



MEDIA RELEASE, 19 January 2012

Constitutional Change, a Powerful and Symbolic Act

The National Sorry Day Committee (NSDC) along with members of the Stolen Generations, view the recognition of Australia's First Nations Peoples' in the Australian Constitution as a powerful and symbolic act that will stand alongside the National Apology of 2008.

NSDC acknowledges that the Final Report presented by the *Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* to the Australian Government today has come about after a great deal of community consultation.

NSDC hopes it will help to build positive momentum towards a successful Referendum in 2013 – a movement for change which now sits in the hands of all Australians and their political leaders.

As children, many members of the Stolen Generations were denied their Aboriginal heritage and forced to feel ashamed of who they were.

In contrast, recognition of Australia's First Nations Peoples in the Constitution would signify the pride of our nation in being connected to the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

The change delivers a message to all the children of Australia today to be proud and happy in who they are and of where they come from.

The Apology along with the upcoming Referendum herald great hope and are both part of a longer Journey of Healing for our country.

They stand together also as a reminder of the unfinished business for the Stolen Generations, which includes the need for full and effective reparation for the harm, loss and trauma suffered as a result of past forcible removal policies.

The theme for NSDC's Stolen Generations agenda in 2012 is "SORRY. *Still Living on Borrowed Time!*" – highlighting the fact that most members of the Stolen Generations are now entering or well into their senior years. Time is running out.

NSDC has long supported constitutional recognition, most specifically through its 'WALK YOUR TALK' Campaign and the NSDC Australian Schools National Sorry Day Program.

All Australians are encouraged to be involved in the recognition of our country's First Nations Peoples, which will in turn contribute to the shared healing of the Stolen Generations and our nation as a whole.

All Australians are invited to support NSDC's work by becoming a member (www.nsd.org.au).

The Final Report of the Expert Panel can be found at www.youmeunity.org.au.

Interviews available with Indigenous Co-Chair Helen Moran and non-Indigenous Co-Chair Sally Fitzpatrick (Contact Rita Markwell, 0426 250 764 or rita@nsdc.org.au)