

NSW Government issues formal apology in Stolen Generation action – Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers

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The NSW State Government has acknowledged its policies of forced removal of indigenous children were *'entirely dismissive of the long held beliefs and practices of Aboriginal people'*.

The comments were made in a formal apology to one of the *Stolen Generations* for his forced removal from his family and placement into two Aboriginal Children's homes in NSW for fifteen years.

The man now aged 74, was removed from his family in 1943 and sent first to the Bomaderry Children's Home and then later to the Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Home where he remained until 1958.

In a mediated settlement of his claim secured by Maithri Panagoda, Partner at Carroll and O'Dea Lawyers, the man received a formal apology from the Department of Education and Communities on behalf of the NSW State Government.

The written apology acknowledged that government policy of the time *"lacked an understanding and appreciation of the importance of Aboriginal kin networks and Aboriginal culture"*.

"On behalf of the State I want to say how sorry I am for you being removed from your family and placed into care", wrote relieving Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education and Communities Michael Waterhouse.

"I acknowledge the profound distress you must have experienced as a child in believing your father to have died; a belief you later discovered to have been false"

"I know no amount of money can erase the past and you will live with those events for the rest of your life. Once again, I am deeply sorry", said Mr. Waterhouse.

"This is an important recognition from the highest level of government in this state of the enduring pain and continued suffering of those who were forcibly removed", said Carroll & O'Dea's Maithri Panagoda.

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“True reconciliation with the Stolen Generations must be built on a clear and unequivocal recognition that these children, now adults, suffered enormous damage as a result of being taken away from their families.

“This formal apology from the NSW Government is a critical part of the settlement that has been reached in this case and represents a genuine effort to make amends for past failures”, he said.

The terms of the settlement reached are confidential.

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