

## Media coverage of Stolen Generations Alliance press conference with

### Malcolm Fraser and Lowitja O'Donoghue

**The Australian** 27 April

A decade of Aborigines being told to 'fit in'

Stuart Rintoul

ABORIGINAL people have lost hope under Howard government policies designed to force them to "fit in" with white Australia, say former prime minister Malcolm Fraser and indigenous leader Lowitja O'Donoghue. In a fierce attack on indigenous policy over the past decade, Ms O'Donoghue said yesterday she had never known such a bad time in Aboriginal affairs: policy was shaped by an attitude of "white is right" and John Howard had been a "dead loss" in the area.

Mr Fraser said that almost 10 years after the Stolen Generations report, ***Bringing Them Home***, two-thirds of the recommendations had been ignored by the Government, while Aboriginal affairs had been "taken back decades" to attitudes and policies that were proven failures.

Mr Fraser said Australia ought to follow the example of Canada, which is set to pay its equivalent of the stolen generations more than \$1 billion in compensation. He said Canada was "light years" ahead of Australia in addressing very similar problems in its indigenous communities.

Attacking key areas of Aboriginal policy, Mr Fraser said cutting off services to remote indigenous communities would be a "total denial of responsibility", it was "a national disgrace" that there were fewer Aboriginal students at university today than 10 years ago and far too little was spent on Aboriginal health.

Mr Fraser and Ms O'Donoghue, co-patrons of the Stolen Generations Alliance, were joined in Melbourne by singer Bob Randall, author of the stolen generation anthem Brown Skin Baby and an influential figure at the troubled Mutitjulu community at Uluru, who said the community was "emptying out" as people moved to Alice Springs.

Mr Randall lashed out at media reports last year that a pedophile traded petrol for sex with girls at Mutitjulu and that the community was presided over by men with criminal convictions, saying no charges had ever been laid.

Mr Fraser said Mr Howard's predecessor, Paul Keating, "had a vision of Australia that was intrinsically Australian. He wouldn't have been trying to say 'you've got to be like us'."

**The Sydney Morning Herald** 27 April  
Fraser slams indigenous policy fiasco  
Mark Metherell

GOVERNMENT attempts to "starve" indigenous people out of remote communities highlights the "significant regression" in indigenous policies under John Howard, the former prime minister Malcolm Fraser has said.

It will be a decade next month since the *Bringing Them Home* report chronicled the suffering of indigenous families through official removal of children.

But Mr Fraser said the failure to reverse indigenous disadvantage, poor health and lack of elected representation showed "there has really been a significant regression over the past 10 years". He joined the Aboriginal leader Lowitja O'Donoghue to call for a new commitment to the wholehearted implementation of the report.

Mr Fraser said Government attempts to move indigenous people from their communities into bigger towns to get jobs was the latest sign of the failure of the "practical reconciliation" policy.

"Just to starve out the remote localities . that is not a policy. It is a prescription for more despair," he said.

Appointing the historian Keith Windschuttle to the ABC board was "like slapping every indigenous person in the face with a wet fish".

**Herald-Sun**, Melbourne, 27 Apr  
Pay the Stolen Generation call

Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has used the forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stolen Generations report to call on the Federal Government to pay compensation.

Mr Fraser joined Prof Lowitja O'Donoghue and activist Bob Randall in praising Canada's model of compensation for its indigenous communities.

"There aren't large numbers of votes on this issue. People ought to act because it is needed and it is necessary and it is right," Mr Fraser said.

Prof O'Donoghue said she was still waiting to hear Prime Minister John Howard say sorry and, as far as leadership goes, "he doesn't rate".

The anniversary of *Bringing Them Home* is on May 26, one decade after it was first tabled in Federal Parliament.

**Courier Mail**, Brisbane 27 Apr

Fraser plea on compo

FORMER prime minister Malcolm Fraser yesterday urged the Federal Government to pay compensation to members of the Stolen Generations of indigenous Australians.

Mr Fraser's appeal came as he joined Aboriginal leader Lowitja O'Donoghue in painting a bleak picture of indigenous affairs one month out from the 10th anniversary of the Bringing Them Home report on the Stolen Generations.

The former Liberal prime minister compared Australia's treatment of its stolen generations with Canada, which has recently announced compensation for indigenous people removed from their families.

"If there are going to be resources of the sort Canada has employed, and believed to be necessary and believed to be justified, you can't say it's just the states' responsibility," Mr Fraser said.

"It's Australia's responsibility. When they want to do something the Federal Government seems to find ... large sums of money.

"They're mostly spending money where they think there are going to be large numbers of votes. There aren't large numbers of votes on this issue. People ought to act because it is needed and it is necessary and it is right."

Mr Fraser attacked both sides of politics for pushing Aboriginal issues off the agenda, saying federal policy on indigenous affairs was "going backwards".

Following the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Australia was the only western democracy with an indigenous minority that had no representative voice, he said.

"To have no elected representation is really saying to an important indigenous minority: 'Well, we know what's best for you'."

Mr Fraser criticised the declining number of Indigenous students studying at university and inadequate spending on Aboriginal health, which he said was significantly less than non-indigenous people realised.

Professor O'Donoghue criticised both the Labor and Liberal parties for doing little on Aboriginal issues and said most of the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home report had never been implemented.

This AAP article, or variations, appeared in **numerous regional papers:**

Compensate Stolen Generation - Fraser

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Professor O'Donoghue criticised both the Labor and Liberal parties for doing little on Aboriginal issues and said most of the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home report had never been implemented.

"This is the absolute worst time in Aboriginal affairs history from my point of view," Prof O'Donoghue said.

## OVERSEAS

**The Scotsman**, Edinburgh 27 April

Aborigines say little done to help stolen children

By Victoria Thieberger

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Ten years after a report detailed the "attempted genocide" of Australian Aborigines and demanded a government apology and compensation, black leaders are still waiting to hear the word "sorry" or see any compensation.

Advert for scotsman.com's football briefing

The 1997 report described the forced removal of aboriginal children, known as the "Stolen Generations". Up to 100,000 were seized from their parents from 1910 to 1970 under government policy to assimilate them into white culture.

But aboriginal leaders said on Thursday that about two-thirds of the report's recommendations on helping those forcibly taken from their families have been ignored.

They said Australia compared poorly with Canada, which recently announced a compensation package for its indigenous people, and other countries, including the United States and New Zealand.

"The report's recommendations could do much to heal the wounds," said Lowitja O'Donoghue, a former chairwoman of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

She said the plight of Aborigines in Australia contrasts sharply with Canada, where the government has agreed to pay compensation to native Indian children who were forced to attend "residential schools" thousands of miles from their homes.

"I think this is the absolute worst time in the history of Aboriginal affairs," she said.

The 1997 report by Australia's human rights commission found an assimilation policy used until the 1960s was "systematic racial discrimination and genocide".

It called for a government apology and compensation, but conservative Prime Minister John Howard will not issue an apology for past atrocities against Aborigines.

In recent years Aboriginal leaders have moved away from calls for racial reconciliation to a more pragmatic call for help on health and drug and alcohol abuse.

Aborigines have far higher rates of imprisonment, unemployment, welfare dependency, domestic violence and alcoholism than the rest of the population. Most live in remote communities in Australia's outback, with smaller groups in squalid conditions on the fringes of larger country towns.

Former conservative prime minister Malcolm Fraser, one of the patrons of the Stolen Generations Alliance, said Australia should follow Canada's example in setting compensation for the "stolen" children.

Fraser said education and health services for Aborigines have gone backwards over the past 10 years and there is little political interest in improving the situation. "The political process has virtually pushed indigenous people off the agenda.

"Some of the things that are being said now remind me of policy that are many decades old," he said.

Aboriginal leaders said a service set up to reunite separated families was chronically underfunded, and could only help up to 200 families a year, with thousands waiting for assistance wading through government records and files to find lost family members.

This article: <http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=645062007>, also appeared in Switzerland and elsewhere around the world.

### **All Headline News** (digital) 26 April

Fraser attacks Indigenous affairs 'regression'

Former prime minister Malcolm Fraser says the Federal Government has ignored most of a major report on the removal of Indigenous Australians from their families.

In the lead up to next month's 10-year anniversary of the 'Bringing Them Home' report, Mr Fraser has attacked the Government's handling of Indigenous affairs, saying it has regressed.

Mr Fraser says neither the Federal Government nor the Opposition is showing any real interest in Aboriginal affairs.

He says more money needs to be spent on health, and education has gone backwards.

Mr Fraser, who is a co-patron of the Stolen Generations Alliance, says there is no stark point of difference between the two major parties on Aboriginal affairs.

He says the Federal Government should follow the Canadian Government's example.

"The Canadians have shown a very real interest in resolving these problems," he said.

"The kind of interest that hasn't come from Canberra, [from] either party.

"I don't really believe has come from either of the major parties in the state arena."

Former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) chair, Lowitja O'Donoghue, has supported Mr Fraser's stand.

She says this is the worst time in Aboriginal affairs history.

### **New Zealand Television** 26 April

"Stolen children" wait for compensation

Ten years after a report detailed the "attempted genocide" of Australian Aborigines and demanded a government apology and compensation, black leaders are still waiting to hear the word "sorry" or see any compensation.

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But aboriginal leaders said on Thursday that about two-thirds of the report's recommendations on helping those forcibly taken from their families have been ignored.

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