

Senate Inquiry Submission From: Journey of Healing (ACT) Inc. (JoHACT)

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Sent: Wednesday 9th April 2008

To: Legal and Constitutional Committee (SEN)

Submission to the Inquiry into the Stolen Generations Compensation Bill 2008

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Department of the Senate

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Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600, Australia

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Journey of Healing (ACT) Incorporated (JoHACT) started as a local coalition of community and reconciliation groups, churches, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals. It was originally formed as the Canberra Sorry Day Network in 1997, after a meeting called by a group of Community leaders in Canberra in response to the *Bringing them home* Report.

The Network organised a number of events for National Sorry Day on 26 May 1998, as recommended by the *Bringing them home* Report. Since Sorry Day, the Network has continued to meet regularly as it was considered important continue to work towards the long process of healing, and to progress the *Bringing them home* recommendations in the ACT area. The objectives and strategies of the JoHACT include:

1. To support and promote implementation of the recommendations of the *Bringing them home* Report, in consultation with local Indigenous people. Strategies will include:

Researching, monitoring and encouraging local action towards the *Bringing them home* recommendations

Working with governments and community organisations towards improving the well-being of local Indigenous communities and their access to services.

2. To support community education about the effects of child removal policies on Indigenous individuals, families and communities. Strategies will include:

Encouraging governments and community organisations at all levels to increase their knowledge and awareness of Indigenous history and culture;

Supporting and creating opportunities for cross-cultural education and contact among the wider community.

The JoHACT Implementation Task Force was active between 1998 and 2002, and again in 2005 and 2007. It has consulted with local Indigenous people, and worked towards more action on the recommendations of the **Bringing them home** report.

The Task Force has monitored actions towards the *Bringing them home* recommendations in the Australian Capital Territory area. This work has involved consulting with local Indigenous communities about how services were working 'on the ground' for them, consulting key officers in government and community agencies about their current and proposed services and practices, and workshops or conferences with service providers, policy workers, and interested individuals in both government and community agencies. This process has enabled us to identify local actions needed, and outstanding issues relating to the *Bringing them home* recommendations.

Independent community progress reports were prepared in 1999, 2000, 2002, and 2007, reporting on actions by local churches, community groups, governments and others, and indicating those actions which are yet to be addressed.

- Given our activities and the objectives of JoHACT, we commend Senator Bartlett for drafting the Bill, and the Senate Committee for its consideration. We strongly recommend the need for a full audit and monitoring, at both a state and national level, of all 54 recommendations of the *Bringing them home* Report, recommendation by recommendation..

To give real value to the Apology, reparations should use the von Boven principles.

JoHACT would welcome the opportunity to speak to these issues before the Committee in the near future.

Mr Neil Macdonald
Indigenous Co-Chair
Journey of Healing (ACT) Inc.