



CHIEF MINISTER

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
chief.minister@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801
Telephone: 08 8901 4000
Facsimile: 08 8901 4099

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

The Chair of the Inquiry into the *Stolen Generation Compensation Bill 2008* wrote to me on 18 March 2008 inviting the Northern Territory Government to make a submission on this matter.

I want to say at the outset that the Northern Territory Government recognises the substantial difficulties and personal tragedies that the policies of previous Governments have caused many Indigenous Australians. Indeed members of the Northern Territory Government are from outstanding Territory families who were directly affected by these policies.

The Bill being considered by the committee states that the eligibility criteria for ex gratia payments under the proposed scheme extend to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who:

- Were removed from their family prior to 31st December 1975, were under 21 years old at that time, and that this was done as a consequence of race-based policies.
- Were subject to removal from their family as a result of the Aborigines Ordinance 1911 or 1918 or similar.

The committee should be aware that the Northern Territory of Australia, as a body politic, came into existence on 1 July 1978 on commencement of the Commonwealth's *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978*. Prior to 1911 the area now known as the Northern Territory was part of South Australia.



2.

Given that actions and policies between 1911 and 1978 were the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, the Northern Territory cannot assist the inquiry as described by its terms of reference. Any Commonwealth records held for this period are held by Commonwealth Archives.

The Northern Territory Government apologised to the Stolen Generations in a motion to the Territory Parliament in 2001. The Northern Territory Government also fully supported the Government's apology motion made to the Federal Parliament in Canberra earlier this year.

I trust this submission will be of assistance to the Senate's deliberations.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Paul Henderson.

PAUL HENDERSON

11 APR 2008