

STOLEN GENERATION COMPENSATION ACHIEVED VIA TRIPARTISAN SUPPORT

Tuesday, 22nd January 2008

Media release: Peg Putt MP

Tasmanian Greens

The Tasmanian Greens today supported the completion of the process of delivering compensation to members of the stolen generation of Tasmanian Aborigines and their children, reiterating the Greens' strong commitment to this important gesture of healing and reconciliation, first initiated with a tripartisan apology in Tasmania's House of Assembly during the balance of power Parliament in 1997, at the suggestion of the Greens to the minority Liberal government, and continued during the Labor era.[1]

Greens Opposition Leader Peg Putt MP again apologised to stolen generation members, their families and community for the removal of children and the legacy of pain and disadvantage that has followed, and thanked the aboriginal community for their courage and forbearance.

Ms Putt pointed out the tripartisan history of political support over the past decade which has led the nation on this vital issue, saying that it was vital to meaningful resolution of this distressing chapter that all sides of the Parliament, representing the people of Tasmania, had come together to agree and to endorse action to support the words of reconciliation with actions to back them up.

"As we move to resolution of compensation payments to Tasmanian Aborigines and their families it is important to acknowledge the courage, the struggle, and the forbearance of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and the leadership of stolen generation advocates Annette Peardon and Eddie Thomas, because it is the terrible wrong that was done to them that we seek to address," Ms Putt said.

"The statement 'we have survived' made by the Aboriginal community points to the dreadful treatment of a people by an ignorant society, and the valiant efforts of our indigenous community to maintain their families, community, culture, and identity against the odds."

"Nothing can ever take away what happened and compensation cannot remedy all the ills, this is primarily a gesture that we as a society are serious about reconciliation and sincere in our apology for past hurtful actions."

"We lead the nation in making financial restitution and the collaboration of all sides of Parliament and tripartisan support through the years has been a key to achieving this, it could never have been done by just one political party acting alone."

"The fact that many people from all sides of the political spectrum in Tasmania have been involved in bringing us to this day must be acknowledged, from former Liberal Premier Ray Groom to former Leader of the Tasmanian

Greens Christine Milne, and of course the former Labor Premier Jim Bacon who all so much wanted to see us take this important step."

"I wish to again apologise to the stolen generation for their suffering and to pledge that I will personally continue to do what I can for healing and reconciliation, and that the Tasmanian Greens stand with me on this."

"The onus is now on other states and on the new Federal government to also apologise and make compensation, but true reconciliation must be an inclusive affair, and we hope that all political parties will be able to collaborate as has been the case over the decade in which this has come to fruition in Tasmania," Ms Putt concluded.

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