

# Anniversary of National Apology Day and National Sorry Day



## What is the difference between National Apology Day and National Sorry Day?

National Apology Day is observed on 13 February every year to mark the anniversary of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology, and National Sorry Day is held on 26 May every year to mark the tabling of the 'Bringing Them Home' report. Sometimes these two can be confused because of the similar language. The purpose of this communicate is to assist One Tree service staff in understanding the differences to help plan how they may acknowledge each day at their service.

## National Apology Day

On 13 February 2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made a formal apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly to the Stolen Generations whose lives had been blighted by past government policies of forced child removal and assimilation. You can view the apology speech at this link. <https://youtu.be/b3TZOGpG6cM>

Following years of campaigning by Aboriginal groups and reconciliation supporters, in 2007, consultation began about what form a national apology should take. On 13 February 2008, the Prime Minister offered a formal apology to members of the Stolen Generations on behalf of the Australian parliament. In this landmark speech, all Australians were called to acknowledge and reflect on the past policies imposed on Aboriginal people and the ongoing actions of Governments that implemented these policies over decades. The apology included a commitment to embrace new solutions to enduring issues that have affected Aboriginal people. It called for a future based on mutual respect and mutual responsibility.

## National Sorry Day

On 26 May 1997, the 'Bringing them Home' Report was tabled, following the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. The report marked a pivotal moment for those who had been removed and their descendants, known as the Stolen Generations.

National Sorry Day reminds Australians to remember the injustices of past policies, and the subsequent mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout the Stolen Generations era of the 20th century. It acknowledges the findings of the report and the impact on past, current and future descendants of the Stolen Generations. You can read the full report at this link. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/bringing-them-home-report-1997>

## Acknowledging these National Days

The Anniversary of National Apology Day, and National Sorry Day are good opportunities for our services to engage with local Aboriginal families and community. It may be possible to include songs, painting, or similar activities in a morning tea or lunchtime event. Engaging with your local community regarding what is happening at your service sends a strong message of support and acknowledgement.

It is common to delay introducing these issues with children until school ages, due to the sensitivity of the topic and how confronting stories of child removal may be. Staff are encouraged to reflect on this and discuss with our Cultural Practice Leader before introducing resources about the Stolen Generations. There are resources available to assist in talking to children at an appropriate age level. As a first step, programming could explore the concept of apologies and what it means to say 'sorry' more generally, rather than focusing on Stolen Generations stories directly.