

# Premier

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Senator T Crossin  
Committee Chair  
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Crossin

Thank you for inviting the Tasmanian Government to make a submission to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs' Inquiry into the Stolen Generation Compensation Bill 2008.

I note that as part of the Inquiry the Committee will consider existing domestic and international compensation models for providing reparation to Stolen Generations and I am pleased to provide information in relation to the Tasmanian Government's approach.

In November 2006, the Tasmanian Parliament passed the *Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Act 2006*.

The Act made provision for a \$5 million fund to enable the Tasmanian Government to provide ex-gratia payments to eligible members of the Stolen Generations of Aborigines and their children.

The Act also provided for the appointment of an independent assessor with responsibility to assess the eligibility of applicants. Former Tasmanian Premier, the Hon Ray Groom, accepted this position and the Act became operational on 15 January 2007.

A total of 151 claims were received. Following assessment of all applications, the Assessor determined that 106 were eligible to receive an ex-gratia payment. Eighty-four eligible living members of the Stolen Generations each received \$58 333.33. Twenty-two eligible children of deceased members of the Stolen Generations received either \$5 000 or \$4 000 each, depending on how many people were within the particular family group.

Ex-gratia payments were made on 8 February 2008.

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For many applicants, the process has provided a chance to tell their story for the first time. For some it has offered an opportunity to finally understand what happened to them as children.

No amount of money can ever return shared experiences of family life to children, parents and siblings whose lives were disrupted by policies of the past. Nevertheless, through the legislation and scheme of ex-gratia payments, the Tasmanian Government has taken an important step to resolve acts that were founded on ignorance and prejudice.

I am pleased to be able to provide the committee with the following material that may assist in its deliberations:

- A copy of the Report of the Stolen Generations Assessor released in February 2008, which includes *the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Act 2006* (the Act can also be accessed online at [www.dpac.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au));
- An information package that was made available for applicants, which outlines eligibility criteria for claims under the Act; and
- A copy of the Second Reading Speech on the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Children Bill 2006 made to the Tasmanian Parliament on 28 November 2006.

My Government is justly proud of the way we have addressed the issue of the Stolen Generations in Tasmania by providing a tangible response that builds trust and support with the community and lays a strong foundation for moving forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Inquiry. I look forward to reviewing the Committee's final recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Paul Lennon  
Premier