

HEALING FOR THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

A Shorten Labor Government will establish a compensation scheme for survivors of the Stolen Generations in Commonwealth jurisdictions.

Labor will also establish a \$10 million Healing Fund, to assist with the healing needs of Stolen Generations and their descendants.

Labor will also convene a national summit on First Nations children within our first 100 days – to address the very high rates of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, and prevent the emergence of another generation of children living away from family, community and culture.

These announcements recognise and respond to the legacy of pain and trauma that the Stolen Generations and their families continue to experience today.

Ten years after Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued the Apology to the Stolen Generations, and more than 20 years after the *Bringing Them Home* report recommended the establishment of a compensation scheme, there is still more to do to support the Stolen Generations and their descendants.

Labor is committed to dealing with the legacy of past trauma, delivering justice to the Stolen Generations, and working together with First people to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage, today and into the future.

THE APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

While it is not possible to definitively state how many Indigenous children were forcibly removed, between 1905 and 1969 it is estimated that about one in ten Indigenous children across Australia was stolen from their families and placed into care.

During these years, about 2,000 Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory were removed from their families by government officers and taken to seven different missions. Throughout this period, the Northern Territory was governed by the Commonwealth.

These children were forced to live away from their families, their communities and their culture. Many never made it home, and lived with the trauma of this separation for their entire lives.

There's where food was scarce again. Hardly anything ... night time we used to cry with hunger, y'know, lice, no food. And we used to go out there to the town dump ... we had to come and scrounge at the dump, y'know, eating old bread and smashing tomato sauce bottles and licking them. Half of the time our food we got from the rubbish dump. Always hungry there.

- *Confidential evidence 549, Northern Territory: man removed to Kahlin Compound at 3 years in the 1930s, Bringing Them Home Report 1997.*

Today, there are around 150 surviving members of the Stolen Generations in the Northern Territory.

On February 13 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued an apology, on behalf of the nation, to members of the Stolen Generations:

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 the 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.

- Kevin Rudd, 13 February 2008

The Apology to the Stolen Generations was a momentous day in our nation's history. Not only was it an important day of national healing, it was also accompanied by the Close the Gap framework – the most comprehensive agenda for tackling Indigenous disadvantage in our nation's history.

Until now, the Commonwealth has never addressed the issues of compensation for members of the Stolen Generations.

Addressing this issue recognises that closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage depends on dealing with the trauma and pain of the past.

COMPENSATION FOR STOLEN GENERATIONS IN COMMONWEALTH JURISDICTIONS

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver compensation to members of the Stolen Generations in Commonwealth jurisdictions. This includes the Northern Territory, ACT and Jervis Bay.

The scheme will provide ex gratia payments of \$75,000 to living Stolen Generations survivors who were removed from their families and committed to care.

Labor will also establish a Funeral Assistance Fund to provide one-off payments of \$7,000 to Stolen Generations survivors to assist with the cost of funerals.

The establishment of a compensation scheme for Stolen Generations deals with the unfinished business of the Apology, delivered ten years ago.

It also responds to recommendation 3 of the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* Report, which recommended financial compensation be provided to members of the Stolen Generations.

NATIONAL HEALING FUND

A Shorten Labor Government will also establish a \$10 million National Healing Fund to invest in programs that would support healing for Stolen Generations and their families.

In line with Labor's commitment to support Indigenous decision making, this fund would be administered by the Healing Foundation – an Indigenous led organisation with the skills, experience and understanding of the needs of Stolen Generations.

The fund would be used to support programs aimed at meeting the ongoing needs of members of the Stolen Generations, including:

- Programs that support family reunion and return to country.
- Programs that support the needs of ageing members of the Stolen Generation, including potentially the provision of aged care services for those unwilling to re-enter institutions.
- Programs that support intergenerational healing for the descendants of members of the Stolen Generations.

NATIONAL SUMMIT ON FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN

Since the Apology was issued in 2008, the number of Indigenous children removed from their families has risen rapidly.

In 2017, an estimated 17,664 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were living in out-of-home care, compared with 9,070 a decade ago.

When the *Bringing Them Home* report into the Stolen Generations was released in 1997, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children represented 20 per cent of children living in out-of-home care. That rate has increased to more than 35 per cent today.

In 2015, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were 9.5 times more likely to be residing in out-of-home-care than non-Indigenous children in Australia.

Current rates of child removal risk the emergence of a new generation of children who will grow up without connection to family and country.

A coalition of Indigenous organisations, including SNAICC, the Healing Foundation, Kari, and Save the Children have developed a campaign – Family Matters – which calls for a new national focus on child removal, including its inclusion in the Close the Gap Framework.

In response to this growing issue, a Shorten Labor Government will convene a national summit on First Nations children within its first 100 days in government, to address high rates of child removal and identify new approaches to building resilient families.

Labor's announcements have been costed by the Independent Parliamentary Budget Office.

Issue/Measure	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
Stolen Generations Redress Scheme		-3.2	-2.8	-2.7	-8.7
National Healing Fund		-2.5	-2.5	-2.5	-7.5
Departmental expenses		-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.9
Total		-6.0	-5.6	-5.5	-17.1

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.

- *Kevin Rudd, National Apology to the Stolen Generations, 13 February 2008*