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MEDIA RELEASE

Senate recommendations fall short of what is needed to deliver justice to the Stolen Generations

The recommendations of the Senate Inquiry report into compensation for the Stolen Generations tabled today, fall short of what is needed to deliver justice to Australia's most disadvantaged people, according to ANTaR.

ANTaR National Director, Gary Highland said the Committee's decision not to recommend compensation to the Stolen Generations flew in the face of evidence presented to the inquiry by the National Sorry Day Committee, Stolen Generations Alliance, ANTaR, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and leading QC, Julian Burnside.

"Providing compensation would be a modest, practical and expedient way of helping ease the suffering of the Stolen Generations and their families," Mr Highland said.

Mr Highland said that across a range of social indicators, Aboriginal people forcibly removed from their parents remain the most disadvantaged Australians. Stolen Generations members are more likely to have a disability or long term health problems, less likely to have completed year 10 and have a greater chance of being a victim of violence than other Aboriginal people.

"The lack of a compensation scheme will only add to the suffering of these people by forcing them to pursue lengthy and traumatic court proceedings to seek justice," Mr Highland said.

Mr Highland said it appeared that Government Committee members were unwilling to contradict public statements ruling out compensation by the Prime Minister and Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

In tabling the report, Committee Chair Senator Trish Crossin acknowledged that the vast majority of submissions to the inquiry supported the provisions of the Bill.

"The Committee's recommendations reflect the views of the Government, rather than the bulk of evidence presented to its inquiry," Mr Highland said.

Mr Highland said ANTaR supported other recommendations of the Committee including the establishment of an Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the provision of additional close the gap measures to meet the specific needs of the Stolen Generations.

"The establishment of an Aboriginal Healing Foundation was also an outcome of the 2020 Summit and now appears to be firmly on the national agenda. This is a much needed development, but it should be in addition to, rather than instead of, compensation for the Stolen Generations," he said.

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