

National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week  
26th May - 5th June 2007

One People, One Place, One Future



*Breaking the Silence*

**Murri Ministry of the Archdiocese of Brisbane,  
Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane,  
Brisbane Catholic Education**

# CONTENTS

	Page number
▪ Ministry of Healing and Reconciliation.....	3
▪ Foreword by Bishop Oudemans.....	4
▪ Article - Reconciliation - background information .....	5
▪ Homily Notes.....	6
▪ Prayer and Liturgy Resources.....	8
▪ A Ritual for National Sorry Day.....	10
▪ Newsletter Editorial .....	12
▪ Key Issues for Reconciliation .....	13
▪ Gathering of Voices Conference Recommendations 2001.....	16
▪ The Acknowledgement Protocol .....	17
▪ Bringing them home - Ten years on.....	18
▪ Many Voices .....	20
▪ Time Line.....	23

(1986 - 2006)  
"MAY your Kingdom Come"  
+ John Bathersby

## Ministry of Healing and Reconciliation

Reconciliation partnerships have been happening around the country for some time now. They involve many groups – government and non-government organisations, local Aboriginal and Islander peoples, community and churches, schools and educational institutions - all coming together.

As Church and Christians we know that true reconciliation is a gift of God and we recognise that we are caught up in a divine activity, beyond our power when we move in the spirit of Reconciliation.

A coming together is not always easy for any group and in regard to Reconciliation it must be expected that in some places the going will be slow but with perseverance and goodwill a fruiting will occur.

It is important to remember that there has been a long history of injustice for the Aboriginal peoples of this country commencing with years of invasion, genocide, massacres and dispossession. This was followed by many generations of living under the different laws and policies that governed and kept people imprisoned on reserves and missions. These laws and policies were imposed into the very general and most intimate parts of Indigenous peoples' lives, not just for their living and working conditions but their every day decision making capacity about personal, social, emotional, religious and recreational aspects.

The First Peoples of Australia know racism and oppression. They know suffering and pain having lived with the impacts of personal experiences and remembered histories of what was done to them, their families and communities. Therefore, a real process of trust and relationship building is necessary and will take time, energy and patience for a true Reconciliation path to be forged.

To learn about and to walk with Aboriginal people in the Journey of Healing and Reconciliation is a true gift of peace and love to one another. If we can walk in solidarity with the suffering of this country we can understand and know the suffering of those in other countries. Can we answer the challenge to our comfortableness of responding to the suffering in our backyard and respond to the heart call of Jesus?

Reconciliation is a work of Justice and can bring about a conversion of heart and deepening of spirituality if we open the ears of our hearts, mind and soul. With Jesus in our hearts and guided by the Gospel we can nurture the Journey of Healing and Reconciliation for all in this nation and particularly the First Peoples of this land.

*Kerry Charlton*

### Use of the Reconciliation Kit

The 2007 Journey of Healing and Reconciliation working group encourages Churches, Schools and Community groups to use this kit. These resources can be used in liturgies and adult discussion groups in community or church settings. Wherever possible involvement with local Indigenous community members is recommended as a way of continuing the journey together.



*Justice and Peace  
Commission of the Catholic  
Archdiocese of Brisbane*



*Catholic Education of the  
Archdiocese of Brisbane*



*Murri Ministry of the  
Catholic Archdiocese of  
Brisbane*

## Foreword

In 2006, many parishes, schools and agencies throughout the Archdiocese of Brisbane participated in the Pass It On Message Stick Relay. We remembered Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs in 1986 and his powerful message to Indigenous Australians and to the Church.

It was, indeed, an immense privilege for me to join with my brother Bishops and so many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from every part of the continent last October to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Holy Father's visit. That time of prayer and sharing helped us to understand how significant the Pope's message was and is to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics.

In our 2006 Social Justice Statement, *The Heart of Our Country: Dignity and Justice for Our Indigenous Sisters and Brothers*, we used the symbolism of the Message Stick Relay to call on the Church in Australia to reclaim the message of Pope John Paul II and to re-commit the Church to working for reconciliation in our land.

2007 is a very important year for Indigenous Australians. It marks the anniversary of the *Bringing Them Home* report which told the story of the former policy of forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities. This year is also the fortieth anniversary of the 1967 referendum which finally recognized Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as Australian citizens and enabled the Commonwealth to make laws on their behalf. NAIDOC Week is also celebrated for the fiftieth time this year.

Having recommitted ourselves to the process of reconciliation in our land and having reflected on what the Social Justice Statement identified as the key challenges of John Paul II's message, it is important that we make every effort to take action to advance the cause of reconciliation during the coming year.

I congratulate the Murri Ministry Team, the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission and the Indigenous staff of Catholic Education in Brisbane for the work they have done to assemble this kit. It contains many useful resources to help Catholics to understand the important issues and to take action to promote dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers.

I endorse the resources in this kit and hope that parishes, schools and agencies put them to good use on National Sorry Day and during National Reconciliation Week.

**Most Rev Joseph Oudeman OFM Cap, D.D.**  
**Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane**



# BACKGROUND

## National Reconciliation Week 2007

This year National Reconciliation falls between 27 May - 5 June and includes two landmark dates in the history of Australia. A national process of reconciliation was one of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report's recommendations. This report, tabled in 1991, detailed the impact that dispossession and discriminatory policies had upon Australian's Indigenous population. More than a decade after the Deaths in Custody Royal Commission report many of the shocking findings made in this important report have in fact worsened. Today almost 24.9% of prisoners are Australian Indigenous peoples.

## National Sorry Day 26<sup>th</sup> May

In the wake of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody came strong campaigning for a *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children*. On 26 May, 1997, the report "*Bringing Them Home*" was tabled in Federal Parliament and shook Australia. It detailed painful evidence of the forced removal of thousands of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children from their families. The reports recommended a 'Sorry Day' to be held and a year later over half a million people had responded, signing Sorry Books and taking part in ceremonies on National Sorry Day. In May 1999, this people's movement launched a 'Journey of Healing'.

The commemoration of the "stolen generations", through a National Sorry Day, occurs each year on 26 May and provides a focus for continuing efforts to increase awareness of the story of the Stolen Generations and to promote action which brings healing.

## National Reconciliation Week 27<sup>th</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> June

National Reconciliation Week, which was first celebrated in 1996, offers people across Australia the opportunity to focus on Reconciliation, to hear about the cultures and history of Australia's Indigenous peoples, and to explore new and better ways of meeting challenges in our communities. It is a time for us to renew our commitment to Reconciliation and to think about how we can help turn around the continuing disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.



The week coincides with two significant dates in Australia's history which provide strong symbols of our hopes and aims for Reconciliation.

**May 27** marks the 40th anniversary of the **1967 Referendum** in which more than 90 per cent of Australians voted to remove clauses from the Australian Constitution which discriminated against Indigenous Australians. The referendum also gave the Commonwealth Government the power to make laws on behalf of Aboriginal people who until then were not treated as Australian citizens. They were named as British subjects with each State having the authority to make their own laws and policies to govern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These laws continued to impact on Australia's Indigenous peoples in varying ways into the 1970s.

**Mabo Day June 3** marks the anniversary of the High Court of Australia's judgement in 1992 in the *Mabo* case. The decision recognised the Native Title rights of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the original inhabitants of the continent, and overturned the myth of *terra nullius* - that the continent was empty, unowned land before the arrival of Europeans in 1788.

## Reconciliation and Christian Unity in Australia

In 2007, Christians in Australia are being invited to devote a 10-day period to pray intentionally for both reconciliation in this country and for the visible expression of unity amongst Christians. This period of prayer and activity establishes a special time for Christians to mark National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity (the eight days beginning on Pentecost Sunday, May 27).

The theme chosen for this year is "One People, One Place, One Future."

These two intentions for prayer, reconciliation and Christian unity, are reflected in the resources provided for use during this period. However, the original texts for these resources came from Ireland. Our Christian sisters and brothers in Ireland wished to share the precious insights which have come from the processes of reconciliation in their country. They stress the importance of forgiveness to maintain or restore trust in the Church and the wider community. Above all, the experience they wanted to share is that new relationships between divided communities often begin with groups of two or three. The theme text for the 2007 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is "He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." Mark 7:37.

In Australia, this theme will also provide a fitting focus for the intentional period of prayer and action for reconciliation and Christian unity this year.

# Homily Notes

The ancient Greeks hypothesized that there was a great southern land mass to balance the great land masses of the north of the Earth and, in later centuries, a number of European explorers went off in search of such a southern land mass. In 1606 the Portuguese explorer, Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, sailing under the Spanish flag, mistook one of the islands of the Pacific nation now known as Vanuatu for this Great South Land. Believing he had discovered the long searched-for southern continent, he held a Mass and set off fireworks to commemorate his discovery. As far as we know he was the first to use the name “Terra Australis del Espiritu Santu” - the “Great South Land of the Holy Spirit” – for what we now know as the continent and nation of Australia.

The proclamation by Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros, in claiming the great southern continent, was made on Pentecost Sunday, 14 May 1606 and read as follows:

*Let the heavens, the earth, the waters with all their creatures, and those present, witness that I, Captain Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros...in the name of Jesus Christ... hoist this emblem of the holy cross on which His person was crucified and whereon He gave His life for the ransom and remedy of all the human race...on this day of Pentecost, 14th May...I take possession of all this part of the south as far as the pole in the name of Jesus...which from now on shall be called the southern land of the Holy Ghost...and this always and forever...and to the end that to all natives, in all the said lands, the holy and sacred evangel may be preached zealously and openly.*

From “Honouring Australia’s Christian Heritage” by Col Stringer

The late Pope John Paul II also referred to our country as the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit when he spoke to Indigenous people in Alice Springs just over 20 years ago. The first part of the Holy Father’s address was very much about the working of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, about how the Spirit planted the longing for knowledge of and union with God into our hearts. He said that the Indigenous people, of Australia like every other people in the world, sought to express this desire for God in their own way through their particular culture:

*...for thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you. Your “Dreaming”, which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain for ever people of your culture, is your only way of touching the mystery of God’s Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and hold on to it in your lives.*

John Paul spoke of how the Spirit worked through the unique culture and values of the first peoples of this Great South Land of the Holy Spirit to help them to develop a deep and intimate spiritual relationship with God:

For thousands of years this culture of yours was free to grow without interference by people from other places. You lived your lives in spiritual closeness to the land, with its animals, birds, fishes, waterholes, rivers, hills and mountains. Through your closeness to the land you touched the sacredness of man’s relationship with God, for the land was the proof of a power in life greater than yourselves. You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it. and then walk away from it. You realized that your land was related to the source of life. The silence of the Bush taught you a quietness of soul that put you in touch with another world, the world of God’s Spirit...

We know that many Indigenous people in this Great South Land of the Holy Spirit were very receptive to the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though their culture and languages were very different from that of the Europeans who brought this message to our continent some two centuries after de Quiros hoisted the emblem of the Cross of Jesus on southern shores, they understood it and embraced it in their hearts just as the people from many different lands understood the message of the disciples on the first Pentecost Sunday as we heard in the first reading today.

As Pope John Paul also said in his Alice Springs address, despite their receptivity to the message of the Gospel, Indigenous Australians have suffered greatly since Europeans came to live in their land. There are many hurts still waiting for healing. The wrongs that have been done in the past have had a lasting effect on Indigenous people – they live 17 years less on average than other Australians and have much poorer health and education standards, higher unemployment and imprisonment rates, and poorer housing standards.

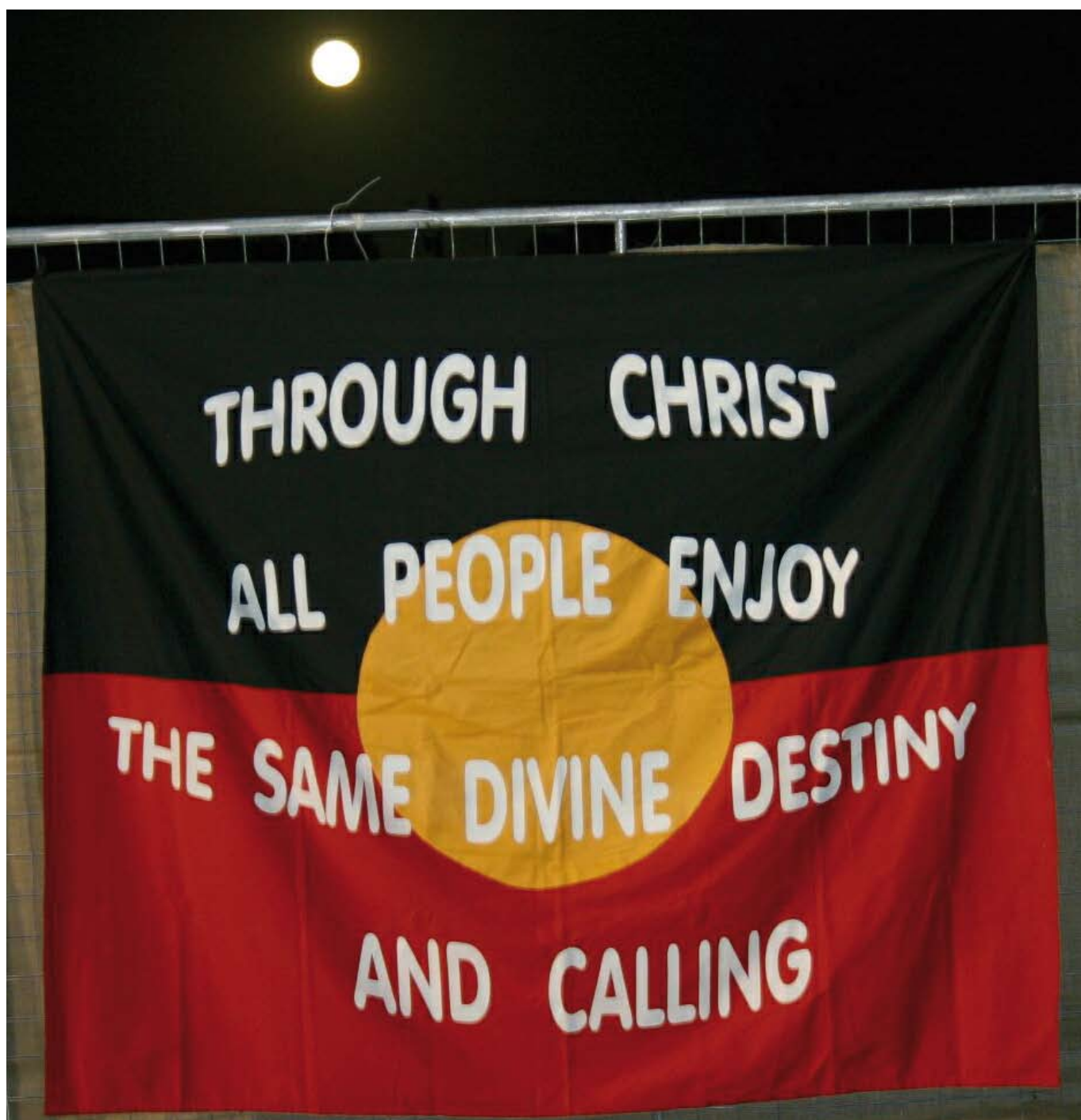
Today is the beginning of National Reconciliation Week, a time when we can remember what we in the Church and the community have done to bring healing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and a time when we reflect on what we can do to promote healing in the future. Today is also a special day because it is the fortieth anniversary of the referendum which finally recognized Indigenous people as Australian citizens and enabled the Commonwealth to make laws on their behalf.

Twice in today’s Gospel, the risen Jesus says to his disciples, “Peace be with you.” He breathed on them, filling

them with the Holy Spirit and told them that His gift of the Holy Spirit empowers them to be ministers of reconciliation and peace, the same reconciliation and peace which God had brought about through Jesus' death and resurrection. The same Spirit which Jesus breathed on the disciples on the first Pentecost also blows through the Church in Australia calling on us and empowering us to be ministers of God's peace and reconciliation in our land, the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit.

There are many ways in which we can work for healing in our land, and, in the context of the anniversary of the referendum which gave Indigenous Australians citizenship, one of the things we can definitely do is advocate action to ensure that Indigenous Australians have access to the same standards of health, education, housing and employment as other Australian citizens.

Today, we celebrate Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. We ask the Spirit to renew us in our faith and the way we live it. In today's responsorial psalm, we renewed our appeal: "Lord, send out Your Spirit and renew the face of the Earth." On this special day for the Church and for Australia's Indigenous people, may the Spirit move in us and inspire us to also be the agents of renewal in this land. May the Spirit Who has moved through this Great South Land and its people for thousands of generations bring it peace and healing.



# National Reconciliation Week Prayer/liturgy Resources

## Setting

An effort should be made to decorate the sanctuary with native flora, Indigenous artefacts, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags or colours. Didgeridoo music may be used at various stages in the liturgy where appropriate.



## Acknowledgement of Country

On this special day, a local Indigenous elder or representative should be invited to offer a welcome to country. If this is not possible, the presider or a member of the community should make an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the country where the liturgy is celebrated.

## Penitential Rite

You send out Your Spirit to renew the face of the Earth.  
Lord have mercy.

You breathe Your Spirit of peace on us.  
Christ have mercy

You call us to bring healing and reconciliation.  
Lord have mercy

## Prayers of Intercession

The following prayers may be included along with other intercessions:

As we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the referendum which recognised Indigenous people as citizens, may our nation's leaders fully commit themselves to concerted action to urgently address the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in their life expectancy, health, education and other living standards.  
Lord hear us.

May Your renewing Spirit inspire the Church to continue its work to promote healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.  
Lord hear us.

## Some Prayers

*The following prayers may be used at appropriate points in the liturgy:*

Great Creator God,  
In Jesus Christ you came among us  
to bring us life in all its fullness  
and to nourish us with your goodness.  
Grant that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
children  
may not be robbed of strength and vitality,  
but fed, from cradle to grave, with all they need  
to thrive.  
Through the power of your life-giving and  
sustaining Spirit. Amen.

Give us hands of hope, O Lord:  
hands to open to give and to receive,  
hands to reach out in care and in support,  
hands to cradle and to play,



hands to share your life-giving grace.  
In the name of Mary's child. Amen

Your people are weary, Tireless One  
your people are weary, and the road is long.  
Your people are hungry, Generous One  
Your people are hungry,  
and the food is scarce.  
Your people lack hope, Never-Failing One  
your people lack hope,  
and they see no sign of light.  
Your people are battered, Making One  
your people are battered,  
and they have no strength to rise.  
Give to the weary, homecoming.  
Give to the hungry, bread.  
Give to the hopeless,  
the light of your consolation.  
Give to the battered, strength to rise up,  
and to all your people, justice and peace.  
Amen.  
(From NATSIEC Make Indigenous Poverty History  
resources)

### Dismissal

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.  
Your Spirit has moved through this ancient  
land for thousands of generations.  
May Your Spirit of Peace bring new hope to  
all who hunger for healing in our land.  
Amen  
Your disciples received the gift of Your Spirit  
of love on the first Pentecost.  
May Your Church, strengthened by Your  
Spirit, be a beacon of love in this Great  
South Land.  
Amen.  
Your Spirit nurtures a burning passion for  
justice.  
May all those who have been baptised in the  
Spirit joyfully respond to Your call to stand  
alongside our Indigenous sisters and brothers  
and all those who are poor.  
Amen.  
And may Almighty God bless you, in the  
name of the Father, the Son and the Holy  
Spirit.  
Amen.  
Go, in the Spirit, to bring God's message of  
reconciliation and healing to all in our land.  
Thanks be to God.

*NB The National Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission's  
Make Indigenous Poverty History Campaign  
has produced many useful prayer and liturgy  
resources which you may wish to incorporate  
into your liturgies during National  
Reconciliation Week. Go to their website at  
[http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenous-  
poverty](http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenous-poverty)*



# A RITUAL FOR NATIONAL SORRY DAY

## Setting

In the place where the ritual is held, a map of Australia, made from soil or sand, is created on the ground or floor. The people assemble in circles around this centrepiece. Indigenous flags and symbols and other appropriate items such as gum leaves may be used to decorate the ritual place. Didgeridoo music may be played to begin the ritual.

## Welcome or Acknowledgement of Country

An Indigenous person from the community or local area is invited to offer a welcome to country or, if there is no local elder available, an acknowledgement of country.

## Prayer for the Journey of Healing

Leader:

We gather today to remember all those Indigenous Australians affected by the practice of forcibly removing children from their families and communities. We remember with great sorrow the pain and suffering this caused and we ask God to help us to work for healing. Let us pray together the Prayer for the Journey of Healing.

All:

Almighty and loving God, you who created ALL people in your image,  
Lead us to seek your compassion as we listen to the stories of our past.  
You gave your only Son, Jesus, who died and rose again so that sins will be forgiven.  
We place before you the pain and anguish of dispossession of land, language, lore, culture and family kinship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced.  
We live in faith that all people will rise from the depths of despair and hopelessness.  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have endured the pain and loss of loved ones, through the separation of children from their families.  
We are sorry and ask Your forgiveness.  
Touch the hearts of the broken, homeless and inflicted and heal their spirits.  
In your mercy and compassion walk with us as we continue our journey of healing to create a future that is just and equitable.  
Lord, you are our hope.  
Amen.

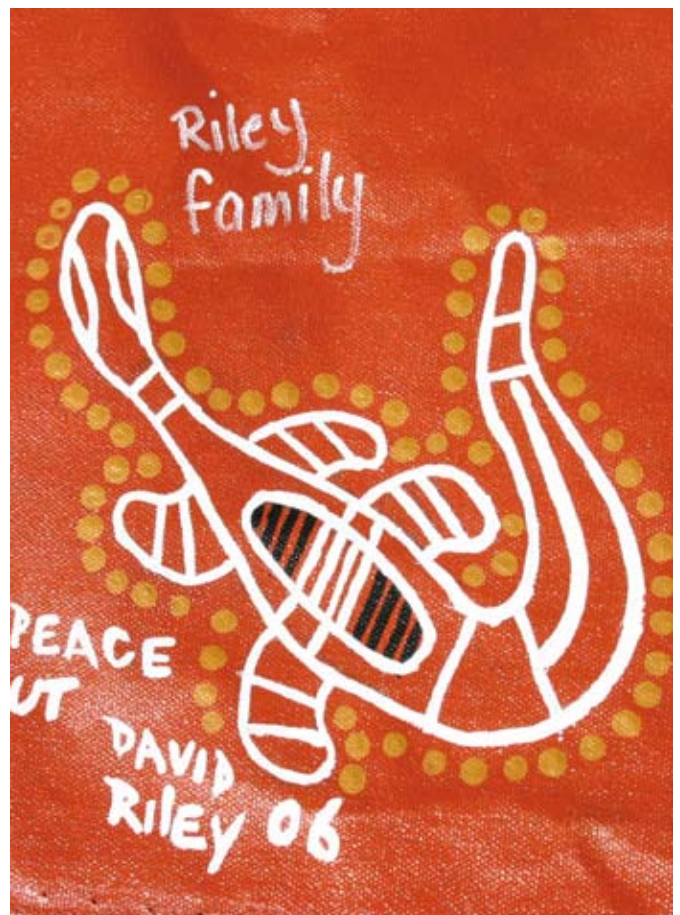
© National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission

## Scripture Reading

*A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (18: 1 – 7).*

At that time the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of things that cause sin! Such things must come, but woe to the one through whom they come!  
The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.



## Expression of Sorrow

As each of the following expressions of sorrow is recited, a lit candle in a holder is placed at a different spot on the map of Australia:

Leader: They took the children away from their mothers, their fathers and their families.

All: We are sorry.

Leader: They told the children their mothers did not love them.

All: We are sorry.

Leader: They wanted the children to lose their culture and spirituality.

All: We are sorry.

Leader: They wanted the children to lose their identity as Indigenous people.

All: We are sorry.

Leader: Many parents never saw their children again.

All: We are sorry.

Leader: Many of the survivors suffered great hardship and pain.

All: We are sorry.

Leader: Some of the survivors do not know how to love.

All: We are sorry.

Leader: A great wrong was done.

All: We are sorry.

After a period of silent prayer and reflection, one by one, a flower is placed beside each candle on the map and the following is said each time:

Leader: God of mercy

All: Wipe away their tears with compassion and justice.

A suitable song such as "Brown Skin Baby" (see the CD "Burraay – Dreaming Them Home") is then sung or a recording is played.

## Prayer of Commitment

Leader: We pray together in hope for healing through justice.

All:

Dear God ...

We who have come from every land give thanks for Australia;

this earth that feeds us;

the shores that bind us;

the skies that envelop us in freedom.

We stand together, united as one people:

proud of our ability to work together;

grateful for our gifts;

nourished by our diversity and our harmony.

Yet we turn to the original owners of our land and see, too, what we have taken.

We weep for their loss of freedom, of country, of children -

even of their very lives

We stand in awe at their survival, and in debt for their land.

We have shadows in our history which if unfaced diminish us

We have taken without asking;

Our nation has taken without asking;

Lives are wounded. We see the pain, feel the sorrow and seek forgiveness

Let us look back with courage; see the truth and speak it.

Let us look around with compassion; see the cost and share it.

Let us look forward with hope; see what can be and create it.

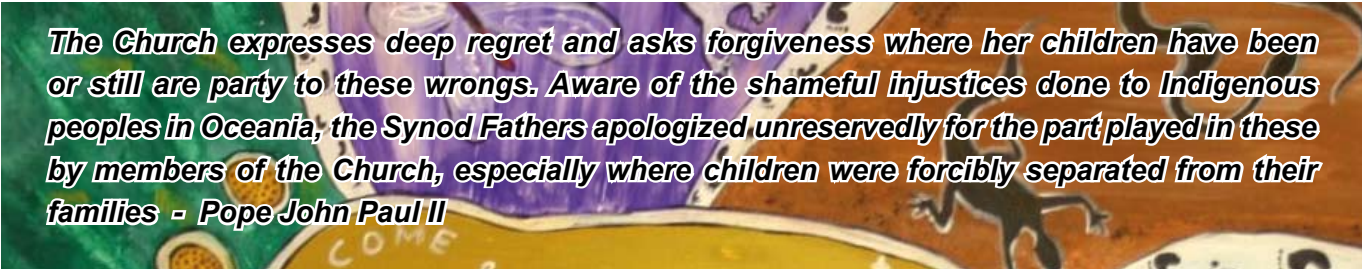
Give us courage to face the truth;

compassion to share the burden -

strength to play our part in the healing -

and hope to walk forward to a place of justice.

With courage, compassion, strength and hope, we will walk together on the journey of healing. Amen.



***The Church expresses deep regret and asks forgiveness where her children have been or still are party to these wrongs. Aware of the shameful injustices done to Indigenous peoples in Oceania, the Synod Fathers apologized unreservedly for the part played in these by members of the Church, especially where children were forcibly separated from their families - Pope John Paul II***

## SAMPLE NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL FOR PARISHES AND SCHOOLS

Australia is in the midst of a long period of economic prosperity. Sustained by a resources boom, our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in decades. We are highly educated, healthy and living longer. Despite some problems such as the current pressure on our water supplies, we have every right to claim the status of "the Lucky Country."

Yet, in the midst of our national good fortune, one group of people, the first Australians, is missing out! Whatever indicator of living standards you look at, Indigenous Australians fare poorly; and the standard of Indigenous health in this country demonstrates this point all too well!

It is astounding that, for Indigenous people, rates of diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory and renal disease are many times higher than for the general population. Infant mortality for Indigenous Australians is three times the rate for the rest of our community. Most appalling of all is the fact that, in the 21st Century, Indigenous people live 17 years less than other Australians. In many respects, the health standards of Indigenous Australians are as poor as that of people in some of the poorest countries in the world such as Bangladesh and Mozambique.

Why is it that other countries such as the USA, New Zealand and Canada have achieved rapid reductions in the life expectancy gap between their Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens, while Australia's progress has been incredibly slow?

The Australian Medical Association tells us that Australia has failed to achieve satisfactory progress because of a lack of political will. The body which represents many of Australia's doctors tells us that health services for Indigenous Australians are under-funded by \$450 million per year. They say that the rate of increase in Indigenous health funding has not been enough to achieve the improvements seen in other Western nations where the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is 7 years.

Today is the beginning of National Reconciliation Week, a time when we reflect on what has been achieved in healing the divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and when we look forward to what more we can do to promote reconciliation. It also happens to be the 40th anniversary of the famous referendum which finally ensured that Indigenous people were counted as Australian citizens and when the Federal Government was given the power to pass laws on their behalf. How far can we honestly say that we have come in the last forty years indigenous people have been so clearly deprived of their right as citizens to the provision of decent health services?

Today, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church's mission to proclaim Jesus' good news for the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden. Just as Jesus stood with all those who suffered exclusion and oppression, we, as his faithful witnesses, are charged with the responsibility of standing with those who suffer in our own time and place.

On this Pentecost Sunday, let us remember that we, too, have been anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to bring good news to the poor. May the Holy Spirit Who gave the Apostles the courage to proclaim Jesus' message two thousand years ago also give us the courage to be witnesses of Jesus' Good News in our land today. Let us not be satisfied until our leaders on all sides of politics have listened to the pain of our Indigenous sisters and brothers and implemented measures to improve their health and living standards so that they can, at last, take their rightful place as equals alongside their fellow citizens in this "Lucky Country".



# Key Issues for Reconciliation

In 2006, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement, *The Heart of Our Country: Dignity and Justice for Our Indigenous Sisters and Brothers*, the Bishops called on the Church in Australia to "reclaim the message" of Pope John Paul II, delivered to Indigenous people in Alice Springs in 1986.

The four key themes of the Pope's message, as identified in the Statement, provide parishes, schools, agencies and individuals with a framework for developing their commitment to reconciliation, a programme which enables them to "reclaim the message" in a concrete way.

You can read the Bishops' Statement on the website of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) at <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

## 1. Preservation of Indigenous Culture

The Bishops reminded us that the Pope challenged all Australians to ensure the preservation of Indigenous cultures and to keep working for an inclusive multicultural Australia.

The Church celebrates the gift of Indigenous people and their culture on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday at the start of NAIDOC Week each July. NAIDOC Week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Indigenous Australians.

To find out more about NAIDOC Week, go to <http://www.naidoc.org.au/>

## 2 Seeking Points of Agreement between Indigenous Traditions and Those of Jesus

Pope John Paul II also called us to seek and explore the points of agreement between Indigenous traditions and those of Jesus and all his people.

Two places where Indigenous Christians are able to bring their spirituality and culture into dialogue with their Christian faith are Nungalinya College and Wontulp-Bi-Buya College.

You can find out more about Nungalinya College at: <http://www.nungalinya.edu.au/> and about Wontulp-Bi-Buya College at: <http://www.wontulp.qld.edu.au/>

## 3 Caring for the Land

The Holy Father also praised the way the Indigenous peoples had cared for the land and then challenged us to learn together how to preserve our fragile environment.

The 1992 High Court decision in the Mabo case recognised the existence of native title rights for Indigenous Australians. Australia's Bishops, in their 2006 Social Justice Statement, acknowledged the importance of this decision for Indigenous people and opposed erosion of these rights.

You may learn more about native title on the website of the National Native Title Tribunal which has much information including a series of native title fact sheets. Go to <http://nntt.org.au> You may also find out more about this important issue by going to the Native Title Report of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mr Tom Calma at [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social\\_justice/native\\_title/index.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/native_title/index.html).



## 4 Addressing Past Hurts and Injustices

By naming past hurts and continuing injustices, John Paul II confronted us as a nation with the need to move towards true reconciliation.

We need to face up to the truth of these past wrongs and to the equally confronting truth that these wrongs are, in large part, the root cause of enormous disadvantage for Indigenous Australians.

For just about every social and economic indicator, Indigenous Australians lag far behind their non-Indigenous counterparts. Indigenous people live 17 years less, on average, than other Australians; and this large gap is also seen when you compare standards for such indicators as health, education, employment, housing and incarceration rates.

**You can find information about these issues at a number of websites:**



### ***Social Justice***

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Report may be found at [http://www.humanrights.org.au/social\\_justice/](http://www.humanrights.org.au/social_justice/)

### ***Make Indigenous Poverty History***

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Council (NATSIEC) has initiated a campaign to take action on the gross disadvantage faced by Indigenous Australians. It has a significant range of resources for prayer, study and action. Its latest initiative, Forty Days of Action for Forty Years of Inaction, taps into the fortieth anniversary of the 1967 referendum and calls on Christians to use a number of relevant dates in the year as focus points for action on Indigenous poverty and disadvantage.

All these resources can be found on the NATSIEC website at [http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenous\\_poverty/](http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenous_poverty/)

### ***Indigenous Health***

The gap between the health standards of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is a key focus of National Reconciliation Week this year. A number of organisations have produced valuable information and campaigns on this issue: Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) has enlisted the support of Catherine Freeman and Ian Thorpe to launch the campaign of more than forty community organisations to close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. You can participate in this effort through ANTaR's On-Line Sea of Hands Campaign at [http://www.antar.org.au/sea\\_of\\_hands/](http://www.antar.org.au/sea_of_hands/)

Oxfam Australia is also participating in this effort by launching its Close the Gap campaign and you can find out more at <http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/indigenous/action.php>

The Fred Hollows Foundation has an excellent kit on Indigenous health in Australia at <http://www.hollows.org/content/TextOnly.aspx?s=146>

### ***The Stolen Generations***

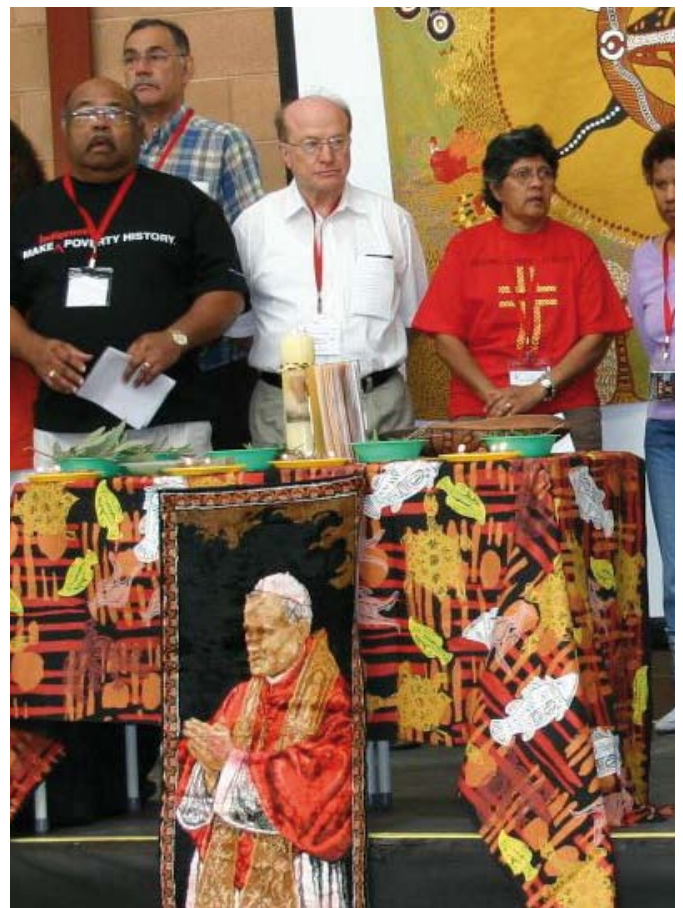
For much of the twentieth century, many Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities as Government policy. The people who were taken away became known as “the stolen generations.” In 1995, the Federal Government instructed the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) to undertake an enquiry into the history and impacts of this policy and to make recommendations for reparations and compensation. HREOC’s report, *Bringing Them Home*, was handed to the Government in 1996. To find out more about the Stolen Generations and ways you can get involved in this issue you can go to the National Sorry Day Committee’s website at <http://www.nsd.org.au/>

### ***Deaths in Custody***

The death in custody of Palm Island man, Mulrunje Doomadgee, in 2005 has highlighted the unresolved problem and tragedy of Aboriginal deaths in custody. The 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody examined this critical issue in great detail. Its findings and recommendations provide a clear picture of the problems and what is needed. A summary of the report may be found at [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/rciadic/rciadic\\_summary/rcsumk01.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/rciadic/rciadic_summary/rcsumk01.html)

### ***Stolen Wages***

For much of the twentieth century, many Indigenous workers had their wages placed in trust as a matter of Government policy. However, this money was often used for other purposes and many workers were never able to obtain the money for which they had worked. Various State Governments, including the Queensland Government, have made attempts to address this injustice, but these attempts have generally met with the disapproval of most Indigenous people. Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) has been involved in working with Indigenous people campaigning for justice on the stolen wages issue. To find out more about the issue, including what the 2006 Senate Inquiry into the issue found, you can go to the national ANTaR site at [http://www.antar.org.au/issues/stolen\\_wages/](http://www.antar.org.au/issues/stolen_wages/) or to ANTaR Queensland’s site at <http://www.antarqld.org.au/>



# Gathering of the Voices Conference 2001 : RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Indigenous Chaplaincy and Clergy

That measures be taken by the Churches to address the inconsistencies between mainstream and Indigenous Ministries regarding support mechanisms, adequate resources, training opportunities and appropriate budget allocations.

## 2. Resources

That churches and religious organisations commit to: (a) funding of resources in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ministries to enable adequate Ministry service delivery, and (b) provide clearer information about processes, responsibilities and access to funding bodies.

## 3. Church Structures and Processes

That church and religious organisations address the inequality and discrimination within their structures which impact on Indigenous Ministry by developing and implementing culturally supportive structures.

## 4. Training

That church and religious organisations support current Indigenous training bodies (Nungalinga, Wontuplp-Bi-Buya) to further develop accessible, relevant, culturally inclusive and appropriate programs (and effective support mechanisms and theology).

## 5. Indigenous Church Leadership

That Indigenous church leaders be included in the decision making process involving Indigenous issues throughout all stages of the process.

## 6. Indigenous Healing

That Spiritual Healing and Development Centres/ Spaces are vital for the wholistic well-being of Ministry Workers and need to be established.

## 7. Sitting, Talking, Working Together

That there be a National Conference for all voices with Indigenous and non-Indigenous coming together; and, that National Indigenous Ministries Gatherings need to continue to happen at least every 2 years.

## 8. Cultural Awareness Training

That Cultural Awareness Training be implemented throughout all the churches (non-Indigenous, lay people, religious, governing bodies, etc.) particularly those entering into Indigenous Ministries/Communities.

## 9. Racism

That Gathering of the Voices participants state strongly to the churches that for Aboriginal people racism is ongoing and continues in this country and it impacts heavily on their daily lives.

## 10. Reconciliation

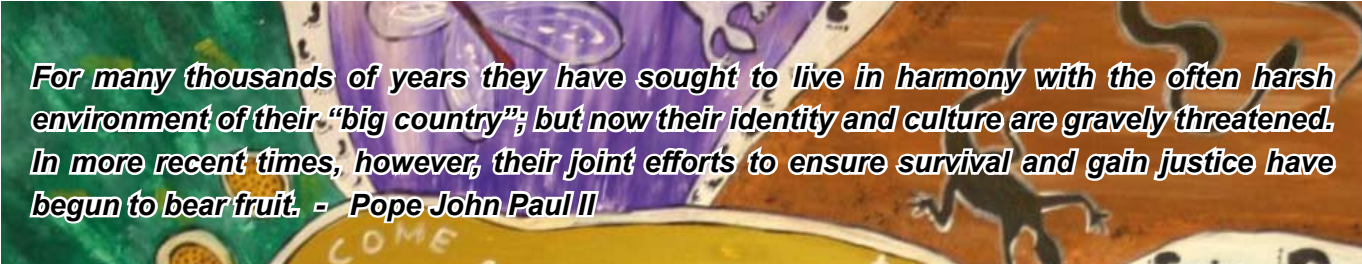
That all churches need to play a bigger role in the Reconciliation process in Australia.

## 11. Elders

That Elders continue to play an active role in community and church matters.

## 12. Protocols

That churches and religious organisations need to acknowledge and implement Indigenous protocols which have continued to be observed and practised by Indigenous people for thousands of years.



***For many thousands of years they have sought to live in harmony with the often harsh environment of their "big country"; but now their identity and culture are gravely threatened. In more recent times, however, their joint efforts to ensure survival and gain justice have begun to bear fruit. - Pope John Paul II***



## The Acknowledgement Protocol

There are many reasons for the acknowledgement protocol – because of our way of life. My understanding of the acknowledgement protocol is that it is based on the protocol of acknowledgement of another's country and the process to walk through country that wasn't your own.

Also, there is a deeper understanding of crossing onto someone else's Dreaming place. Their Dreaming is not your Dreaming and it is very important to acknowledge one's presence in that land and get permission for being there or even before entering onto that other's land. Sometimes permission was given and sometimes it was not depending on local activity at the time be it ceremonial, seasonal, nature of request etc.

The acknowledgement that we do today of acknowledging the Traditional people is more or less based on respect of that group who lived their way of life and traditions for a long time before the invasion of their country.

So, in a sense, we are still carrying on that traditional way of seeking permission, acknowledging the people and the past and present.

Today in contemporary Australia we can travel anywhere across the country. Aboriginal people continue to acknowledge their presence in another's country and acknowledge the Traditional peoples' custodianship of that land in keeping with our spiritual beliefs and traditions.

We invite all Australians to participate in this protocol to respect our ancestors and the traditional custodians of the many countries who lived upon this land.

*Kerry Charlton, Ravina Waldren, Evelyn Parkin*

### Some Stepping Stones to guide the process:

1. **Go Local** – who are the local Indigenous people in your parish, school, agency, community? They are appropriate people to approach for assistance.
2. **Don't go too big** if you're new to this – invite those interested to be part of your Reconciliation Aboriginal reference group and remember small is achievable to start the ball rolling.
3. **A partnerships approach** is important. If people approached are reluctant, ask them for some other contacts or contact other local Indigenous group or organizations for assistance. (local Aboriginal Catholic ministry groups, parish workers, Catholic Education Offices, local Elders groups)
4. **Financial considerations** are important. Be honourable in the engagement of Aboriginal participants. Factor in costs for materials, travel and a small fee for service if applicable. Many Indigenous people rely heavily on public transport or others for transport. Elders will usually need transport arranged for their involvement and taxi vouchers/fares need to be supplied.
5. **Seek and take the advice** on planned activities. Identify the appropriate processes and steps for working with Indigenous peoples. Ensure everyone is okay with the processes and plans. Check as you go that you are inclusive of everyone's ideas or concerns. Aboriginal people also have their own ways of doing things.
6. **Learn to really listen** for the ways forward and check-ins are key to the process.
7. **Transparency and open communication** are necessary so keep everyone informed by sharing all the relevant information.
8. **A "WE" approach** rather than "I" is best and the ownership needs to be group owned rather than one individual controlling all.
9. **Take the Time** to build a foundation of trust and understanding. The process is as important as the outcome.
10. **Tokenism is out.** Make the effort to keep the relationship and shared activity going. Don't just contact Aboriginal and Islander people once a year during Reconciliation or NAIDOC week. Keep the network alive and develop ways to build and grow together.

*Kerry Charlton*

## BRINGING THEM HOME TEN YEARS ON

A key recommendation of the Bringing Them Home report was that reparations should be made to those Indigenous people affected by the policy of forcibly removing children from their families. The report indicated that it should include monetary compensation, an acknowledgement of responsibility and an apology from all governments, police forces and churches responsible for the policy, restitution and rehabilitation.

Since the publication of the report, all State and Territory Governments have apologised to the Stolen Generations. The Commonwealth Government, however, has chosen not to apologise. The Prime Minister, John Howard, expressed his personal sorrow at the Reconciliation Convention in 1997, but indicated that Australians today should not be asked to accept blame for past policies and practices over which they have no control. The Commonwealth Parliament passed a motion of reconciliation on 26 August. In the motion, it expressed its deep and sincere regret for past injustices.

Many churches and non-government organisations have made an apology for their part in the practice of forcible removal and many individuals have signed Sorry Books since the inaugural Sorry Day in 1998.

Senator John Herron, as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, delivered the Federal Government's formal response to the report on 16 December 1997. It included a \$63 million package over a four year period to provide practical support to members of the Stolen Generations. Some of these funds were given to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) which established the Bringing Them Home Task Group. Funds were provided to establish a dedicated Link-Up service in each State and Territory.

The Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee undertook an inquiry into the implementation of the report's recommendations and handed down its report in November 2000. Its principal recommendations focussed on the development of processes to monitor and report on responses to the recommendations of Bringing Them Home and on the establishment of a Reparations Tribunal. The Federal Government agreed that proper monitoring and reporting procedures were necessary and announced a \$53.9 million package to provide family reunion and health services past 2002 until 2006. It rejected the proposal for the establishment of a Reparations Tribunal.



The Federal Government argued that a Reparations Tribunal would expose claimants to the same stress and complexity as they would if they took court action to obtain compensation. It said claimants would face similar challenges in establishing their qualifications for compensation before an administrative tribunal. In addition, the Government argued that the States were responsible for implementing the policy and that the Commonwealth should not be held responsible for providing compensation on behalf of the States nor for non-government organisations involved in the implementation of the policy. It argued that the States and non-government organisations should be held accountable separately.

A number of individuals have sought reparations through the courts, but most have been unsuccessful in obtaining monetary compensation.

In November 2006, the Tasmanian Parliament passed legislation establishing the first compensation package for members of the Stolen Generations. The legislation was passed unanimously in the Lower House after historic addresses to the House of Assembly by two members of the Stolen Generations, Eddie Thomas and Annette Peardon who told the story of their being taken away from their families as children. The legislation was passed in the Upper House with the support of three Independent Members.

The law enables both members of the Stolen Generations and children of deceased members to claim compensation from the \$5 million package. Determinations will be made by an independent Stolen Generations Assessor.

Ms Peardon and other members of the Stolen Generations called on other States and the Commonwealth to follow the lead of the Tasmanian Government.

Link-Up services are experiencing greater difficulty in continuing to provide assistance to members of the Stolen Generations in recent times as funding becomes more uncertain.

The National Sorry Day Committee has launched its ten years anniversary campaign, calling on organisations and groups to adopt one of the 54 Bringing Them Home recommendations and taking action to advocate for its full implementation. To find out more, go to the Committee's new website at <http://www.nsd.org.au/>



## Many Voices

The Federal Government and the National Sorry Day Committee reached agreement on the content and design of a memorial which was installed at Reconciliation Place in Canberra. The memorial recognises the great injustice of the past practice of separating Indigenous children from their families.

It was unveiled on Sorry Day in 2004 and honours the stolen generations and 'all those, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, whose genuine care softened the impact of what are now recognised as cruel and misguided policies. Through quotes from those involved, it describes the impact of these policies. The text came out of consultation with hundreds of the stolen generations and those who staffed the institutions or fostered or adopted removed children.

As South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has shown, the truth about what happened is a vital step on the road to reconciliation. This memorial enables more Australians to hear the many voices of those whose lives were greatly affected by the policy of forcible removal and those who were involved in carrying it out.



### ***Text for the Stolen Generations Memorial at Reconciliation Place***

*(agreed to by the Federal Government and the National Sorry Day Committee)*

#### ***“THEY TOOK THE CHILDREN AWAY”***

For 150 years until the 1970s, many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were removed from their families, with the authorisation of Australian governments, to be raised in institutions, or fostered or adopted by non-indigenous families. Some were given up by parents seeking a better life for their children. Many were forcibly removed and see themselves as 'the stolen generations'. Many of these children experienced overwhelming grief, and the loss of childhood and innocence, family and family relationships, identity, language and culture, country and spirituality. Their elders, parents and communities have experienced fear and trauma, emptiness, dis-empowerment, endless grieving, shame and failure. Most who looked after the removed children believed they were offering them a better future, and did all they could to provide loving care. Some abused and exploited the children.

This place honours the people who have suffered under these policies and practices. It also honours those Indigenous and non-Indigenous people whose genuine care softened the tragic impact of what are now recognised as cruel and misguided policies.

In 1937 the first Commonwealth-State Native Welfare Conference, affirming the policies of previous decades,

resolved that “the destiny of the natives of Aboriginal origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end”.

“Are we going to have a population of one million blacks, or are we going to merge them into our white community and eventually forget that there were any Aborigines in Australia?” A O Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Western Australia, speaking at the conference in 1937.

“I would not hesitate for one moment to separate any half-caste child from the Aboriginal mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief might be at the time. They soon forget their offspring.” James Isdell, Travelling Protector, Western Australia, 1909.

***Reproduction of a letter from W Bray of Alice Springs, Alice Springs, Central Australia April 1, 1941***

Protector Aborigines

Dear Sir

I myself and my wife, both of us half-castes we understand, do not want any of our children removed out of this Central Australia, their country. It would not be fair to us, the loss of them. Also not fair to them the loss of their parents, causing crying and fretting. We parents, born Aritunga Goldfields, children also, except one, he being the eldest, Norman. He born Deep Well, part of the east-west running James Range. We were all born here in Central Australia, we don't know any other parts, and we don't want to. Will you please place this Protest, as we do not understand any forcible removal, of any of us, from this Central Australia, our birthright country.

Yours sincerely

W Bray

***Many similar letters were written by other parents  
(Quotes from those who were removed)***

“We had been playing all together...then the air filled with screams because the police came and mother tried to hide their children...Six of us were put on an old truck and taken to Oodnadatta.”

“I remember this woman saying to me, ‘your mother’s dead. That’s why you’re here with us.’ Two years after that my mother and her sister came to the Bungalow but they weren’t allowed to visit us because they were black.”

“I didn’t know any Aboriginal people at all, none at all. I was placed in a white family and I was just – I was white.”

“Dormitory life was like living in hell. It was not a life. The only things that sort of came out of it was how to work, how to clean...But we got a lot of bashings.”

“I ran away because my foster father used to tamper with me and I’d had enough. I went to the police but they didn’t believe me.”

“We were all happy together, us kids. We had two very wonderful old ladies that looked after us.”



“Another thing we find hard is giving our children love. We never had it. So we don’t know how to tell our kids that we love them. All we do is protect them. I can’t even cuddle my kids ‘cause I never got cuddled.”

“The nuns and fathers at Beagle Bay were good to us. We learnt at school there, we worked in the gardens and there was plenty of food. But my mother’s heart was broken, and soon after she was admitted to Claremont Mental Hospital where she died.”

“Through all these years - from five-and-a-half months to 18 years of age - my mother never gave up trying to locate me. She wrote many letters to the State welfare department, pleading to give her son back. All these letters were shelved. The department rejected and scoffed at all my mother’s cries for help.”

“We went there to be brought up as white kids, but when we left there we were Aborigines, second-class citizens and we were nothing.”

***(Quotes from the carers)***

“To my knowledge nobody ever discussed how or why the children had been placed there. We took for granted that we were doing the right thing. I saw my job as giving care and imparting understanding and self-esteem.”

“I cannot comment on other missionary enterprises. Moore River Settlement, at that time however, failed to achieve what was intended due to its location, lack of facilities and inadequate finance.”

“We would get a message on the radio from Welfare in Darwin to say that a certain plane would be coming out and there would be three children there for us... We knew their name, their date of birth... but there was no official information beyond that.”

“We read in the newspapers that there were young Aboriginal children who were not being adopted and would go into orphanages. So, against the advice of some people, we went ahead. We didn’t realise the identity issues that would arise.”

“To me, they were children, that’s that. I never thought about what colour their skin was... they were there for me to mother - and it had to be mothering, not just caring.”

The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (known as the Bringing Them Home report) recommended in 1997 that reparation, including acknowledgment and apology, be made to all who suffered because of forcible removal policies. Its recommendations were directed to all Australian governments, the churches and others involved in those policies.

On 26 August 1999, both Houses of Parliament endorsed a Commonwealth government’s Motion of Reconciliation. Through this motion, the national parliament:

- expressed its deep and sincere regret that Indigenous Australians suffered injustice under the practices of past generations, and for the hurt and trauma that many Indigenous people continue to feel as a consequence of these practices; and
- reaffirmed a whole-hearted commitment to the cause of reconciliation between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians as an important national priority for all Australians.

“The impacts of the removal policies continue to resound through the generations of Indigenous families. The overwhelming evidence is that the impact does not stop with the children removed. It is inherited by their own children in complex and sometimes heightened ways.” Bringing Them Home Report, 1997


We the removed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of Australia would urge you to look through our eyes and walk in our footsteps, to be able to understand our pain. We call on all Australians to acknowledge the truth of our history, to enable us to move forward together on our journey of healing, because it is only the truth that will set us all free.



# Did You Know?

## A quick overview of landmark events that have impacted upon Indigenous people in Australia

- 1770 - Captain James Cook proclaims the whole of the east coast of Australia for Britain as 'New South Wales'.
- 1788 - The arrival of the First Fleet of officials, marines and convicts from England.
- 1790 - 1802 - Pemulwuy leads Eora resistance to white occupation.
- 1868 - First Australian Cricket team to tour overseas is Aboriginal.
- 1888 - Aborigines boycott centenary celebrations.
- 1932 - Australian Aborigines League formed.
- 1937 - Aborigines Progressive Association formed.
- 1938 - One hundred and fifty years of occupation - Day of Mourning, Protest and Conference, Sydney.
- 1958 - Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders formed.
- 1965 - Charles Perkins and Gerry Mason lead freedom rides throughout NSW to protest against segregation.
- 1967 - Federal referendum gives Aborigines the right to vote and citizenship rights. ('Yes' vote 90.77%)
- 1968 - Council for Aboriginal Affairs established to advise Commonwealth Government. Lionel Rose named Australian of the Year.
- 1969 - ABSTUDY introduced to assist Aboriginal students.
- 1971 - Aborigines included in national census for the first time. Evonne Goolgong named Australian of the Year.
- 1972 - Aboriginal Tent Embassy set up on lawns of Parliament House to fight for land rights.
- 1973 - National Aboriginal Consultative Committee set up to assist Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.
- 1975 - Racial Discrimination Act passed.
- 1976 - Pat O'Shane graduates as first Aboriginal law student.
- 1997 - Commonwealth Development Employment Programme (CDEP) established as an employment creating scheme in indigenous communities.
- 1979 - Galarrwuy Yunipingu named Australian of the Year. Aboriginal Treaty Committee launches campaign for a treaty between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.
- 1981 - Pat O'Shane becomes head of NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
- 1982 - Mark Ella named Australian of the Year.
- 1983 - NSW passes Aboriginal Land Rights Act.
- 1984 - Charles Perkins becomes Secretary of Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Lowitja O'Donoghue named Australian of the Year.
- 1987 - Twentieth anniversary of Referendum. PM Hawke talks of Treaty with Indigenous people. Opposition Leader Howard objects. Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody commences.
- 1990 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Commission (ATSIC) is established as the main policy making body for Aboriginal affairs. Lowitja O'Donoghue is first Chairperson. Cathy Freeman name Australian of the Year and Mum Shirl named Aboriginal of the Year.
- 1991 - Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation formed, Pat Dodson first Chairperson.
- 1992 - Eddie Mabo and Meriam people win High Court case for recognition of native title. PM Keating's Redfern speech calls for reconciliation.
- 1993 - United Nations International Year of the World's Indigenous People. Native Title Act passed. Mandawuy Yunipingu named Australian of the Year. Mick Dodson becomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.
- 1996 - High Court Wik decision rules that pastoral leases do not extinguish native title. Promotion of anti-indigenous policies during federal election campaign.
- 1997 - Australian Reconciliation Convention, Melbourne. Ten Point Plan response to Wik decision enacted. Nova Peris-Kneebone named Young Australian of the Year.
- 1998 - ABSTUDY abolished. First National Sorry Day commemorates release of Bringing Them Home Report. UN issues racial discrimination warning over amended Native Title Act.
- 2000 - Corroboree 2000, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's culminating event. People's Walks for Reconciliation occur around Australia. 'Practical reconciliation' announced as the referred approach by the Australian government.
- 2001 - Council for Reconciliation replaced with private body Reconciliation Australia.
- 2004 - Australian government transfers service funding and responsibility from Indigenous bodies to mainstream government departments. The 'mutual obligation' approach to welfare recipients is extended to Indigenous funding through Shared Responsibility Agreements whereby communities commit to behavioural or other changes in return for extra funding for infrastructure or services. Such commitments are usually not required for grants to other sections of the community. CDEP funding for communities becomes dependent on negotiating an SRA.
- 2005 - ATSIC and its regional councils are abolished, removing elected indigenous representatives from policy development.
- 2006 - Media reports violence and abuse in remote Aboriginal communities. The rhetoric shocked many Australians. Many calls were made to place such issues into the wider context of indigenous dispossession, loss of culture and lack of services. The Australian government unveils a plan to move the system of Northern Territory land tenure from the communal basis of traditional land ownership to a system of private ownership rights.
- 2007 - Ten years since 1997 Reconciliation Convention. A National Reconciliation Convention is planned.

A large, reddish-brown rock formation, Uluru, dominates the background under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The sun is low on the left, creating a bright glow and long shadows. The foreground is a dry, scrubby landscape with sparse green and yellow vegetation.

### **Reconciliation Kit 2007 Brisbane Working Group**

Peter Arndt, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.  
Ravina Waldren, Murri Ministry of the Archdiocese of Brisbane  
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Barry Malezer, Kevin Eastment, Brisbane Catholic Education

### **Acknowledgements**

Faith and Life Vicariate of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.  
Centacare of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.  
Brisbane Catholic Education  
Reconciliation Kit 2005, 2006  
The Hour has Come - Sisters of St Joseph  
Photos - Tony Robertson

### **Enclosures**

Acknowledgement script card  
Prayer of the Aboriginal people  
The Lords Prayer in Jandai language, Moreton Bay  
Poster 1: Prayer for Reconciliation Poster  
Prayer for Reconciliation and Christian Unity Prayer Cards  
Murri Ministry brochure  
Catholic Justice and Peace Commission brochures  
National Day of Healing Brisbane Commemorative Plaque Dawn ceremonies schedule  
Reconciliation OHT

Publish and Print: Xavier Grafix May 2007