

3 February 2008

SWASLC Welcomes Government Apology

The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council welcomes the Federal Governments move to say sorry to the stolen generation.

Mr Glen Kelly, CEO of the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council said, "A formal apology is a welcome decision by the Prime Minister, it is an important first step in a long journey to true reconciliation".

Mr Kelly added, "An apology from the government is important because it acknowledges the past. It recognises that the forcible removal of children was and will always remain simply wrong".

"Contrary to the popular myth, the removal of children wasn't for their own good, it was a state sanctioned policy of social engineering of the worst kind. It has left generations of children bereft of one of the most fundamental parts of human existence, the simple love a child receives from their parents."

"This has resulted in a fractured Noongar community which faces a variety of significant social issues, issues which spill over and effect the broader society of WA. It's time to take the steps to turn this around, and an apology is a key part of this.

"No where is it more relevant an issue than in the south west. There were more than 10 significant Aboriginal missions on Noongar Country. These were places like Mogumber, Wandering, Sitster Kates, New Norcia, Marribank, Roelands and several others. Many Noongar people were taken from their families and placed into these missions. Many never saw their families again".

"An apology to the Stolen Generations isn't about blame, guilt or money, it's about acknowledgement and respect. For many people of the Stolen Generation an acknowledgement needs to be forthcoming before they can move forward, and an apology can provide them with this'.

"Saying sorry, like native title, is an opportunity to turn a new page in history in relation to Noongar people. We can use these opportunities to work together to improve opportunities for Noongar people in the south west".

The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council is a representative body for the traditional owners of the South West of Australia. SWALSC's main role is to work with its members to find resolutions for Native Title Claims in the south west as well as advancing the Noongar culture, language and society.

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South West Aboriginal
Land & Sea Council

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MEDIA RELEASE

In 2006 the Single Noongar Native Title Claim, lodged by SWASLC on behalf of the Noongar people was recognised over the areas of un-occupied land in the Perth metropolitan area.

The State and Commonwealth Governments both appealed the Single Noongar Claim decision immediately, in spite of the overwhelming evidence showing that the Noongar people remain a strong and united community and continue to practice their traditions and customs. The appeal decision is due to be delivered very soon.

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