

## STOLEN GENERATIONS COMPENSATION

*In response to Senator Andrew Bartlett's Private Senator's Bill*

TO BE EXAMINED BY SENATE COMMITTEE INQUIRY

SUBMISSION:

I strongly believe in a 'fair-go' for all, it is this 'core value' that I feel is fundamental to my identity as an Australian. In this light, I think that Australian institutions of government should work towards advancing and protecting this deeply egalitarian and endemically Australian value (of 'fair-go'), as government should represent and reflect the values of its constituents and must to be seen to be equitable and democratic in the eyes of all citizens, in order to maintain legitimate political authority.

I don't believe that Indigenous Australians have ever really got a 'fair-go' from Australian governments in the past. As a student who is studying Indigenous issues and post-colonial legacies, in depth, at the University of the Sunshine Coast, I understand that descendants of Australia's 'white settler-society' have come to enjoy the full potential of wealth and opportunity that Australian lands, resources and liberal political systems have to offer, whereas our 'first nations' peoples' (through *inter alia*; racist government policies and institutional practises), have only ever received the very short end of the stick.

But times are changing. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the Indigenous Australian Stolen Generations, on behalf of past and present Australian governments, has given me new hope for a better (and fairer) future for all Australians. Though 'the apology' was long-overdue, it has, in effect ascertained a contemporary basis for improved relations between Non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. It heralds a new era of honest and healthier 'racial' relationships, that *can* foster and *will* encourage -a renewed and hopeful engagement in the process of reconciliation, with (government and public) respect, understanding and support this may manifest in more equitable social outcomes and a greater social well-being.

Healing our nations past hurts and social rifts, so that together we may move forward towards a more inclusive, equitable and considerate Australian society is an idea that I find very exciting and refreshing. I think positive, national action that is emotive of 'fair-go' for all, will be instrumental in inspiring a more authentic sense of pride, good-heartedness and more constructive aspirations -in our

political arena and will be thus embraced by broader society. I feel this concept is especially resonate with young Australians (who will be our leaders of tomorrow), they should be able to envisage a great future for their country, based on ethical principles and 'fair-go' values, in which they will want to participate.

In this sense, I believe that Senator Andrew Bartlett's Private Senators Bill (that seeks to address some of the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* Report such as compensation for the Stolen Generations), makes the next logical step in this healing process. As an Australian, I believe that the Indigenous Australian peoples affected by past government's policies of child removal, have the right for an 'effective remedy' and should be given a 'fair-go' by the Rudd Government, particularly in order to seek compensation in the form of financial reparations.

I believe that Non-Indigenous Australians would demand no-less if the shoe was on the other foot. The Rudd Government has apologised but in my opinion must now seek atonement in the form of an 'effective remedy' if it wants to be seen as sincere. I think that the Rudd Government has, not only the obligation to make restitution, but also the power, the funds and the public support to do so.

Indigenous Australians have suffered enough. I feel, it is of the utmost importance that compensation is provided to the victims of the Stolen Generations in a way that is as painless for them as possible. Like Senator Andrew Bartlett, I believe that the implementation of the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report is required by the new Rudd Government, as is the examination and investigation of local and international compensation models, in order to find the most suitable and effective method of reparation. I hope that the Senate's Legal and Constitutional committee finds an appropriate way to get compensation to the victims of the Stolen Generations and that the Rudd Government then has the courage and moral tenacity to follow the recommendations of the Committee's inquiry and provide justice for all the Stolen Generations without delay.

Regards,

Lisa Delanoue