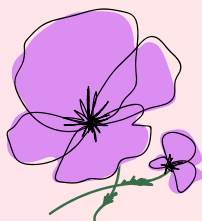
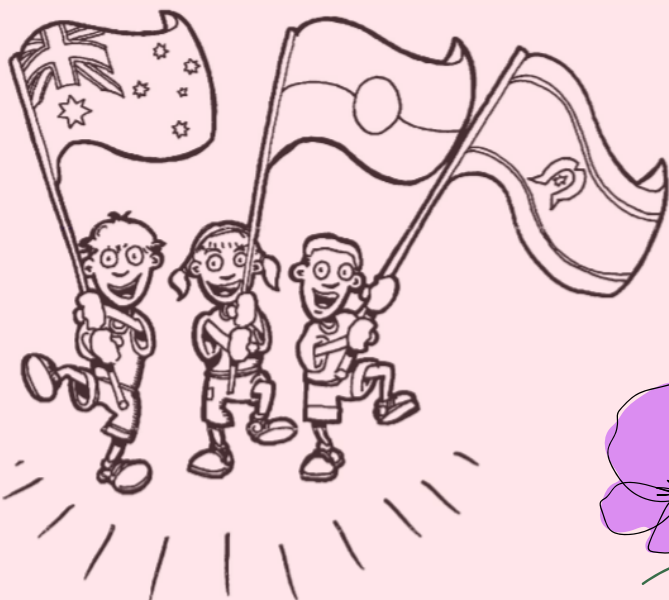


Towards a Just and Harmonious Future

Local historical perspectives on *National Sorry Day*

compiled by Aunty Bev Hickey for the
Noonga Reconciliation Group



Proudly supported by
Brisbane City Council



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 1
Noonga Reconciliation Group Inc.	Page 2
• Noonga Patron—Aunty Ruth Hegarty	Page 3-6
• Acknowledgement of Country	Page 7-8
Coming of the Mogwi (Europeans)	Page 9 - 10
Under the gaze of officialdom	Page 11 - 13
At the will of 'right-thinking' people	Page 14
• St Vincent's Orphanage - Industrial School for girls	Page 14
• Diamantina Receiving Depot	Page 15
• Magdalen Asylum - Holy Cross Retreat	Page 16
• Tufnell Homes	Page 17 - 18
A Journey of Healing	Page 19
Walking the Talk	Page 20
• Saying 'sorry' in Kalinga Park	Page 20 - 21
• Lord Mayor Jim Soorley statement & speech	Page 22 - 26
• Brisbane City Council Minutes, 26 May 1998	Page 27 - 28
• Australian Government Apology	Page 29 - 30
• Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apology	Page 31 - 32
• Stolen Generations - poems by Karen Lea and Fox Smith-Krcmar	Page 33 - 35
Useful Resources	
• Apology Timeline	Page 36 - 40
• Books	Page 41
• Websites	Page 41
• Places of Educational Interest	Page 42 - 43

Introduction

Noonga Reconciliation Group is proud to present this booklet to schools, individuals and organisations as a resource for local and historical perspectives and knowledge on the occasion for *National Sorry Day* 2014.

An important recommendation from the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* states

- *That curricula of schools at all levels should reflect the fact that Australia has an Aboriginal history and Aboriginal viewpoints on social, cultural and historical matters. It is essential that Aboriginal viewpoints, interests, perceptions and expectations are reflected in curricula teaching and administration of schools*

Ref: www.naa.gov.au/publications/fact_sheets/fs112.html

For Teachers:

Throughout the booklet a number of topics have been combined and may be used in a variety of ways for teaching both Primary and High School students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, particularly in relation to our 'local area'.

For example: On Page 9 the topic 'Coming of the 'Mogwi' (Europeans)' may be used for Year 5 curriculum under 'Time, Continuity and Change'. Look at the impact of white settlement, not only as to what it would have been like for the two cultures to co-habitate, but also, the consequences of 'free' settlement and the passing of numerous Government Acts and policies that put Aboriginal lives 'Under the gaze officialdom' (page 11).

For High School students the same topic may be used for a research project with a focus on the 'free' settlement but concentrating on the *Stolen Generations* and the laws that were passed and implemented over many years. Please refer to Pages 11 - 14 for the extensive Queensland law timeline.

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Noonga Reconciliation Group Inc.

Noonga Reconciliation Group (NRG) was established in August 1997 during the time of the Native Title debates. The group grew out of a realisation that non-Indigenous people lacked awareness of issues that impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

At the group's Annual General Meeting in 2007 the then President, Ted Chen, stated, "This year Noonga celebrates its tenth anniversary - ten years of building bridges, fighting for socially just causes and encouraging reconciliation through public education. We have had many successes and great memories, most of those are witnessed by the strong bonds we have created with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters and within our group."

In 2014 Noonga members (some of whom participated in the forming of the group fifteen years earlier) are proud to present this booklet which we trust will be a useful tool for teachers and students. Since 1998 Noonga has hosted National Sorry Day ceremonies at the *Stolen Generations* memorial site in Kalinga Park. The site was chosen because it sits in the vicinity of homes and institutions where Aboriginal children were taken 'for their own good' between 1897 and 1970.

We still have much to learn about the Aboriginal people who lived on and cared for the land in this area; the history of the coming of German missionaries to *civilise* and *Christianise* the natives of this area; and the laws, practices and policies of forcible removal that resulted in so many Aboriginal children becoming members of the *Stolen Generations*.

***May this booklet be but a small contribution, in the spirit of reconciliation,
to your life-long journey of learning***



***They took the children away - Our souls will cry no more
For now we are going home.***

Noonga Reconciliation Group Inc.

Noonga patron, Aunty Ruth Hegarty, is a Gungurri woman, Elder, author and community activist who continues to be the group's inspiration, mentor and friend.

Aunty Ruth was one of the many Aboriginal people who gave evidence about their experiences of forcible removal when the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families was conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission from 1995.

Peggy: Confidential evidence 404, Queensland, 1930s.

My family went to Cherbourg. They volunteered to go there during the Depression. So I would have been about 6 months old when grandfather, who was, I mean, he was independent. He had eight kids all birthed out in the trees you know, under the stars. My mother spoke her own language. She had me with the promise to marry my father. And then when the Depression came they talked to the policeman. He said go to Barambah. When things get better come back out again. He was the Protector so he sent them there. The thing is though; when we got there you got caught up in the system. You weren't allowed out anymore.

The decision that my grandfather made at the time, he didn't know that would split his whole family up. My Dad was away. He thought we had died. He didn't know what had happened. No-one else seemed to know where we had disappeared to. The whole family went to Cherbourg. Mum said when they got there they were immediately split up. Mum said the superintendent said, 'Agnes, you can't live in the camp with your small baby and you have to go into the dormitory'.

She said, 'Well, they offered the dormitory to me, so I took you there'. I was 6 months old. Because the dormitory is such a big place and it's made up, you know...its split that was [in half] downstairs with your women that side, your girls that side.

I stayed with my mum for 4 years that side with the other mothers. The boys went into the boys' home-my grandfather's sons. And he had Mum's younger sister and younger brother-they stayed with the old people. But the rest of them-the boys-were put in a home. Mum was put in the dormitory. I stayed with her until I was 4 years of age. You slept with your mother because there was basically room for a cot or anything and for the 4 years you're there living with her.

But when I turned 4, and because I was such an intelligent child, sneaking off to school because all the other kids are going...matron made the decision that, 'Peggy has to go to school', and so immediately that decision was made, I was transferred over to this section.

I was taken away from her. Separating her from me was a grill. There was chicken wire across there. That was the extent of how far you could go to this [other] side.

Once you were separated from your Mum, you're not to go back to her again. Absolutely no interaction. You have a bed on your own. No contact during the day. I'm out of her control. She is no longer actually my mother type of thing. So you go under the care and control of the Government. That's what happened.

No-one said anything to me. No-one said anything to her but everybody else in that section knew that this is what happened. And most of those women, my mother tells me, kept their children on the breast for a long, long time, because that bonding was going to be broken at some stage and so keeping their children close to them was the only thing that they had. I've always been an angry child. Very angry. I don't remember much about this section with my mother. I remember nothing. It embarrasses me when she talks of me running to her for cuddles and she'll say, 'I fed you on my titties'. And I get rather embarrassed because I don't remember that time with her.

I can remember sitting here at this grill...

But I can remember sitting here at this grill on that side waiting for her to come out of the door of one of these wards here so that I can just see her. She wouldn't come out because it hurt her to see me over this side. I turned 5 around July. I went to school, but then she had to go to work. So we had that removal from our grandparents, her family, then I was removed from her and I then became the victim.

She ate on this side and I ate on that side. Birthdays were arranged. No, I never saw her on birthdays. I got a cake every birthday that was arranged by the Government - only because she fought for it. I didn't get to know her. To me she was just the woman who comes and goes. When I was 5 she went again. They sent her out to work. I remember the night the taxi pulled up to take her.

Again, there was nothing emotional because if you were a little girl on this side you got into trouble for crying. You couldn't show emotion. Here at this wire grill I could just hear the director of the management call out to me. 'Is that you Peggy?' They could just see my little form there sitting at the wire grill.

'You don't get to bed, you'll be punished!' And so, go to bed. If I'm crying at night, 'is that you Peggy, crying again?' And so it just went on. You've got about 60 or 70 other kids there, so why cry for your mother because kids are going to look after you and think 'she's crying for her mother'. You got to show your anger some place.

I remember that night. We had to sing prayers at night, and I could catch up, I mean, it didn't take me long to know what the system is all about. You're better off living within that system rather than out of it. You go with it. I remember singing prayers that night:

Now the day is over
Night is drawing near

This always upsets me because at the end of singing that prayer, I couldn't remember the words. 'Cause I've got a very high voice - a lot higher than a lot of the kids - they'd hear me first.

Meadows of the evening
Creep across the sky
La la la la la la la

Getting higher and higher

Four and twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie.

That ended the prayer and the old lady called, 'Is that you, Peggy? Get out here'. And I had to kneel on the floor till everyone went to sleep.

It was all about control, reform. The bald head was part of the dormitory system for punishment. If you had lice, you had your head shaved. But you could have your hair cut off for being naughty, doing anything naughty. It didn't matter what it was: speaking back, not doing your chores. Cold baths, getting your hair shaved off if you didn't go for wood in the afternoon so you could warm the baths up.

You also got the strap and you got put into jail. There was three components of the punishment that you got. You could even be left without any food. Go without your meal. Stand in the middle of the dining room there while everybody else finished. Many times I stood there. Humiliation, because when you got your head shaved we were not allowed to put a beret or anything on our heads. Not allowed.

So you walked to school like this and the camp kids made fun of you and that would bring us closer together as a group. As a group [dormitory kids] we were able to fight off the other kids and their insults to us. We were called the dormitory girls. But the kids who slept out on the verandah- they break my heart and it still upsets me: they were the pee-the-beds.

They were called nothing else but pee-the-beds. Maybe you'd pee the bed one night because you were upset tummy, fear, no electric light just a flickering light of an old hurricane lamp. It would scare you because old people have the habit of telling you there's people walking around here at night time. All these 'woop-woops' around the place. And you didn't want to go to the toilet and you may wet the bed. It may only have been a one night occurrence, but you transferred from your bed out onto the verandah. You slept on a mattress on the floor and all you were called was pee-the-beds. 'Tell the pee-the-beds they've gotta get their mattresses in off the line.' 'Tell the pee-the-beds they've gotta put their blankets out.' 'Tell the pee-the-beds it's time to get up.' No identity at all. Absolutely nothing. These kids were just grouped together.

I was talking to a young girl the other day. I said, 'Your mother never peed the bed but her sister did. She had to go down there to sleep with her sister because the kid was crying. She needed her sister with her'. I could see them on a morning, a winter's morning. No ceiling. Just when the sun hit the tin roof. 'All you pee-the-beds gotta get up!' And they would get up out of their wet clothing and all you see is steam coming off them. It was absolutely dreadful and I grieve for those kids, honestly. We were cruelly treated.

Ref: Peggy's story appears on Page 82: *Bringing them home: report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997).



Aunty Ruth Hegarty and Hon. Kevin Rudd MP at the *Reading of Reconciliation Challenge*
3 June 2011 at State Library of Queensland

Acknowledgement of Country

Recognising Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as traditional custodians of the land is an important part of showing respect of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia. There are a variety of ways to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional custodians, which fall into two categories: Welcome to Country; Acknowledgement of Country.

Practices such as 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Country' enable the wider community to share in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and lead to better community relationships and understanding. Observing these practices connects participants with the country, and provides a welcoming atmosphere and spiritual presence to the place upon which people are meeting. It also reinforces the place of Indigenous perspectives within Queensland Government policies and procedures.

Ref: http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach/indigenous_p001_0802.pdf

1. We remember and honour the traditional custodians of this Turrbal country where we gather. We acknowledge their presence in this land and their care of the land over many generations. We also acknowledge that this land was unjustly alienated from its traditional custodians.
2. An understanding of history is important to an understanding of our society. How the story is told depends on the teller and the times in which they lived. The history of Aboriginal occupation in Brisbane has largely been recorded by white tellers rather than by a combination of both white and black observers. Learning about our society through a study of the past requires that we remember who documented the history and what motivated them.

Land, language, and people are linked together in three important elements of Aboriginal culture: family, clan, and language. In the Brisbane area the Yaggera language group was used and the clans associated with this group of language were Jagera and the Turrbal. The Turrbal, also called 'the Duke of York's clan' by the whites, mainly lived north of the Brisbane River, and the Jagera were mostly located south of the river. Today the exact territorial boundary of these two groups is in question.

Brisbane was known as 'Mian-jin', which means 'place shaped like a spike.' The Turrbal and the Jagera had numerous campsites, including those at Woolloongabba, Toowong, Bowen Hills, Newstead, Nundah, Nudgee, and many pathways that allowed them access to different parts of Brisbane. During certain seasons and for some ceremonies the area could become the gathering place for hundreds of people. Everyday life for the clan consisted of hunting and gathering food, with time for games, and other social and spiritual activities, which featured swamps, lagoons, and pockets of rainforest. The coastal areas were rich in

Ref: <http://brisbanegld.com.au>

3. Like most of Northern Brisbane, the area around Nundah was dominated by the Turrbul tribe. Their traditional coastal trade route passed through Nundah, near the modern-day Hedley Avenue. There are also many significant Aboriginal sites near Nundah, such as Dinah Island, which was reportedly the site of last Aboriginal burial in the Brisbane area. There were a number of bora rings in the area, indicating that the Nundah area was densely populated by Aboriginal people before European settlers arrived.

Ref: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nundah,Queensland>

Notes:

Coming of the 'Mogwi' (Europeans)

The first white settlement of convicts was established at Redcliffe, on Moreton Bay, in 1824.

1. The people of the areas around Brisbane ('Meanjin') bore the brunt of first contact with Europeans ('mogwi'). Along the Moreton Bay ('Quandamooka') coast, the first whites to meet and live with the Aboriginies were the lost and stranded ex-convict cedar-getters, Parsons, Pamphlet and Finnigan. John Oxley, who rescued them in 1823, camped near the mouth of Cabbage Tree Creek ('Taigum') on his way in search of the large river ('Maiwah') later known as the Brisbane. This original contact was friendly and benign. The real impact came with the establishment of the penal settlement, first (1824) at Red Cliff ('Umpi-bong' - dead houses), and then (1825) in Brisbane ('Umpikurumba - many houses.)

Ref: <http://mountainstomangroves.org>

2. Queensland's very first Christian mission was unusual in many ways. It was a combined Lutheran/ Presbyterian/ Pietist effort with Moravian inspiration. Zion Hill was part of a plan instigated by J. D. Lang to facilitate settlement in the Moreton Bay area. The mission opened between April and June 1838. It commenced with an unusually large number of staff for a Protestant mission - two ordained priests accompanied by ten laymen and eight spouses—a staff size 'altogether unprecedented in the history of British Missions and British Colonisation'.

Ref: <http://missionaries.griffith.edu.au/qld-mission/zion-hill-mission-1838-1848>

3. *Genuine attempts were made to instruct the aborigines. Apart from itinerating amongst the camp in the bush the missionaries employed the adult aborigines at the Station. These people were instructed in cultivation and were expected to learn civilised ways from the missionaries. The children were taught in a mixed school and the missionaries asserted that the aborigines learned quite as fast as the white children. However, for the most part, the missionaries were discouraged although most of them believe that they would have been successful if they could have separated the children from their parents (p.524).*

Ref: Gunson, W. N., *the Nundah Missionaries*. (As read before the Meeting of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, on June 22, 1961).

4. Although these families formed a cohesive and productive group, the success of the mission would only be judged by the conversion to Christianity of significant numbers of the native population. In this regard the mission was deemed a failure - the aborigines preferred their own Dreamtime stories and were not to be seduced by the fairy tales of the missionaries. Funding to the community by the New South Wales government was withdrawn in 1843, after only a few short years of operation. There were other factors at work too - the English inhabitants of the colony were suspicious of these "foreigners" and

jealous of the large parcel of ideal farming land that had been handed to them. The mission station was gradually run down, although many of the German immigrants remained in the area.

Ref: <http://www.yourbrisbanepastandpresent.com/2011/04/german-station-nundah.html>

5. *The key factor for the collapse of missions was the indifference and the mobility of local Aboriginal groups, characteristics which were read as indices of Aboriginal indolence* (p.22). **Ref:** Kidd, Rosalind, "The Way We Civilise: Aboriginal Affairs—the untold story", UQP, St Lucia, 1997.

Under the gaze of officialdom

The convict colony of Moreton Bay became a 'free' settlement in 1842 and, in December 1858 Queensland separates from New South Wales and becomes an independent colony: now the on-going "Aboriginal problem" must be dealt with.

1. I myself have made repeated trials with boys of every age and have invariably found the same result viz. an insuperable aversion to submit to the habits of civilized life neither food, clothing, or even pecuniary recompense which they much value will induce them to settle down for more than a few days at a time, every species of labour seems to be irksome to them unless perhaps the tracking of cattle and the occasional acting of shepherd. **Ref:** S. Simpson, Annual Report for 1849, Colonial Office Files, CO/210/430.

2. *Aboriginal children have always been far more vulnerable to removal from their families than white children. There was no necessary proof of negligence required: merely to be a child under fifteen with an Aboriginal mother was sufficient to be defined as legally neglected under Queensland's 1865 Industrial and Reformatory School Act. The subsequent 1897 Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of Opium Act defined all children of Aboriginal parentage and all Aborigines, except mixed-race males over sixteen years, as subject to state control (page 9).* **Ref:** Kidd, Rosalind, "Black Lives, Government Lies", UNSW Press, Sydney, 2000.

3. Timeline - Queensland: Provisions of the law

Ref: *To Remove and Protect: laws that changed Aboriginal lives*, Queensland Legislation, 2009,

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/remove/qld/legislation.html>

1865 - Industrial and Reformatory School Act

Established and regulated industrial and reformatory schools for children under 15 who were 'neglected' or convicted of an offence. Missions were registered as industrial or reformatory schools. A constable may arrest without warrant any child he considers to be neglected. A court composed of two or more Justices may order a child found to be neglected to be removed from his/her mother and placed in an industrial or reformatory school. Amended by Industrial and Reformatory Schools Amendment Act 1906- removes reference to Aboriginal children and extend age of child to 17 years. *Repealed by state Children Act 1911.*

1879 – Orphanages Act

A destitute child may be removed to an orphanage declared under this Act. *Repealed by State Children Act 1911.*

1891 – Guardianship and Custody of Infants Act

Where a parent has abandoned or deserted an infant or 'allowed his infant to be brought up by any other person... as to satisfy the court that the parent was unmindful of his parental duties', the court shall not make an order for the delivery of the infant to the parent unless the parent has satisfied the court 'he is a fit person to have custody'. *Repealed by Children's Services Act 1965.*

1896 – Children's Protection Act

Applies to boys under 14 and girls under 16. An offence to 'ill-treat, neglect, abandon or expose a child' in a 'manner likely to cause such child unnecessary suffering or injury to its health'. Court can deal with a child found to be ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed as the 'circumstances may admit and require'. *Repealed by the Children's Services Act 1965.*

1897 – Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act

For the 'better protection and care of the aboriginal and half-caste inhabitants of the colony' and 'for restricting the sale and distribution of opium'. Established positions of regional Protectors and later Chief Protector. *Repealed by Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act 1939.*

1905 – Infant Life Protection Act

Any person wishing to adopt a child under the age of 10 may make application to the Director of the State Children Department for permission. The Director must obtain consent in writing of parent, parents or guardian. *Repealed by State Children Act 1911.*

1911 – State Children Act

Replaced the 1865 Act. The Director of State Children Department is the guardian of all State children. The Director may place a State child in a receiving depot; detain him/her in an institution registered under this Act; transfer him/her from one institution to another; place out or apprentice him/her; or place him/her in the custody of some suitable person. This action may be taken without reference to parents or relatives of the child. Amended by State Children Act 1917 – a court may release a child on probation. *Repealed by Children's Services Act 1965.*

1934 – Protection of Aboriginals and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Amendment Act

Extended the provisions of the 1897 Act and the powers of the Chief Protector. Every Aboriginal and 'half-caste' child who is an inmate of an institution registered under the State Children Act 1911 shall be under the control and supervision of the Protector'. The Minister may from time to time cause any aboriginal or half-caste... to be removed to any reserve, institution, or district and kept there, or to be removed from any reserve, institution, or district to any other reserve institution or district, and kept there'. This does not apply to any 'aboriginal or half-caste who is lawfully married to and residing with any person who is

not an aboriginal or half-caste or otherwise subject to this Act'; or 'a half-caste child living with and supported by a parent of such child who is not subject to this Act'. A 'half-caste' may be exempted from the provisions of this Act (revocable). If the Minister is of the opinion that any 'aboriginal' or 'half-caste' is uncontrollable he may order the 'aboriginal' or 'half-caste' to be kept in an institution. 'Any such order is sufficient authority for the Chief Protector, or any Protector, or any person acting under the authority of the Chief Protector or of a Protector, or any officer of police to arrest such aboriginal or half-caste and remove to an institution'. Any 'aboriginal or half-caste' who is convicted of an offence against the 1897 Act or this Act may be detained in an institution exempted from the provisions of this Act. *Repealed by Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act 1939.*

1935 – Adoption of Children Act

Provides for adoption of 'infants' under 21. The Director of the State Children Department is responsible for making an adoption order. Director may dispense with the consent of the child's parents or guardian if satisfied that a parent guardian has 'abandoned or deserted the infant or cannot be found or is incapable of giving consent; has persistently neglected to contribute to support; or is a person whose consent ought, in the opinion of the Director and in all the circumstances of the case, to be dispensed with'. *Repealed by Adoption of Children Act 1964.*

1939 – Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act

Director of Native Affairs in the 'legal guardian of every aboriginal child under 21'. Director may 'execute agreements between or on the part of aboriginals in the State for the legal custody of aboriginal children by aboriginals or other persons who in his opinion are suitable persons to be given legal custody of such children'. Director may cause any 'aboriginals' who are camped near a town to 'remove their camp to such other place as he may direct'. Director may cause any 'aboriginals' to be 'removed from any district to a reserve and kept there for such time as may be ordered' or to be removed from one reserve to another. This power does not apply to 'a half-blood child living with and supported by a parent of such child who is not subject to this Act. Regulations may be made for the 'care, custody and education of the children of aboriginals' and prescribing the conditions on which 'aboriginal' children may be apprenticed or placed in service. *Repealed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 1965.*

1939 – Torres Strait Islander Act

Director may cause an Islander to be removed from any reserve to another reserve or to a reserve under the Aboriginals Act 1939 and kept there. 'No such removal shall be effected without the recommendation of the Island court'. *Repealed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Act 1965.*

Ref:

http://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/social_justice/bth_report/images/19_ch24.JPG



At the will of 'right-thinking' people

To meet some of the demand for 'care of children' a number of Government Institutions and Private Institutions were established on the north side of Brisbane.

1. On 15 Dec 1866, 48 Roman Catholic children previously at the Diamantina Orphanage were placed under the care of Sisters of Mercy after permission was granted by the Colonial Secretary to Bishop Quinn for the establishment of a Roman Catholic orphanage. In 1869, St. Vincent's Orphanage moved from New Farm to Nudgee.

St. Vincent's Orphanage (Queens Road Nudgee) was charged with the reception, care, teaching and training orphaned, deserted or neglected Roman Catholic children. The Report of the Inspector of Public Institutions of the Session of 1872 describes the "character" of the Orphanage as one of "benevolence and usefulness". Under The Orphanage Act of 1879, institutions established by "private benevolence" were granted a licence as a Licensed Orphanage. St. Vincent's Orphanage, the only private institution at that time, was licensed on 22 Dec 1879.



Ref: Queensland State Archives Agency ID2478, St Vincent's Home, Nudgee

2. **St Vincent's Orphanage** was established in 1866 and was the first church run home in Brisbane. It was staffed by the Sisters of Mercy. Children could be sent there from the age of two years and remained there *until thirteen years of age when they were hired out in the usual way*. The role of this institution in implementing the state orchestrated removal process is clearly documented.

A letter dated 31 July 1901 (from Sister in Charge, St. Vincent 's Orphanage to Foxton Home Secretary) lists eleven Aboriginal children by name, three admitted by Archibald Meston (Protector) in 1899 and eight children admitted in 1900. Birthplaces range from Barren Downs, Jimbour, Bundaberg, Adavale and Cooroonga station to Eulo. Ages range from two years to eleven years. Only one four year old has parentage unknown. Annual reports over the years consistently report on the number of Indigenous children housed at St. Vincent's.

In 1904 an **Industrial School for Girls** was established under the *Reformatory Schools Act* 1865 and later under the *State Children Act* 1911 for children deemed 'neglected' by virtue of their Aboriginal heritage. It seems that this was a kind of reformatory because definite periods of time are referred to. Correspondence records of the Home Secretary in 1913 refer to the remission of sentence of *H...M... from St. Vincent's Industrial School, Nudgee – sentenced in 1900 for five years.*

Ref:

<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/36784/200307300000/www.families.qld.gov.au/departments/care/index.html>

1. The Diamantina Receiving Depot (Kedron Brook Road Woolloowin was originally established as the Diamantina Orphanage (Diamantina Orphan School) in 1865. This facility was originally known as the Diamantina Receiving Depot (1893-1910). In 1909, the decision was made to amalgamate the Receiving Depot with the separately run Infants' Home. In Jan 1910, the Receiving Depot re-located from Sandgate, where it had been for approximately 16 years, to a new property at Woolloowin. The Infants' Home, which had moved to Sandgate in 1907, remained there until a new building was completed at Woolloowin in June 1911. The complete facility was renamed the Diamantina Receiving Depot and Infants' Home.

This was primarily an institution where children admitted under State control were cared for until arrangements could be made for boarding out to foster care. Only Protestant children passed through the depot. All children were outfitted with a complete kit of clothing and either boarded out or placed out for hire. All State children attended school until the age of 12. Boys were then hired out. Girls underwent an extra 12 months domestic service training and were hired out from age of 13. Hired children returning from service were also placed at the home until new employment was found. The two buildings were managed separately – the Receiving Depot by a matron, and the Infants' Home by a trained nurse.



Ref: Queensland State Archives Agency ID2191, *Diamantina receiving Depot and Infants' Home*

2. The Diamantina was established by the government of Queensland in 1883 as an orphanage for Protestant children (some of Indigenous heritage) and a 'receiving depot' for those 'forcibly removed'. A place in which children were temporarily accommodated before being boarded out, fostered, or adopted. From 1962 it was officially known as 'a reception and assessment centre'.

The register of Inward Correspondence to the Chief Protector in July 1916 advises: *Four police going to Maryborough will escort four children to Brisbane, en route to Woolloowin.* In 1918, the Correspondence Register notes the forwarding of an order to the Superintendent at Barambah Aboriginal Reserve for '*admission of R...E...J... to Diamantina Receiving Depot, Woolloowin.*

Ref: Heritage Unit, Brisbane City Council

1. The Magdalen Asylum at Woolloowin (Chalk Street) was established in 1889 as a Catholic Diocesan project *for the rehabilitation of unwed mothers, inebriates and all others who needed help.* It was run by the Sisters of Mercy and was known as the Holy Cross Home. In his 1902 Report, the Southern Protector of Aboriginals noted that during the operations of the Aboriginals Protection and Prevention of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 QLD, *I have removed fifty-one half-caste and thirty-six full-blooded girls who were either sent to service, to the Magdalen Asylum at Woolloowin, or to one of the Reserves. In absolutely all cases the removal was earnestly advised by the police and representative local residents. Not one avoidable case was thrown as an expense on the Department.*

The **Industrial School for Girls** was established in 1904 *especially for the reception of neglected female children over the age of twelve years.* Under the 1865 Act Indigenous girls were deemed 'neglected'. A letter from a visiting Justice recommended that girls committed to school at Nudgee and Clayfield *on moral grounds* be transferred to the Magdalen Home, Woolloowin.

Ref: Heritage Unit, Brisbane City Council.

2. Holy Cross Retreat at Woolloowin (Chalk Street) was also known as the Mercy Centre. Operated by the Order of the Sisters of Mercy, it was established and co-located with Magdalen Asylum for unmarried mothers in 1888. It was licensed separately in 1895 under the *Orphanages Act* 1879, then under the *State Children Act* 1911. It ceased operating as a home for very young children 1959/60. It was licensed again under the *Children's Services Act* 1965 (p.51). **Ref:**

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/foster-care/missing-pieces.pdf>



Magdalen Asylum Children

Ref: <http://www.originsharp.com>

1. The Tufnell Homes, situated on land which formed part of the original German Mission Station, were run by the Anglican Sisters of the Sacred Advent. In 1901 the first of the Tufnell Homes was opened with a capacity number of 50 children. By 1947 it was realised that more buildings were required, especially for young children, so the Toddlers' Home was added. Over the years, until 1970, numbers of Indigenous children were removed to, committed to, or placed in the Homes.

Ref: Nundah & Districts Historical Society Inc.



Ref: <http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/fostercare/missing-pieces.html> :

A Journey of Healing

Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (The Report) was the product of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from Their Families established by the Federal Attorney General in 1995. It was conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HEROC) and released in April 1997.

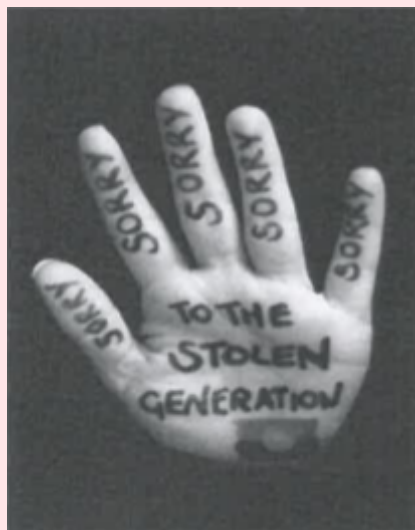
The Report is dedicated to those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose lives were affected by forcible removal. Its terms of references were to examine past laws, policies and practices which led to the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, to evaluate the need for amendments to current laws, policies and practices regarding services, to consider possible compensation principles, and to study present laws, practices and policies regarding placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children considering the principle of self-determination.

The Report concluded that, in the period from 1910 to 1970 when practice of removal was at its peak, between 10 and 30 per cent of Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities. During that period, no Indigenous family remained unaffected. The Report emphasises that the devastation caused to the lives of Indigenous people cannot be addressed until the entire Australian community commits itself to reconciliation.

The Inquiry made a comprehensive range of recommendations including:

- An acknowledgement and apology by Australian Parliament, police forces and churches;
- Commemoration via a National Sorry Day for stolen children and their families
- Public education about the history of forcible removal and its continuing effects on families, communities and the forthcoming generation.

Ref: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf



Ref:

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/shortlist-deanne-daffy-2008-human-rights-photo-competition>

Walking the talk

Noonga Reconciliation Group promotes reconciliation through experiential education, cultural understanding and active involvement in reconciliation initiatives. NRG's aims have been translated into many practical reconciliation initiatives including the annual National Sorry day ceremony held at the Stolen Generations' Memorial site in Kalinga Park, Woolloowin.

Saying "sorry" in Kalinga Park

Year in, year out the green and leafy Kalinga Park lures locals and visitors for all sorts of reasons – young and not so young walk, jog, run, relax and play there. However, on 26 May each year, there is a group of people who gather at a largely unnoticed "space" within this parkland for a very special reason. Why is this so?

Close to the creek and children's playground there is a small grove of trees. Within this grove there are native gardens, sculptured stone seats and, most importantly, rock monuments with plaques attached. The story that one plaque tells begins with the words... they took the children away, our souls will cry no more for now we are going home. The second plaque records Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples.

Those who gather at this site on 26 May each year are dedicated to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the quiet ceremony held on this day provides an opportunity to share in a healing process that allows us to express sorrow for their pain and suffering whilst making a commitment to work in partnership for a better future.

For park visitors who notice the grove and stop to read all the words on the plaques it may be but a momentary pause in their day's outing. Perhaps they know nothing (or just a little) about the Stolen Generation of Indigenous Australians who were forcibly removed from their families and wonder why such a monument has been placed in this particular park. Perhaps they know nothing about the tragic impact that past policies and practices of the government, churches and others have had on the lives of so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Queenslanders.

So when and why was this haunting monument in Kalinga Park created? The answer has a background that is important to explore in order to better understand the "when and why". Bringing them Home, the report of experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families torn apart by policies of Australian governments, shocked the nation when the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission released it on 26 May 1997. Following the release of the report a range of recommendations was offered to deal with the effects of the policies and a community-based National Sorry Day Committee was formed in each State and Territory.

Many thousands of Australians sent their individual messages of sorrow to the Stolen Generations and pledged to work for reconciliation and justice. The Queensland Parliament passed a motion on 3 June 1997 expressing regret for the hurt suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were removed from their families, land and culture.

In Brisbane, early 1998, the then Lord Mayor, Jim Soorley, organised a Bringing Them Home ceremony that would see Indigenous Elders and community people gather at Musgrave Park (South Brisbane) at dusk and then proceed to King George Square where Uncle Herb Bligh was presented with the keys to the city, on behalf of members of the Stolen Generations. This gesture was highly significant as, during the last century, the Indigenous community had been refused access to the city from dusk until daylight and on Sundays.

Another Journey Home initiative of the Lord Mayor was the establishment of six commemorative sites in Brisbane parks adjacent to homes or institutions where Indigenous children had been taken for their own good. Herein lays the answer as to why there is a Stolen Generations monument in Kalinga Park. If we look up from the memorial site towards the heights of Buckland Road, Nundah we can (almost) see the large area of land belonging to the Anglican Church where Tufnell Home was officially opened in 1901. Whilst it is not possible to determine numbers, stories from members of the Stolen Generations recall the trauma of being taken from family and home to “a better life” in Tufnell Home. Likewise, the Diamantina Orphanage, Magdalen Asylum and Holy Cross Retreat at Woolloowin and the St. Vincent’s Orphanage and Industrial School for Girls at Nudgee were institutions that were “receiving depots” for those “forcibly removed”.

Each year since 1998 Noonga Reconciliation Group has held a “sorry” ceremony at the Kalinga Park site and we plan to do so for years to come.

Bev Hickey (NRG)



Jim Soorley was Lord Mayor of Brisbane from 1991-2003. His statement (below) speaks for itself and Noonga Reconciliation Group thanks him sincerely for agreeing to record his thoughts and actions in relation to the findings of the “Stolen Children” National Inquiry tabled in Federal Parliament on 26 May 1997.

When I read the Stolen Generation document by Professor Ronald Wilson, I was amazed at my ignorance, horrified by this part of our history and humbled by the generous and gracious response of Aboriginal people. I made a decision that while I was the leader of the City of Brisbane we would make a significant and substantial response. I was already working closely with the Aboriginal Elders and together we worked through what turned out to be a programme of meaningful events.

The council formally apologized to the Aboriginal community for the way they had been treated in the City of Brisbane. This took place at a Council Meeting with Aboriginal leaders present. The most significant event was a march into the city by the Aboriginal community on dusk. This was symbolic because in the early history of Brisbane they all had to leave the city by dusk. About 500 Aboriginal people marched from West End into the city to be greeted by about 500 “whites” in an emotional ceremony in which the Aboriginal community were given the keys of the city. This is an ancient symbolic ceremony of cities around the world to welcome important citizens.

The final series of events took place in four parks around Brisbane near to where stolen children had been housed. The parks were selected in Enoggera, Wynnum, West End and Kalinga. The memorials were established to remind the future generations of Australians that in our history we had been ignorant of and harsh to the wonderful history and culture of the Indigenous people who had lived in this land for 60,000 years. May we learn from our terrible mistakes.

You gather here today in Kalinga Park to remember, to learn, and to celebrate. May you as the next generation of Australian leaders build our nation in peace with Aboriginal Australia, may their values and love of the land be integrated in the Australian ethos and way of life.

Jim Soorley (April 2006)

SPEECH BY LORD MAYOR OF BRISBANE, JIM SOORLEY:

Given at a Business Breakfast on February 16, 1998 (Part of the Journey Home Initiative)

Thank you very much Bob. Ladies and Gentlemen can I say, 'welcome', it's good to see you here. I want to welcome Bishop John Gerry and John Vitale, the head of the Lutheran Church, from Queensland Churches Together who have played a central and key role in these activities over the last week and will play a key role over the next few weeks.

I also want to welcome and thank the leaders of the Aboriginal Community, the Elders in Brisbane without whose central and pivotal role, we would not have been able to put together a program that has worked. The Aboriginal Elders have actually worked with Queensland Churches Together and is to ensure that this event could take place. I am not going to speak for too long. Noel Pearson is a much better speaker than I am and it is appropriate that Noel is the one who should speak this morning. But I just want to put a few things in context.

When the Stolen Generation Report was tabled and we saw a bit of news around it, it took me some time to actually get a copy and begin to read it. One cannot pick up that document and not be moved to tears and moved to a sense of horror at the history of our nation.

When I was at school learning history, I was learning the kings and queens of England; had to learn their date of birth, their deaths; had to know the order in which they reigned. I learned nothing about Aboriginal history. I learned nothing about Australian history. When I went to university, I was lucky enough to begin to study some of the Aboriginal history and some of our own history in this country. But you cannot pick up that book and be moved by the reality of what has happened.

I think it is important for us as a nation, as we move on to the next century, to be honest. Now there are a lot of different opinions on saying sorry. Let me tell you very clearly, where I come from. Recently, an acquaintance of Mary and mine lost a child in a car accident. Now I say an acquaintance because they are not really close friends, they are acquaintances. But when I saw the father, the first thing I said was 'I am sorry' – One heart to another heart in pain. It's the human thing to do to say I'm Sorry'.

The disaster and tragedy for this family to have a young child killed in a car accident - you cannot fail to be moved in the human heart with empathy and compassion to say I am sorry for what has happened. When we had the disaster of Port Arthur the whole nation

actually went through a ritual process of saying 'We're sorry'. The Governor-General went down, the Prime Minister went down, the Leader of the Opposition went down and recognized that this was a disaster that impacted on our nation, and we need to symbolically say to those victims, 'We are Sorry'.

The Governor-General did not do the shooting and did not feel guilt, the Prime Minister was not responsible for the shooting and did not feel guilt, the Leaders of the Opposition was not responsible for the shooting and did not feel guilt, but they were moved by a disaster to say 'We are Sorry - this is a terrible thing, pain has been inflicted on our fellow citizens and we must say, 'I am sorry'.

The Thredbo disaster was very much the same and I was amazed that we had a live broadcast around Australia. On Seven, and Nine, and Ten as Stuart Diver was rescued out of that hole. And we had a live broadcast of the ceremony on the side of the hill at Thredbo where we had the terrible disaster and, once again, the Prime Minister and the Governor of NSW were there, the Premier was there, to recognize that this was a disaster and he had to symbolically as a nation say 'I'm sorry'. With the death of Princess Diana, the whole world went through a symbolic recognition of a disaster and said 'Sorry'. The Premier of this state flew to London to take over books that people had signed to say, 'We're sorry' - Symbolism.

The greatest disaster that has ever happened in this country, is the stealing of children from Aboriginal people. Every Aboriginal family in this land has felt the impact and hundreds and thousands of children were taken from their mothers and fathers, from their extended family, from their community, from their place where they grew up. That is the greatest disaster, and it's not in the past only, it's today. The impact of being stolen from your mother and father, at three, and four, and five, lives on.

Any psychologist can tell you that in sexual abuse, domestic violence, the hardest thing is to actually talk about it and recognise it. The healing process can begin, when it's actually put on the table and we acknowledge it. While it's hidden behind us it actually dominates our lives. We as a nation must face up to our past, we as a community have no choice, because it is not just in the past, it is today as well. Meet some of those wonderful people who were stolen from their parents and understand the pain and the anguish to search and search, and realise that you're just three weeks late, that your mother has just died.

And as a small boy, living on Banora Point Hill, we had a farm. I wandered away. Dad went across the highway to milk the cows when I was about three and a half. It is earliest childhood memory; that's as far back as I can go. I can recall wandering around the Pacific Highway at about three, lost. And a car stopped. I can't remember this, but a car stopped and picked me up and actually tried to find where I was from and went and found Dad

milking the cows on the other side of the hill.

When I was fifteen, working in our shop, twelve years later, this couple came back to see if I was still alive, and I surprised them by saying I was. But, that's my earliest memory and I was separated from my mother and father for probably fifteen or twenty minutes. What is the impact then, to be taken from your mother, and father, and brothers, and sisters, never to see them again?

We have an opportunity to build a great nation; we have an opportunity to actually build a society of compassion, of empathy, of justice, of warmth. This is the most significant event facing our nation's history. How we deal with this issue will very clearly determine the fabric of our society into the next century. And if we can't deal with the issue, an issue of genocide basically, how will we deal with the smaller issues? How will we deal with racism, how will we deal with new migrants, how will we deal with old people, how will we deal with young people? This is the issue that's going to determine the fabric of our future.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is essential, it is human, it is a statement of the heart, to acknowledge a disaster, to acknowledge pain, to acknowledge suffering, to acknowledge alienation and loneliness and be moved to sorrow. That's what this month of events is about, recognizing that there are hearts out there that are in pain and sorrow, and saying 'sorry'.

Let me conclude with just two stories that have been etched in my brain and my heart by this event.

On Monday of last week we had Tammy Williams, a young Aboriginal girl. She got up and spoke about her great grandfather who was taken from Cooktown at three and a half, to become the lead act in the circus grand parade – the funny little black boy. And the circus wove its way down the coast and ended up in Melbourne, and was heading off overseas. They no longer needed the funny little black boy because he had grown a bit bigger, and he was left alone on the streets of Melbourne. A Christian group in Melbourne found and took him in. After a while they realised, someone told them, where he was from. So they took this boy, who was a little older, back to Cooktown, and reunited him with his family. And a very short time later, the Troopers arrived, and he was rounded up again, to be stolen a second time because he was black and a boy. He was then moved about eight times around the State.

On Saturday night, Leah Purcell, a young Aboriginal girl sang a song about her grandmother. The song was titled 'Run, Daisy Run', and they were the words that a mother had said to her little girl who was about four, as the Troopers arrived – 'Run Daisy Run', the white troopers are coming. Go and hide wherever you can hide. Imagine being a

mother, saying to your little four-year-old, 'Run, Daisy Run'. We must, we simply must; we have a moral obligation to say 'I am sorry'.

Lined area for writing.

Aunty Marjorie Woodrow, an elder of the indigenous community of Brisbane, was asked to speak regarding her experiences as a member of the Stolen Generation. She spoke of her mother's sorrow at having all five of her children taken from her and placed in institutions. Marjorie herself was taken to a girls' home at Cootamundra where she experienced 'cruel treatment'. She was later told that her parents had died. After some time Marjorie wrote the story of her life which was published and a copy of the book fell into the hands of her mother.

She quickly recognised that the writer's experience could only have been those of her daughter. There was an emotional reunion and the mother was able to prove their relationship by pointing to a mark that she herself had placed on her infant daughter in case she should find her again. Marjorie's mother locked herself inside her house for eight years after her children were taken away. The authorities threatened to arrest her if she tried to find them.

Aunty Marjorie expressed her heartfelt thanks to the Lord Mayor for his strong support of the reconciliation process and expressed her hope that the people of Brisbane could now live as one.

In response to Aunty Marjorie's address, the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor...thanked Aunty Marjorie for sharing her story with the Councillors and the people of Brisbane, and stated that he was sorry for what had been done to her and her people. He pointed out that it was important that the people of the whole nation make a commitment to work together for the sake of the future, and he commented that he was sorry that all members of the Stolen Generation had to endure such pain.

At this point several of the Councillors on the committee spoke regarding their response to the information that had been presented and many expressed sorrow at the injustice and ill treatment experienced by members of the Stolen Generation. Among them were Deputy Mayor K.O.T. Quinn, Councillor M.C. Bailey, Councillor J.H. Campbell, Councillor D.B Hinchcliffe, Councillor K.M. Rea, Councillor A. Bennison and Councillor M.A. Hayes.

A report was placed before the full Council outlining the actions taken by the City Council during the period of 7 February to 22 March in collaboration with the Churches of the city and the Indigenous Community. As a result of this report, the following recommendation was passed:

THE COUNCIL RESOLVE THAT-

- As leaders of this City's Community, Brisbane City Council records our deep regret for the injustices suffered, over generations, by Indigenous Australians, as a result of European settlements.
- Further, as has already been expressed by Council, in unity with the City's Churches, in particular, we acknowledge and apologise for the hurt and harm caused by the forced separation of children from their families
- We also re-commit to reconciliation and a better future for all our peoples – a united City which respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island residents and heritage.



Ref:<http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/a-guide-to-australias-stolen-generations>

Notes:

[illegible]

The Australian Government apologises to Indigenous Australians

On 13 February 2008 the then Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, moved a motion of *Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples* with specific reference to the Stolen Generations.

The Prime Minister described it as an occasion for “the nation to turn a new page in Australia’s history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future”.

The motion honoured the Indigenous peoples of this land and reflected in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations: “For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry”.

The Apology passed with bipartisan support from the Parliament and received a standing ovation from the floor of the House of Representatives as well as from the public gallery. The Prime Minister, the then Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Brendan Nelson MP, and the Minister of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, then shook hands with members of the Stolen Generations seated in the distinguished visitors' gallery.

Stolen Generations' elder Aunty Lorraine Peeters presented the Australian Parliament with the gift of a grass coolamon. The coolamon contained a message thanking the Parliament for the Apology on behalf of all those affected by removal from their families. In the message Aunty Lorraine explained that the coolamon was a traditional vessel for carrying children, and “a symbol of the hope we place in the new relationship you wish to forge with our people”.

The Australian Government assisted more than 100 members of the Stolen Generations to travel to Canberra to be present in the House of Representatives Gallery at Parliament House to witness the Apology. Others viewed proceedings from screens set up in the Great Hall.

Thousands of Indigenous and other Australians viewed the Apology from the lawns outside Parliament House where they were also entertained by a concert featuring Indigenous performers. The Apology was broadcast live around Australia, where it was watched by almost 1.3 million television viewers.



Ref: <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/indigenous-australians/programs-services/recognition-respect/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

Notes:

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd: Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples

Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations – this blemished chapter in our nation's history

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.

A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, education achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibly.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.

[illegible]

Noonga Reconciliation Group sincerely thanks Karen Lea, former Wavell High School staff member, for her contribution to the Sorry Day ceremonies in Kalinga Park. Karen has given permission for her poems to be included in this booklet.

My name is Karen Lea, I am a Kalkadoon – South Sea (mother's side)/ Undumbi – South Sea (father's side) woman, born and raised in Brisbane. My family, specifically my maternal grandmother, Annie Lyhee and paternal grandfather, George Lea were part of the Stolen Generations. The poetry I write is based on how they may have felt being taken as young children and based on conversations with students I have worked with at Wavell High School and their understanding of the Stolen Generation era.

Proud Aborigine

They took them from their mothers
because their skin was pale,
The government had forged a plan
a plan that could not fail

We'll put them into dormitories
and put them into schools
We'll teach them how to read and write
but they must obey the rules.

They cannot have contact
With friends and family,
No more pagan rituals
they'll learn Christianity

To supplement their learning
They'll work to earn their keep,
And if any are ungrateful
they'll be beat until they weep.

And when all is said and done
and they can pass for white,
We'll dress them up and show them off
and prove that we were right.

But what they didn't fathom
and they could not foresee.
Their skin was pale but their hearts were black
Proud Aborigine.

**Karen Lea
2009**

Stolen Child

Why have they taken me?
What have I done?
Don't wanna be here
Wanna run in the sun

Where is my mother?
My father, my clan,
My brothers, my sisters
I don't understand

This fence is too big
I can't get out
My family can't hear
When I scream and shout

"Come get me, come get me –
I want to go home"
But nobody comes
I stay here alone

Please don't forget me
I'll not forget too
The blood in my veins
Reminds me of you

But the years roll by
They make me feel shame
Trying hard to remember
My mother's name

Why have they taken me?
What have I done?
Don't wanna be here
Wanna run in the sun

**Karen Lea
2010**

That Day

We camped down by the riverbank,
With friends and family,
A small tin shed is all we had,
But we lived there happily.

The one day Native Welfare came,
With Bullymen in tow,
“We’ve come to take the children now,
Don’t fight, just let them go’.

They forced us kids into a truck,
We heard our mothers scream,
Our fathers yelled and banged their fists
Their tears began to stream.

They drove us far into the night,
No-one had said a word,
Then finally the truck stood still,
We unloaded like a herd.

We stood not knowing what to do
Or where we had arrived,
The sister came and greeted us
Her smile was so contrived.

She stood before us, dressed in white,
Her words we did not hear,
The little ones began to weep,
The big kids stood in fear.

That day was so, so long ago
That day before sunset,
That day took us kids away,
That day we’ll not forget.

Karen Lea
2011

My Mother

This poem is for my mother
A mother I never knew
When I was only 3 years old
They took me away from you.

They took me to a place unknown
Away from your safe hold
Surrounded by a big wire fence
A place you were never told.

I’d lay awake in bed at night
Sobbing quiet tears
But soon those tears began to dry
As days turned into years.

Your face, your hair, you familiar smell
Became blurry in my mind
But I hoped one day I’d come back home
And your loving arms I’d find.

But 50 years had come and gone
Till I could make a start
To make my journey home to you
With hope within my heart.

But as I kneel beside your grave
My tears begin once more
No chance for one more hug or kiss
Exactly like before.

I mourn for everything we lost
But most of all for you
I mourn for you my mother dear
My mother I never knew.

Karen Lea
2012

The Thief

I stood before him
Heart beating fast
I could not look
My eyes downcast

His voice, it thundered
It hurts my ears
He yelled, 'don't cry'
I held back my tears

He called me a thief
My anger rose
I lifted my head
I wiped my nose

He raised his arm
Whip in hand
But I stood still
Feet firm on land
My tears start to fall
I begin to sob

Not from the lashing
Nor from the pain
But for all you have stolen
Which I'll never regain

I did not flinch
I did not cry
I stood strong
And this is why

I'm not the thief
The thief is you
You've stolen my childhood
My culture too

The red rag I took
To tie up my hair
Does not make me a thief
It does not compare
To what you have stolen
From me and my mob.

Karen Lea 2013

Reconciliation

I feel sorry for the Stolen Generation,
Never should have done it,
Devastated people were,
I wish I could change the past but I can't,
Get everybody to say 'sorry'.
Everybody should care for the Aboriginal culture,
Now we know what we have done.
Others think we shouldn't have stopped it,
U probably do the Sorry Day,
So now you see how sad it was.

The Year Three students at Nundah State School have been learning about the Stolen Generations based on a book that the teachers have read us called 'Stolen Girl'. We learnt and felt a lot from this true story. I wrote this poem and it is called 'Reconciliation' and is an acrostic poem using the word Indigenous.

**Fox Smith-Krcmar
Nundah State School
2012**

Useful Resources

Apology Timeline

1788 – mid 1800s

Early child removals occur through the establishment of church-run missions.

There are also reports of Europeans settlers kidnapping Indigenous women and children to use as cheap domestic labour.

1837

The British Select Committee recommends the appointment of government “Protectors of Aborigines” in Australia.

1869-1935

Indigenous child removal legislation is enacted in every Australian State and Territory.

All states and territories pass laws giving Chief Protectors or Protection Boards power to “manage” the interests of indigenous people. This includes wide-ranging powers to remove indigenous children from their families and place them in state care on the grounds of race alone. Although some early Acts require proof of neglect, in practice simply being Indigenous was often proof enough.

At first, these removals were part of protection and segregation policies, which believed that Indigenous children were part of a dying race.

These policies gave way to assimilation in the late 19th century. The main aim of removals during this period was to control the reproduction of Indigenous People, so that they could be gradually “absorbed” into the non-Indigenous population.

The main laws were:

- The Aborigines Protection Act 1869 in Victoria
- The Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 in Queensland
- The Aborigines Act 1905 in Western Australia
- The Aborigines Protection Act 1909 in New South Wales
- The Aborigines Act 1911 in South Australia
- The Northern Territory Aboriginals Ordinance 1911
- The infants Welfare Act 1935 in Tasmania

1937

The first Commonwealth/State Conference on Native Welfare adopts assimilation as the official national Indigenous affairs policy. This policy approach is confirmed at the 1951 conference.

1969

All States and Territories have repealed Indigenous child removal legislation.

1980

The first Link-up Aboriginal Corporation is established in New South Wales, designed to provide family tracing, reunion and support services to Stolen Generation members. Link-ups are opened in the other States and the Northern Territory between 1984 and 2001

1991

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody reports to the Australian Government. It finds that 43 of 99 deaths investigated were of people who were separated from their families as children.

1994

The Going Home conference in Darwin brings together over 600 members of the Stolen Generations for a think-tank on reparations.

1995

The Commonwealth Government establishes the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families.

1997

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission releases Bringing Them Home, its report on the findings of the national inquiry into the Stolen Generations. The report made 54 recommendations, including a formal government apology, monetary compensation and other reparations to members of the Stolen Generations.

The parliaments and governments of all States and the ACT issue statements recognising and publicly apologising to the Stolen Generations

The Australian Government unveils its response to Bringing Them Home, featuring a \$63 million practical assistance package.

The Australian Government rejects the recommendations of an apology or compensation scheme, arguing that Australians should not be asked to “accept responsibility of the acts of earlier generations, sanctioned by the law of the times”.

The High Court finds that the Northern Territory child-removal laws are constitutionally valid and do not fall within the definition of genocide under international law in the case of *Kruger v the Commonwealth*.

1998

The National Archives of Australia launches its Bringing Them Home indexing project to identify and preserve records about Indigenous people and communities.

The National Sorry Day Committee is formed to organise an annual National Sorry Day on 26 May to commemorate the history of forcible removals and their effects. The first Sorry Day is held in 1998.

1999

The Federal Parliament passes a Motion of Reconciliation expressing “deep and sincere regret over the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents” but stops short of apologising.

2000

Over 250,000 people participate in the Corroboree 2000 “Sorry” Walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge on 28 May. Similar walks are held in the other State and Territory capitals.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expresses concern about the Australian Government’s decision not to make a national apology or consider monetary compensation.

The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee undertakes an inquiry into the Australian Government’s implementation of the Bringing Them Home recommendations. The Committee makes 10 recommendations, concentrating on the need for a formal apology, monetary compensation and processes for the ongoing monitoring and reporting of the Government’s progress.

Stolen Generations member Joy Williams loses her action against the New South Wales Government seeking compensation for the harm and mental illness she suffered as a result of forcible removal from her family.

Stolen Generations members Lorna Cubillo and Peter Gunner lose their actions against the Commonwealth in the Federal Court, seeking compensation for serious assaults during their time in institutions in the Northern Territory.

2001

The Northern Territory Parliament makes a motion of apology to the Stolen Generation and abolishes its mandatory sentencing laws.

HEROC and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) host the Moving Forward conference which explores ways of providing reparations to the Stolen Generations.

2002

PIAC releases Restoring identity – its report on the Moving Forward conference.

The National Library of Australia's oral history project with members of the Stolen Generations is published.

The New South Wales Victims Compensation Tribunal awards compensation to Stolen Generations member Valerie Linow for sexual abuse suffered while in State care.

2003

The Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) commissions and releases an independent evaluation of responses to the Bringing Them Home report.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner publicly criticises the Australian Government's failure to apologise and make reparations to the Stolen Generations.

The Victorian Stolen Generations Taskforce delivers its report to the Victorian Government about implementing the recommendations in Bringing Them Home.

2004

The Australian Government unveils a Stolen Generations memorial at Reconciliation Place in Canberra.

461 "Sorry Books", recording the reflections of Australians on the Stolen Generations on National Sorry Days, are entered on the Australian Memory of the World Register as part of UNESCO's program to preserve and promote historically important material.

2005

The organisation Stolen Generations Victoria is established on the recommendation of the Victorian Stolen Generations Task force, to assist members of the Stolen Generations in reconnecting with their family, community, culture and land.

The National Sorry Day Committee announces that Sorry Day will become a "National Day of Healing for All Australians".

The UN Commission on Human Rights adopt the van Boven/Bassiouni Principles, which declare a right to a remedy and reparations for victims of gross violations of international human rights law. The recommendations in Bring Them Home were based on these principles.

2006

The Tasmanian Government sets up Australia's first Stolen Generations compensation scheme.

2007

The South Australian Supreme Court awards \$525,000 in damages to Stolen Generations member Bruce Trevor for mental illness and suffering caused by his wrongful removal from his family.

South Australian Premier Mike Rann announced that the government would not contest the decision, and that the government would consider the possibility of a Stolen Generations compensation scheme.

The Australian Labor Party releases its election platform which includes a pledge to "provide a comprehensive responses to the Bring Them Home report, including a formal apology".

Democrats Senator Andrew Bartlett introduces a Stolen Generation Compensation Bill into Federal Parliament, modelled on the Tasmanian legislation. The Bill lapses due to the adjournment of Parliament prior to the election.

The Western Australian Government sets up the Redress WA program to provide monetary and emotional support to people who were abused as children in State care, including members of the Stolen Generations.

2008

On 13th of February 2008 the Prime Minister moved the apology.

The Rudd Government confirmed to make an apology to members of the Stolen Generations early in the first term of Parliament, and to use the word "sorry".

The Rudd Government said it will not establish a compensation scheme, stating that it will back the apology with a concerted effort to close the 17-year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, while providing "targeted assistance" to members of the Stolen Generations.

The Northern Territory Minister for Indigenous Policy, Marion Scrymgour, supported the Federal Government's decision not to establish a compensation fund for individual members of the Stolen Generations.

The Queensland and New South Wales governments ruled out Stolen Generations compensation schemes.

2009

The Australian Government commits \$26.6 million for the establishment of a Healing Foundation to address trauma and healing in the wider indigenous community, with a focus on the Stolen Generations. The Foundation is incorporated on 30 October 2009 and the inaugural Board holds its first meeting in December 2009.

Books

Cahir, Sandra: *Reconciliation*

Chaney, F. M.: *Reconciliation in schools*

Egan, Allan Joseph: *Mission to suburb*

Harris, Christine: *Audrey's big secret*

Harrison, Jane: *Stolen*

Healey, Justin: *The Stolen Generations*

Healey, Justin: *The Stolen Generations: the way forward*

Hegarty, Ruth: *Is That You, Ruthie?*

Hegarty, Ruth: *Bittersweet Journey*

Hegarty, Ruth: *Jack's Story: The life and Times of a Cherbourg Dormitory Boy*

Hill, Marji: *Stories of the Stolen Generations*

Hill, Marji: *Saying sorry to the stolen generations*

Huggins, Jackie: *The Reconciliation Journey*

Nundah and Districts Historical Society: *From pioneering day: Nundah, Northgate, Virginia*

Nundah and Districts Historical Society: *Images past and present Nundah and Districts*

Outridge, M. ed: *150 years: Nundah Families 1938-1988*

Saffioti, Trina: *Stolen Girl*

Sheehan, Norman: *Stolen Generations Education: Aboriginal Cultural Strengths and Social and Emotional Well Being*

Steinberg, Rebecca: *Towards reconciliation*

Turner, Pam: *First European settlement of Queensland 1838-1988*

Jones, Tony: *The apology to the stolen generations of Australia* [DVD]

Websites

- http://hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html
- http://humanrights.gov.au/education/bringing_them_home
- http://humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/publications
- <http://missionaries.griffith.edu.au>
- <http://racismnoway.com.au/classroom/factsheets/52.html>
- <http://reconciliation.org.au>
- <http://slq.gov/info/index>
- <http://archives.qld.gov.au>
- <http://nsdc.org.au>
- <http://aiatis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/html#stolen>
- <http://aiatis.gov.au/asp/map.html>
- <http://rqi.org.au>
- <http://reconciliation.org.au/nsw/education-kit/stolen-generations>
- <http://people.howstuffworks.com/stolen-generation.htm>
- <http://dakibudtcha.com.au/Turrbal/index.php/about>
- http://myplace.edu.au/teaching_activities/2008/1/the_apology.html
- <http://germanydownunder.com/they-came-and-they-stayed/>
- <http://discoverbrisbane.com/brisbane/history.html>
- <http://queenslandplaces.com.au/node>
- <http://thebridge.com/> [reconciliation board game]

Places of Educational Interest

Aboriginal History and Culture

Riverlife Mirrabooka: Meet the local Brisbane Aboriginal Tribe Riverlife Mirrabooka and share in rich Aboriginal culture presented by the Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers in the natural bushland of Kangaroo Point.

Where: Riverlife is housed in Brisbane's heritage listed Naval Stores. Access to Riverlife can be found via Lower River Terrace or River Terrace, Kangaroo Point.

Contact: 3891 5766; **E:** info@riverlife.com.au

Kuril dhagun –Indigenous Knowledge Centre, State Library of Queensland: kuril dhagun offers a range of public programs including A Night by the fire, Yarnin' time, Murri Claus and an annual program of exhibitions that aim to engage all Queenslanders with stories and collections from Indigenous people.

Where: Level One– State Library of Queensland.

Contact: 07 3842 9857; **E:** kuril.dhagun@slq.qld.gov.au

Boondall Wetlands Environment Centre: Environmental and cultural learning programs including the Nurri Millen Totem Trail.

Where: 31 Paperbark Drive, Boondall. **Contact:** 07 3403 1490

<http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/environment-waste/natural-environment/environment-centres/boondall-wetlands-environment-centre/boondall-wetlands/index.htm>

Local History

Kalinga Park: This park was officially opened by Andrew Petrie (Member for Toombul) in 1910. In 1920 the 'Soldiers Honour Gates' were opened as a witness and everlasting remembrance of the patriotic services and sacrifices of the men who enlisted from the Kalinga district and fought for their country in the Great War. On 15 March 1988 a Stolen Generations Memorial Plaque was installed and each year, on or around 26 May, a National Sorry Day commemorative service is held on site.

Where: Enter via Park Avenue, Clayfield.

Contact: Noonga Reconciliation Group. **E:** noonga.rg@gmail.com

Nundah Cemetery (originally German Station Cemetery): Early settlers of many nations and their descendants are buried here.

Where: Hedley Avenue Nundah.

Nundah & Districts Historical Society Inc.: Sir William Knox Archives & Resource Centre

Where: 1A Bage Street Nundah (behind the Nundah Library)

Contact: 07 3260 6703; **E:** nundahhistoricalsoc@bigpond.com

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a vertical red margin line on the left side, creating a narrow left margin. The paper appears to be a standard notebook or composition paper.