

# Apology

Today, on behalf of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, I say sorry to the Aboriginal people of New South Wales.

I especially apologise to those of the Stolen Generations, to their families, and their descendants.

Aboriginal people are the First Nations people of New South Wales. I pay my respects to all Elders, past and present and acknowledge the ongoing connection that Aboriginal people have to these lands.

I am deeply sorry for the pain and suffering caused by taking children from their families and from their communities.

I am profoundly sorry that the predecessor agencies to the Department of Communities and Justice played a major role in those forced separations.

Aboriginal people were terribly wronged. What was done cannot be undone, and its effects are felt today.

I am sorry for the trauma that has been passed through generations.

We cannot make up for the childhoods lost and the damage caused to individuals, families and their cultural connections.

The repercussions of those previous welfare policies haunt Aboriginal people today.

We mustn't repeat past mistakes.

I acknowledge that Aboriginal children learn at an early age the kinship ties that exist within their communities and they learn their place culturally in those communities.

I recognise the significance that family and community play in providing children with a sense of safety, belonging and resilience.

I commit the Department of Communities and Justice to work in partnership with Aboriginal people, communities and with our Aboriginal staff.

Together, we will ensure that our actions make things better and not worse, that they respect the diverse needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people, and above all, support Aboriginal children to grow up strong in family and culture.



Michael Coutts-Trotter  
Secretary  
NSW Department of Communities & Justice

