

5.

Track the History

Timeline

The history of the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families

This timeline details the history of forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families. Information is primarily taken from the findings of the *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, and from a wide range of other sources.

The timelines provides up-to-date information about the status of the recommendations of the report. It links to responses and actions from government, and from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The timeline is available online at: www.humanrights.gov.au/education/bth/download/Track_History_A1poster.pdf

45 000 years ago

Rock engravings in South Australia suggest evidence of land inhabitancy.

- Timeline of pre-colonisation history of Indigenous peoples in Australia: <http://www.loreoftheland.com.au/land/time.html>

1451

Dutch explorers record the journeys of Macassan Trepangers (indigenous traders from Indonesia) to northern Australia. Trade between the Macassans and Aborigines continues until 1906.

- Timeline of contact between outsiders and Indigenous people in Australia: http://www.racismnoway.com.au/library/keydates/index-Pre_1700.html

1770

James Cook claims possession of the whole east coast of Australia. Cook raises the British flag at Possession Island, off Cape York Peninsula in Queensland.

- The Secret Instructions to Lieutenant Cook 30 July 1768: <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?sdlID=67>

1788

The First Fleet lands in Port Jackson – British settlement in Australia begins. Clashes between Aboriginal people and the settlers are reported over the next 10 years in the Parramatta and Hawkesbury areas.

- First Fleet Online: <http://cedir.uow.edu.au/programs/FirstFleet/>
- An overview of the landing and settlement: <http://www.acn.net.au/articles/1999/01/australia.htm>

1814

Governor Macquarie opens a school for Aboriginal children at Parramatta called the 'Native Institution'.

- Read the Story of Maria Locke, the first girl to be placed in the care of the Native Institution at Parramatta when it opened in 1815: <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2003/hc48.htm>

1824

Marital law is declared in Bathurst, New South Wales, when several Europeans are killed by Aboriginal people and conflict with Aborigines is seen as a serious threat to white settlement.

- An account of the 1824 war in Bathurst: http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/ida/link_d3_1824war.html

1830

Tasmanian Aboriginal people are resettled on Flinders Island without success. Later, the community is moved to Cape Barren Island.

- A history of Flinders Island: <http://www.focusonflinders.com.au/about.htm>
- Alma Stackhouse's story: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/car/1993/15/21.html>

1834

In Western Australia, Governor Stirling leads 25 mounted police against the Aboriginal people. Conflicting records exist in regards to the number of people killed during the Battle of Pinjarra.

1837

British Select Committee examines the treatment of Indigenous people in all British colonies and recommends that 'Protectors of Aborigines' be appointed in Australia.

1838

Myall Creek Massacre. Near Inverell (NSW), settlers shoot 28 Aboriginal people, mostly women and children. 11 Europeans were charged with murder but are acquitted. A new trial is held and seven men are charged with the murder of one Aboriginal child. They are found guilty and hanged.

- *R v Kilmeister (No 2)*, 1838 – text of the decision of the Superior Court of New South Wales by Justice Burton:
http://www.law.mq.edu.au/scnsw/Cases1838-39/html/r_v_kilmeister__no_2___1838.htm

1869

The *Aborigines Protection Act (Vic)* establishes an Aborigines Protection Board in Victoria to manage the interests of Aborigines. The Governor can order the removal of any child from their family to a reformatory or industrial school.

- The *Aboriginal Protection Act* : <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?sdID=22>

1883

The NSW Aborigines Protection Board is established to manage the lives of 9000 people.

- Protection and Welfare Boards in New South Wales:
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/rciadic/regional/nsw-vic-tas/206.html>

1897

The *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act (Qld)* allows the Chief Protector to remove local Aboriginal people onto and between reserves and hold children in dormitories. Until 1965 the Director of Native Welfare is the legal guardian of all 'aboriginal' children whether their parents are living or not.

- A copy and description of the Act: <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?sdID=54>

1901

Australia becomes a Federation. The Constitution states that Aboriginal People will not be counted in the census, and that the Commonwealth has the power to make laws relating to any race of people in Australia with the exception of Aborigines. The federated states therefore retain exclusive power over Aboriginal affairs until the Constitution is amended in 1967.

- A copy of the original constitution: <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?dID=11>
- A copy of the current Australian Constitution:
<http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/general/constitution/index.htm>

1905

The *Aborigines Act* (WA) is passed. Under this law, the Chief Protector is made the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and 'half-caste' child under 16 years old. In the following years, other states and territories enact similar laws.

- *Bringing them home* – Appendix 5: Western Australia. Laws applying specifically to Aboriginal children: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/stolen/stolen68.html>
- Some information on one of the NT Chief Protectors:
http://www.abc.net.au/federation/fedstory/ep4/ep4_people.htm

1909

The *Aborigines Protection Act* (NSW) gives the Aborigines Protection Board power to assume full control and custody of the child of any Aborigine if a court found the child to be neglected under the *Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act 1905* (NSW).

1911

The *Aborigines Act* (SA) makes the Chief Protector the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and 'half-caste' child with additional wide-ranging powers to remove Indigenous people to and from reserves.

The *Northern Territory Aborigines Ordinance* (Cth) gives the Chief Protector to assume 'the care, custody or control of any Aboriginal or half caste if in his opinion it is necessary or desirable in the interests of the Aboriginal or half caste for him to do so'. The *Aborigines Ordinance 1918* (Cth) extends the Chief Protector's control even further.

1915

The *Aborigines Protection Amending Act* (NSW) gives power to the Aboriginal Protection Board to separate Indigenous children from their families without having to establish in court that they were neglected.

1928

Coniston Massacre, Northern Territory. Europeans shoot 32 Aborigines after a white dingo trapper and station owner are attacked by Aborigines. A court of inquiry says the European action was 'justified'.

- Perspectives on the Coniston Massacre: <http://www.abc.net.au/frontier/education/coniston.htm>

1935

The introduction of the *Infants Welfare Act* (Tas) is used to remove Indigenous children on Cape Barren Island from their families. From 1928 until 1980 the head teacher on Cape Barren is appointed as a special constable with the powers and responsibilities of a police constable, including the power to remove a child for neglect under child welfare legislation.

1937

The first Commonwealth/State conference on 'native welfare' adopts assimilation as the national policy:

The destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin, but not of the full blood, lies in ultimate absorption ... with a view to their taking their place in the white community on an equal footing with the whites.

In 1951, at the third Commonwealth/State Conference on 'native welfare', assimilation is affirmed as the aim of 'native welfare' measures.

- National Report Volume 2 – The Assimilation Years: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/disp.pl/au/other/IndigLRes/rciadic/national/vol2/278.html?query=%7e+assimilation>

1938

Australian Aborigines Conference held in Sydney. Meeting on January 26, the 150th Anniversary of NSW, Aborigines mark the 'Day of Mourning'.

- The Resolution from the Australian Aborigines Conference: <http://www.abc.net.au/frontier/education/shutstu.htm#1938>
- Australian History Reclaims its Indigenous Past: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/car/1996/1/wtpag12.htm>

1940

The NSW Aborigines Protection Board loses its power to remove Indigenous children. The Board is renamed the Aborigines Welfare Board and is finally abolished in 1969.

- A history of Aboriginal child welfare in NSW: <http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lrc.nsf/pages/RR7CHP2>

1948

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted by the newly-formed United Nations, and supported by Australia.

- The Declaration: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

1949

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is ratified by Australia. It comes into force in 1951.

- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm

1952–1963

Atomic tests take place at Emu Field and Maralinga in South Australia. Aborigines describe a 'black mist' and report sight loss and skin rashes. Many die from radiation poisoning. Hundreds of families are forced to leave their homelands because of contamination.

- A website on Maralinga: <http://www.naa.gov.au/fsheets/fs129.html>

1966

In the Northern Territory, Aboriginal stock workers protest against their living conditions in the Wave Hill Walk Off.

- A fact sheet about the Walk Off: <http://www.racismnoway.com.au/library/keydates/index-1900s.html#1960>

1967

A national referendum is held to amend the Constitution. Australians confer power on the Commonwealth to make laws for Aboriginal people. Aborigines are included in the census for the first time.

- A fact sheet about the referendum: http://www.a.a.gov.au/publications/fact_sheets/fs150.html
- Section 51xxvi <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/amendment.asp?amID=17>
- Section 127 <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/amendment.asp?amID=21>

1969

By 1969, all states had repealed the legislation allowing for the removal of Aboriginal children under the policy of 'protection'. In the following years, Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies ("AICCAs") are set up to contest removal applications and provide alternatives to the removal of Indigenous children from their families.

1971

Neville Bonner is sworn in as Australia's first Aboriginal Senator.

- Biography – Neville Bonner: <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/bonner.htm>

1972

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is pitched outside Parliament House in Canberra to demonstrate for Land Rights.

1975

The Commonwealth Government passes the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*

1976

The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* is passed by Commonwealth Parliament in 1976. It provides for recognition of Aboriginal land ownership, granting land rights to 11, 000 Aboriginal people and enabling other Aboriginal people to lodge a claim for recognition of traditional ownership of their lands.

- *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth): <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?sdID=64>

1980

Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation is established. It is followed by Link-Up (Brisbane) in 1984, Link-Up (Darwin) in 1989, Link-Up (Tas) in 1991, Link-Up (Vic) in 1992, Link-Up (SA) in 1999, Link-Up (Alice Springs) in 2000, and Link-Up (WA – seven sites) in 2001. Link-Up provides family tracing, reunion and support for forcibly removed children and their families.

- List of current Link-Up organisations: http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/family_history_tracing/link_up_services

1981

Secretariat of the National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care established (SNAICC). SNAICC represents the interests on a national level of Australia's 100 or so Indigenous community-controlled children's services.

- Secretariat of the National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care established (SNAICC):
<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/>

1983

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, developed principally due to the efforts of Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies (“AICCAs”) during the 1970s, is incorporated in NT welfare legislation to ensure that Indigenous children are placed with Indigenous families when adoption or fostering is necessary. This is followed in NSW (1987), Victoria (1989), South Australia (1993), Queensland and the ACT (1999), Tasmania (2000) and Western Australia (2006).

- *Bringing them home* report – Aboriginal Child Placement Principle: State and Territory Review:
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/stolen48.html>

1987

Northern Territory elections are held and for the first time voting is compulsory for Aboriginal people.

1988

The Bicentennial of British Settlement in Australia takes place. Thousands of Indigenous people and supporters march through the streets of Sydney to celebrate cultural and physical survival.

- The Aboriginal Memorial: We Have Survived:
<http://www.nga.gov.au/Dreaming/Index.cfm?Refnc=Ch2a>

1991

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation is set up, funded by the Commonwealth Government. Parliament noted that there had not been a formal process of reconciliation to date, ‘and that it was most desirable that there be such a reconciliation’ by 2001.

- Reconciliation Australia website: <http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/graphics/ra/history.html>

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody presents its report to the Commonwealth Government. It finds that of the 99 deaths it investigated, 43 were of people who were separated from their families as children.

- ATSIIC website – Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody:
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/atsic/ar1991-92/20.html>

1992

The High Court of Australia hands down its landmark decision in *Mabo v Queensland*. It decides that native title exists over particular kinds of lands – unalienated Crown Lands, national parks and reserves – and that Australia was never terra nullius or empty land.

- Access the High Court decision on *Mabo* at:
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/archives/mabo/>

1993

International Year of Indigenous People.

The Commonwealth Government passes the *Native Title Act 1993*. This law allows Indigenous people to make land claims under certain situations. Claims cannot be made on freehold land (privately-owned land).

- Native Title: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/native_title/index.html

The position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner is established within the Australian Human Rights Commission. The Commissioner's role is to monitor and report to Commonwealth Parliament on the human rights of Indigenous Australians.

- For further information on the role of the Commissioner see:
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/index.html

1994

The *Going Home* Conference in Darwin brings together over 600 Aboriginal people removed as children to discuss common goals of access to archives, compensation, rights to land and social justice.

1995

The *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children From Their Families* is established by the Commonwealth Government in response to efforts made by key Indigenous agencies and communities.

- Terms of Reference:
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/prelim.html#terms>

1996

The High Court hands down its decision in the *Wik* case. *Wik* concerned land, which is, or has been, subject to pastoral leases.

- http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/ntreport_1997/03.html

1997

The Commission presents *Bringing them home*, its report on the findings of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families to the Commonwealth Government.

- The *Bringing them home* report:
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/>

The parliaments and governments of Victoria, Tasmania, ACT, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia all issue statements recognising and publicly apologising to the 'Stolen Generations'.

- For the specific details of the apologies issued in various state jurisdictions, see:
<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/49245/20050414/www.daa.nsw.gov.au/news/files/FinalBTHReportDec2003.doc>

1998

The Commission releases the Social Justice Report 1998, which includes a summary of responses from the churches, and non-Indigenous community to the Inquiry's recommendations plus an Implementation Progress Report.

- *Social Justice Report 1998*: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/sjreport_98

The Commonwealth Government amends the *Native Title Act*. This restricts the way in which native title can be claimed.

- The Ten Point Plan in response to the Wik decision:
http://www.nlc.org.au/html/land_native_amend.html

National Archives Australia – *Bringing them home* indexing project is launched. The project is focussed on the identification and preservation of Commonwealth records related to Indigenous people and communities.

- *Bringing them home* indexing project – Fact Sheet: <http://www.naa.gov.au/fsheets/fs175.html>

1999

Federal Parliament passes a motion of 'deep and sincere regret over the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents'.

Mandatory sentencing in Western Australia and the Northern Territory becomes a national issue. Many call for these laws to be overturned because they have greater impact on Indigenous children than on non-Indigenous children.

- Statement from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner on mandatory sentencing: http://www.hreoc.gov.au/speeches/social_justice/mandatory_sentencing.html

2000

The People's Walk for Reconciliation on 28 May occurs in state/territory capitals throughout Australia.

Australia appears before the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Committee criticises the Commonwealth Government's inadequate response to recommendations from *Bringing them home*:

While noting the efforts by the State party to address the tragedies resulting from the previous policy of removing indigenous children from their families, the Committee remains concerned about the continuing effects of this policy.

The Committee recommends that the State party intensify these efforts so that the victims themselves and their families will consider that they have been afforded a proper remedy (arts 2, 17 and 24).

- For the full text of the Concluding Observations of the HRC see [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.55.40,paras.498-528.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/A.55.40,paras.498-528.En?OpenDocument)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner's *Social Justice Report 2000*: http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/sjreport00/chap3.html#ch3_aus_appearance

Inquiry into the Federal Government's Implementation of the Recommendations Made by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (as it was then known) in *Bringing them home* undertaken by the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee.

- *HEALING: A Legacy of Generations* – the report of the Inquiry into the Federal Government's Implementation of the Recommendations in *Bringing them home*: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/legcon_ctte/stolen/report/index.htm
- Speech by Dr William Jonas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the public hearings held in July 2000: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/speeches/social_justice/stolen_generation.html

Final report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation presented to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Parliament.

- For a full text of the report see: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/car/2000/16/>

2001

The Northern Territory Government repeals its mandatory sentencing laws.

The Northern Territory Government presents a parliamentary motion of apology to people who were removed from their families.

The Commission & PIAC (Public Interest Advocacy Centre) hold the Moving Forward Conference. The conference aims to explore ways of providing reparations to Indigenous people forcibly removed from their families.

2002

The *Social Justice Report 2001* and *Native Title Report 2001* are presented to Commonwealth Parliament. Both reports express serious concerns about the nation's progress in achieving the exercise of Indigenous rights.

- Whatever happened to Reconciliation? Speech by Dr William Jonas at the media conference to launch the *Social Justice Report 2001* and the *Native Title Report 2001*:
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/speeches/social_justice/what_happened_reconciliation.html
- *Social Justice Report 2001* – Reconciliation Progress Report:
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/sjreport_01/chapter6.html

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) releases *Restoring Identity – the follow up report to the Moving Forward Conference*. The report presents a proposal for a reparations tribunal.

- *Restoring Identity* Final Report 2002:
http://www.piac.asn.au/publications/pubs/restore_20020927.html

Inquiry into the Progress Towards National Reconciliation undertaken by the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee.

- Inquiry into the Progress Towards National Reconciliation:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/legcon_ctte/reconciliation/index.htm
- Statement at the media conference for the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's Reconciliation Inquiry by Dr William Jonas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner:
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/speeches/social_justice/jonas_reconciliation_inquiry.html

The Sorry Day Committee release report of the Parliamentary Seminar Report: *Are we bringing them home?* The Report surveys the progress in the implementation of the *Bringing them home* recommendations.

National Library of Australia Oral History Project, *Many Voices: Reflections on Experience of Indigenous Child Separation* published.

- National Library of Australia Gateways at: <http://www.nla.gov.au/ntwkpubs/gw/60/p01a01.html>

The first member of the Stolen Generations is awarded compensation in the NSW Victims Compensation Tribunal for the sexual assault and injuries she suffered after authorities removed her from her family.

- For a media release giving more details on the decision, see:
<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/10/17/1034561266360.html>

As part of the Victorian Government's response to the *Bringing them home* Report, Victoria establishes a Stolen Generations taskforce.

2003

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

- For the full text of this report see:
<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/49245/20050414/www.daa.nsw.gov.au/news/files/FinalBTHReportDec2003.doc>

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner publicly criticises the failure of governments to provide financial and social reparations for members of the Stolen Generation, a national apology, or the appropriate mechanisms for individuals that were forcibly removed to reconnect with their culture.

- For a full text of the speech see:
http://www.humanrights.gov.au/speeches/social_justice/snaicc.htm

2004

The Commonwealth Government establishes a memorial to the Stolen Generations at Reconciliation Place in Canberra.

- For a description of the text that accompanies the artwork see:
<http://www.nsdcc.org.au/index.php/index.htm>

461 'Sorry Books' recording the thoughts of Australians on the unfolding history of the Stolen Generations are inscribed on the Australian Memory of the World Register, part of UNESCO's programme to protect and promote documentary material with significant historical value.

- For the full media release relating to the inscription of the books see:
<http://www.eniar.org/news/unesco.html>

2005

The organisation Stolen Generations Victoria is set up as a result of the 2003 report of the Stolen Generations taskforce. Its purpose is to establish a range of support and referral services that will assist Stolen Generation peoples to reconnect with their family, community, culture and land.

- For more details on this organisation see: <http://www.stolengenerationsvictoria.org.au>

The National Sorry Day Committee announces that in 2005, Sorry Day will be a 'National Day of Healing for All Australians' in an attempt to better engage the non-Indigenous Australian community with the plight of the Stolen Generations.

- For details on this announcement see: <http://www.nsdcc.org.au/index.php/index.htm>
- For the official declaration made by Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations on Sorry Day 2005 see: <http://www.eniar.org/news/nsdc4.html>

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) is dismantled by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Amendment Act 2005* (Cth) and replaced by a Commonwealth Government appointed advisory board.

- For media releases surrounding the demise of ATSIC see:
<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2004/s1088224.htm>

The first official Sorry Day ceremony outside Australia is hosted in Lincoln Fields, London, on 25 May 2005.

- For the full details of this celebrations see: <http://www.eniar.org/news/SorryDayUK2005.html>

Volume two of the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey is released. The report says that 12.3% of the carers of Indigenous children aged 0–17 in Western Australia were forcibly removed from their families. Compared with other Indigenous children, the children of members of the 'Stolen Generations' are twice as likely to have emotional and behavioural problems, to be at high risk for hyperactivity, emotional and conduct disorders, and twice as likely to abuse alcohol and drugs.

- For the full text of this report see:

<http://www2.ichr.uwa.edu.au/waachs/publications/docs/Volume2%20Complete.pdf>

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights passes Resolution 2005/35 that adopts the Van Boven/Bassiouni Principles. These principles declare a right to a remedy and reparation for victims of gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

- For the full text of Resolution 2005/35 see:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/docs/61chr/reportCHR61.pdf>

2006

The first Stolen Generations compensation scheme in Australia is set up in Tasmania by the *Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Act 2006* (Tas).

- For the full text of the legislation see: <http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au>

2007

The tenth anniversary of the *Bringing them home* report is recognised around Australia with a number of different events.

- For details of events see http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report/index.html

The first Stolen Generations compensation case is successful in the Supreme Court of South Australia. The *Trevorrow* judgment recognised the existence of the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families and the detrimental long-term effects of that policy on both the removed children and on the wider Aboriginal community. It found that even though the State of South Australia had guardianship powers over Aboriginal children, those powers were formulated for the 'care and protection' of Aboriginal children, and did not extend to removal of children from their natural parents.

- See <http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/judgments/topics.html>

2008

The federal government publically apologises to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia for the forced removals of their children throughout history.

Response to Government to the National Apology to the Stolen Generations' by Tom Calma – 13 February 2008.

- See www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/speeches/social_justice/2008/20080213let_the_healing_begin.html
- <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/apology/>
- Apology transcript – AIATSIS – <http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/apology/sorry.html>

The Federal Parliament opens for the year with a *Welcome to Country*, for the first time ever.

2009

The Federal Government establishes the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples.

Note: For the latest up-to-date information about the status of the recommendations of the report go the Social Justice section of the website at: www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice