



Media Release

JENNY MACKLIN MP

Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs

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Australian Government to Apologise to Members of the Stolen Generations

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, today announced that a formal apology to members of the Stolen Generations would be made on Wednesday, 13 February, 2008.

Ms Macklin said the apology would be the first item of business for the new Government.

“A national apology to the Stolen Generations and their families is a first, necessary step to move forward from the past,” Ms Macklin said.

“The apology will be made on behalf of the Australian Government and does not attribute guilt to the current generation of Australian people.”

Ms Macklin said there will also be a national Welcome to Country as part of the opening ceremony proceedings for Parliament on Tuesday, 12 February, 2008.

“The Welcome to Country will be delivered by Elder Matilda House on behalf of the Ngunnawal people in the Members Hall,” Ms Macklin said.

“A Welcome to Country is about paying respect to the traditional owners of a particular region.

“This Welcome will carry national significance in symbolising a future of respect and partnership with Indigenous people.”

Ms Macklin said she had consulted widely on the apology, including with the National Sorry Day Committee and the Stolen Generations Alliance.

“I have also met with Malcolm Fraser and Lowitja O’Donoghue, who are patrons of the Stolen Generations Alliance,” Ms Macklin said.

“Local Northern Territory MPs Damien Hale, Minister Warren Snowden and Senator Trish Crossin, have held consultations in NT with local Indigenous people.

Ms Macklin said the Government was continuing to consult widely on the content of the apology, and is confident that the timing chosen is appropriate.

Ms Macklin said an apology is the beginning of a new relationship, a bridge to build respect and a powerful healing symbol.

“Once we establish this respect, the Government can work with Indigenous communities to improve services aimed at closing the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians,” Ms Macklin said.

“The Australian Government has committed \$261 million to improving Indigenous kids’ health and early development.

“We have also committed an extra \$15 million towards counselling and helping the Stolen Generations reconnect with loved ones.”

Ms Macklin said she hoped that there was bi-partisan support in the Parliament for an apology to the Stolen Generations.