

# National Apology Day

13 February 2008

**A day for reflection and truth telling**



## Why National Apology Day matters

### Background – National Apology Day

National Apology Day, held on 13 February, is a time for all Australians to reflect on our shared history and the ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For much of Australia's colonial history, government laws and policies allowed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be forcibly removed from their families, communities and culture. These children are known as the Stolen Generations. Removals occurred over many decades and were often justified at the time as being in the child's best interests. We now recognise that these policies caused deep and lasting harm.

Children were separated from parents and siblings, disconnected from culture, language and identity, and placed in institutions or non-Aboriginal households. Many experienced trauma, loss and long term social and emotional harm that continues today.

### The Apology

In 1997, the national inquiry into these practices released [Bringing Them Home](#), documenting the lived experiences of those affected and the long term impacts of child removal.

On 13 February 2008, the Australian Parliament formally apologised to the Stolen Generations. Delivered by Kevin Rudd, the Apology acknowledged the harm caused and accepted responsibility for past wrongs.

For many survivors, the Apology was a powerful moment of recognition. National Apology Day reminds us that reconciliation is ongoing and requires continued truth telling, listening and action.

### How you can take action

Learn more about the Stolen Generations - [Bring Them Home](#) - Share this resource within your workplace and take a moment to reflect of how this has impacted and continue to impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today