

Thursday, 3 March 2022

SUPPORTING THE STOLEN GENERATIONS TO HEAL

The Andrews Labor Government has today unveiled its landmark *Stolen Generations Reparations Package*, recognising the lasting suffering caused by the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families.

Members of the Stolen Generations will be able to access financial reparations, an apology from the state and healing support, with applications opening on Thursday, 31 March 2022.

The package has been designed by and for Aboriginal people, backed by an investment of \$155 million from the Labor Government. The Stolen Generations Reparations Steering Committee engaged with more than 400 members of Victoria's Stolen Generations and their families during the consultation process in 2021.

Those who are eligible can apply to receive financial reparations of \$100,000, as well as a personal apology from the Government, access to healing and reconnection to Country programs, and an opportunity to share their story.

No amount of reparations can ever make up for what happened, but this package is designed to go some way towards addressing the actions of past governments that resulted in ongoing suffering for Stolen Generations members and communities.

The application process will prioritise terminally and critically ill applicants who will be able to receive interim payments.

Applications will start being assessed by June and payments will begin later this year. The package is open to those who were removed by a government or non-government agency in Victoria prior to the 31 December 1976.

Acting under past laws, Victorian authorities forcibly removed many Aboriginal children from their families causing lasting distress, trauma and pain.

A 2018 survey found many Stolen Generations members still suffer health, social and economic disadvantage, with up to 70 per cent relying on welfare and more than half living with disability or a chronic health condition.

A reparations package was one of the key items raised at the first meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. The Government continues to work with Aboriginal communities on our historic path towards truth, justice and Treaty.

Quote attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Healing and reconciliation for Aboriginal Victorians doesn't just mean talking about what we can do – it means taking action. While we're on a pathway to Treaty, and truth telling is underway, more can be done."

"Only by righting the wrongs of our past, and addressing ongoing injustices, can we achieve a fairer and stronger future – for all Victorians."

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"This package delivers tangible support for those who have suffered far too long. The harm caused by governments in breaking up families and taking children away can never be undone, and saying sorry has never been enough."

Quote attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

"Thank you to the Steering Committee and every single person whose voice and commitment along the journey have delivered this package for Victoria's Stolen Generations survivors."

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