

MEDIA RELEASE

FAMILIES AUSTRALIA WELCOMES THE APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATION

11 February 2008

Families Australia, the national, independent peak organisation promoting the interests of families, today welcomed the forthcoming apology to the Stolen Generation. The Australian Government plans to issue the apology on 13 February 2008.

Families Australia Chief Executive Officer, Brian Babington, said: "Families Australia strongly supports this apology by the Australian Government and the consultation that preceded it. An acknowledgement of past wrongs, and a genuine apology for them, is an important first step in any healing process. For Indigenous Australians, it is long overdue. The sufferings of past generations extend into the present, with Indigenous people still experiencing the long-term outcomes of forced separation from family, culture and land.

"Many Indigenous children also suffered physical, sexual and/or psychological abuse at the hands of those who were supposed to care for them, in orphanages or other forms of out-of-home care. All governments must take responsibility for this and for the difficulties these survivors now face as adults.

"Families Australia applauds the Government's commitment to increase services to Indigenous people. Indigenous children continue to be removed from families and taken into care as a result of abuse or neglect at rates 8 times higher than the general population (AIHW Child protection 2008). Support for families and children needs to be more holistic, sustainable and delivered by culturally literate people. Australia must also close the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Australians, who currently have a greater instance of serious illness and a significantly lower life expectation than the non-Indigenous population.

"Families Australia would support a process of ongoing, wide consultation leading to the design and delivery of a national compensation scheme."

"An apology is only the beginning," said Mr. Babington, "but it is a crucial beginning, laying the foundation on which to begin building understanding, mutual respect and the collaborative efforts that will strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities."

For further information, go to www.familiesaustralia.org.au or contact Families Australia on 02 6273 4885 or email: admin@familiesaustralia.org.au