

# National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

1995 – 1997

## Details

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The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families was established by the Federal Attorney-General in 1995. It was conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). In April 1997, the Commission handed down the report, *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* containing 54 recommendations.

The basic terms of reference for the Commission were to inquire into and report on the following matters:

- a) what were the laws, policies and practices that resulted in the removal of children in the past, and what effect did they have?
- b) were the (then) current laws and practices (related to services available) adequate enough to help people whom had been affected by removal in the past?
- c) what factors were important to consider when thinking about compensation for people who had been removed?
- d) whether the (then) current laws and policies around removal needed to be changed.

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## Gallery



Front cover of the Bringing them home report (1997)

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## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Related Events

- [Apology to the Aboriginal people of Australia for the separation of children from their families, Parliament of New South Wales \(18 June 1997\)](#)  
The NSW apology to the Aboriginal people of Australia was a response to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families.
- [Apology to Aboriginal People, Government of Tasmania \(1997\)](#)  
The National Inquiry led to the apology to Aboriginal people by the Tasmanian state government.
- [Apology to Aboriginal Families by the Parliament of Western Australia \(28 May 1997\)](#)
- [Victorian Government Apology to the Stolen Generations \(17 September 1997\)](#)
- [Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, Parliament of Australia \(13 February 2008\)](#)

#### Related Glossary Terms

- [Aboriginal Child Placement Principle \(1983 - current\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Aborigines Welfare Ordinance 1954, Commonwealth of Australia \(1954 - 1965\)](#)
- [Aborigines Welfare Repeal Ordinance 1965, Australian Capital Territory \(1965 - 1977\)](#)

#### Related Archival Collections

- [Bringing Them Home after the Apology oral history project \[sound recording\], National Library of Australia \(2009 - current\)](#)
- [Bringing Them Home Oral History Project \[sound recording\] \(1998 - 2002\)](#)

#### Related Organisations

- [Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care \(1981 - current\)](#)  
SNAICC was instrumental in bringing the story of the 'Stolen Generations' to prominence and calling for a national enquiry.

## Resources

- Swain, Shurlee, [History of Australian inquiries reviewing institutions providing care for children](#), October 2014
- Parliament of Australia, [Apology Transcript](#), We say Sorry - The National Apology to Indigenous Peoples of Australia, Parliament House, Canberra, 13 February 2008, 2008
- Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce, [wilam naling ... knowing who you are: Improving access to records of the Stolen Generations: a report to the Victorian Government from the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce](#), 2006
- Briskman, Linda, *The black grapevine: Aboriginal activism and the stolen generations*, 2003
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, [The Stolen Generations](#), No date

- [\*Marie Wood interviewed by Ann-Mari Jordens in the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants oral history project \[sound recording\]\*](#), 13 May 2010
  - Australian Human Rights Commission, [\*Bringing Them Home: The 'Stolen Children' Report \(1997\)\*](#), 2011
  - Australian Human Rights Commission, [\*RightsED: Bringing them home\*](#), 2010
  - McDonald, Ashley, [\*Are We Family? And if so, Can I Still Sue You?\*](#), Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law, March 2000
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