



The Catholic Church Says Sorry



This has been a momentous and historic week in the history of our nation with our Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, saying sorry to the Stolen Generations of indigenous Australians for the profound pain and suffering inflicted on them by the laws, policies and practices of successive Australian governments.

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat joins with the Prime Minister in saying sorry to you, our indigenous people. Through its missions, especially in central and remote Australia, and its orphanages and children's homes – two of which operated in the Ballarat Diocese until the late 1970s – we were no less complicit than the government in causing the profound pain, grief and loss experienced by you, the Stolen Generations.

We were part of that era that, not only stole children from their parents, but then separated them from their brothers and sisters, effectively decimating their families. Many of you only learned in recent years that you had brothers and sisters.

As a Church we say sorry to you, the children of the Stolen Generations, who were taken to the children's homes that the Church ran here in the Ballarat Diocese. We say sorry for the part we played in creating the profound pain you must have experienced in the separation from your parents, brothers, sisters and extended family members. We say sorry for the grief and loss you experienced when later searching for family members, you found they had died.

As a Diocese and a Church we join with the Prime Minister in becoming part of his new future of "mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility" for and with you, our indigenous people. We are committed to walking with you on the road to equality and reconciliation. We are very conscious that saying sorry is only the beginning.

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