



National Council of
Churches in Australia
NATSIEC

Historic Apology Celebrated by the NCCA



The NCCA welcomes the apology offered to the Stolen Generations by the Federal Government last Wednesday in Parliament. The Churches have long held hope that our Federal Parliament could acknowledge the past and the pain that many of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters have suffered.

The Stolen Generations have held a special place in the heart of many of our faithful. We rejoice with them that finally their life experiences have been recognised and that we, as a nation, can accept our failures of the past.

This apology has created an atmosphere of hope and forgiveness that, at more than any other time in Australia's history, allows for the possibility of real advancement along the journey to Reconciliation.

Words of course we've heard before, but what is needed now is to back them up with action.

The Prime Minister's plan for action, as outlined in his speech, is therefore welcomed. In particular, we congratulate the Prime Minister on recognising the need to set time bound and measurable goals, which has been the position of the NCCA through its campaign to Make *Indigenous* Poverty History.

We applaud the Prime Minister's leadership and hope that he will continue to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to ensure that past

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Chinese Methodist
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Orthodox Church

Greek
Orthodox Church

Lutheran Church

Mar Thoma Church

Religious Society
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Roman Catholic Church

Romanian
Orthodox Church

Salvation Army

Syrian
Orthodox Church

Uniting Church

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mistakes are not repeated and that Indigenous peoples are enabled to create their own solutions. At last Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are being heard and their life experiences validated. Their voices must never be silenced again.

We churches must also play our part. We cannot ignore our role in the events of the past. Many congregations have already offered their apologies to the Stolen Generations. We too, as people of faith, must move beyond words and convert our recognition of the plight of our fellow Australians the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples into action.

We call on all our faithful to reflect upon the words of the Prime Minister last Wednesday and to honestly examine our own heart and conscience to recognise where we continue to fail our fellow Australians. We too must act to diminish the many disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous in our common lives. As people of faith and good citizens it is our responsibility to ensure that our elected representatives remain true to their words.

We pray that this new beginning can be carried forward with the same good will and bi-partisan spirit that was shown in parliament and all around the nation on Wednesday morning.

For further comment please contact Graeme Mundine 02 9299 2215 or 0419 238 788