

As a member of the stolen generation I'm in full support of the recommendations in the bringing them home report with particular reference to the guide in making reparations on pages 27, 28, 30, 34, 36, 37.

Why I think reparations/compensations are important is basically for the government to make good on the apology which will go toward mending differences and promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non Indigenous peoples of Australia.

Today's Government is in a position more fiscally aligned than ever before as a reflection and sign of the times where society and its people see compensation as nothing less than due process. This goes without saying concerning, "victims of crime" which we all know to be the result of genocidal practices regarding stolen generations however good intentioned it may have been at the time.

I was adopted by Dutch migrants who were well intentioned people but didn't realise the importance of my identity which I was denied until my late twenties. I effectively lived a lie up to that point where I suffered from alcoholism, drugs social awkwardness and alienation both within myself and in my social surroundings which became very apparent in my inability to have intimate relationships. My life had a general lack of meaning because of this manufactured identity, that I was socially conditioned to accept as my lot in life. I lived in a mystified third person experience rather than any meaningful engagement of enjoying and experiencing the essence of life. It was like I constantly watching TV where the audience of mainstream laughs at me as an oddity for their entertainment because of being an outsider and never being fully included. This psychological barrier led me to experience the social issues so commonly experienced in our community which we are all too familiar with. This I have to work through in various capacities for my own piece of mind throughout my life.

In Western thought there are major paradigms shaped by a colonial past that basically regard the Indigenous context with disdain, mistrust and total exclusion. It is masked in a process of dualism where the strategy is one of divide and rule with the intention of always gaining the upper hand that validates itself through assuming a moral high ground and it is the projection of this image to a largely ignorant public that perpetuates this paradigm to constantly repeat itself in the annals of history.

The stark reality of these paradigms has resulted in little or no change in regards to relations between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians. The fact remains that Indigenous people are Australian citizens and more so the case being first nation peoples. We are also tax payers to a system that has largely been against us in the past and we have died in wars for a system that is also antagonistic by not fully recognising our contribution as servicemen and women in paying the ultimate sacrifice.

This paradigm of duality becomes most evident when it involves such issues as stolen wages (whom the victims in many cases are also members of the stolen generations). We have yet to see an outcome which by enlarge still has not been addressed to this day and is also further testament against this paradigm. It always seeks to hold the purse strings regarding fiscal policy and implementation by never giving out the full amount as due process toward anything to do with Aboriginal people.

That window dressing of past government spin doctoring by assuming the moral high ground as presenting self determination and self management as a facade versus accountability and government control which is most evident to any and all fiscal policies and practices concerning Indigenous peoples.

Other paradigms that hide behind this duplicity of intent is spin doctoring to pre-empt, bureaucrats assuming a moral high ground by implicit distrust of Indigenous decision making processes and more so the case concerning financial matters to impose conditions of such compensation and reparations outside the recommendations or at best compromise in favour again of dual process to be seen as meeting the recommendations on paper but with no clear outcome where Indigenous peoples are concerned.

These are my concerns and compensation should be justifiable into today's fiscal economy of what Michael Mansell asserts as \$1 million dollars per person as a benchmark for individuals who have been separated from their families and communities through adoption, fostering, removal or institutionalisation due to past government policies and practices as is the modus Operandi of Link-Up services to reunite such people.

Lets get down to tin tacks by a quote from the Royal commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody but more particularly the regional report of Inquiry in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania 1991. p. 29

“the great lesson that stands out is that non-Aboriginals who currently hold virtually all the power in dealing with Aboriginals, have to give up the assumption that they know best for Aboriginals...who have to be led, educated, manipulated and re-shaped into the image of the dominant community. Instead Aboriginals must be recognised for what they are, a people in their own right with their culture, history and values...”

We do not need nor want the government to tell us how to use, manage our monetary affairs but only to make suggestion and provide financial planning to have our future generations benefit where we are the ones that make the final decision and for the government to show due respect to us as first nations people in such decision making.

Monetary compensation as an act of reconciliation in action that gives the legs to the apology stated earlier this year on the 13th of February 2008. It is also a demonstration where money is representative of time spent through the giving of oneself to a process of work and toil.

It is not only that we were stolen but the effects include us being stolen from ourselves and the stealing of time from us of who we could have been in reaching our full potential. Compensation ought to reflect time stolen from us as one way of determining a framework for monetary compensation. It is the amount of time taken away from us until a reunion has occurred as a pivot point. It would also respect our elders who generally have a longer time span and therefore would have the Lions share of compensation and also to those who can never have a reunion because of deceased relatives. There would also need to be provision made for victims of stolen wages who are members of the stolen generations as well.

Let it not be insulting of offering \$4,000 dollars as the Queensland government has done in one particular case concerning 25years of work where wages never paid was kept in a so called trust.

Compensation ought to be considered according to the recommendations regarding those who have been in institutions however \$20,000 as a base sum does not reflect adequately what the compensation is intended for. It in fact is insulting and trivialises the experiences of those who have been in institutions. As for those who experienced foster care, the same measure of time can serve as an indicator for an amount of compensation. It can also include an added amount of their years in institutions and again the full amount to those whose relatives that have past away and can never have a reunion.

These are some broad frameworks which I think are worth exploring.

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