teams

Ask your team:

- How does our service acknowledge historical trauma?
- Do clients feel culturally safe here?
- Are our systems responsive to community needs?
- What barriers still exist?
- What changes can we implement immediately?

Reflection is the first step toward meaningful improvement.



Moving Beyond Acknowledgement

Sorry Day as a Call to Action

Commemoration alone is not enough.

Real change requires:

- Accountability
- Honest reflection
- Continuous learning
- Practical system improvement
- Commitment to culturally safe care

CQI ensures remembrance leads to measurable action.





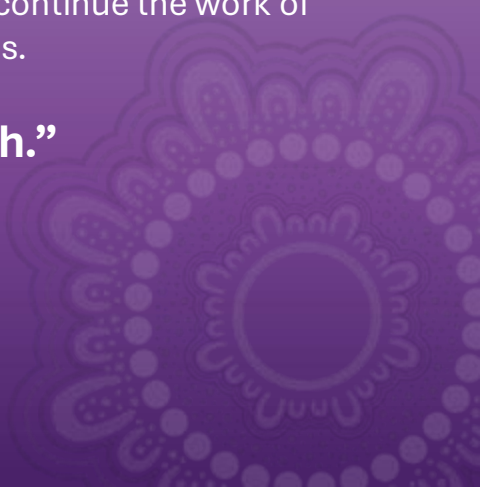
Healing Through Continuous Improvement

Sorry Day reminds us of the past.

CQI helps us shape a better future.

Through culturally safe, community-led improvement, Aboriginal Medical Services continue the work of healing, justice, and better health outcomes for future generations.

“Acknowledgement without action is not enough.”



Activity: “Our Journey of Healing and Improvement”

Participants will contribute to a collaborative artwork that represents:

Acknowledging the Past (Sorry Day)

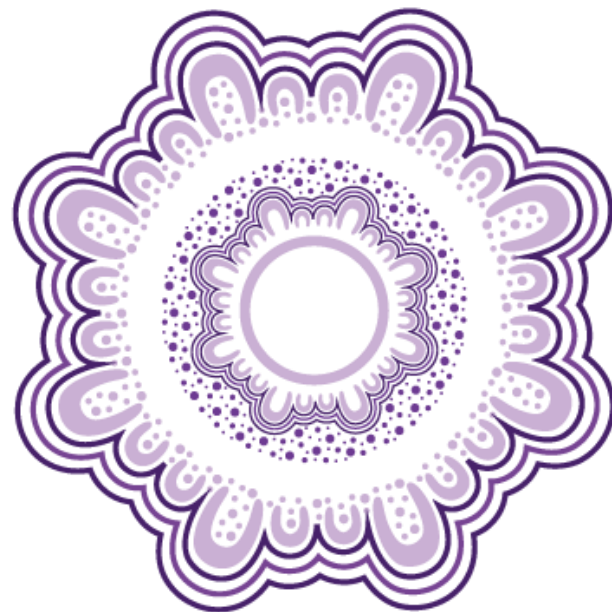
Reflection on truth-telling, loss, resilience, and healing

Where We Are Now (CQI Reflection)

Recognising current strengths and challenges in service delivery

The Path Forward (Continuous Improvement)

Our shared commitment to culturally safe, community-led change



Thank you!

