



**Aboriginal Health Council**  
of South Australia Inc.

**'Our health, our choice, our way'**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release  
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**SA Aboriginal Leader Congratulates Bruce Trevorrow and  
Calls on Rann to Consult Aboriginal Leaders regarding a Compensation Fund  
for SA's Stolen Generations**

Mrs Mary Buckskin, Chief Executive Officer of the state peak body representing Aboriginal health services in South Australia, congratulates Bruce Trevorrow for being the first Stolen Generations person to be compensated.

"I am particularly pleased that Premier Rann has chosen not to contest the court judgement and has further acknowledged that this is an appalling case of dispossession.

"The announcement yesterday by SA Aboriginal Affairs Minister Jay Weatherill that a compensation fund was being examined by the government is also a major step forward.

"However, for any such fund to work it must be appropriate for Aboriginal people and there needs to be communication programs put in place to assist Aboriginal people access the fund and to educate the wider community about why this is happening.

"A recent poll conducted with the general community on whether the Stolen Generations should be compensated or not resulted in an appalling majority saying no. This would indicate that many people have little idea of the trauma suffered by Aboriginal people.

"I, therefore, call upon Premier Rann to consult with the Aboriginal community on any such fund to ensure that it appropriately meets the needs of our Stolen Generations.

Speaking on behalf of the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Inc. (AHCSA) and its member organisations which represent community controlled health services, substance misuse services and Aboriginal Health Advisory Committees across the state, Mrs Buckskin said Mr Trevorrow's determination to pursue his struggle since the 1997 handing down of the *Bringing Them Home* Report is admirable.

"It's not just the last 10 years but all those before that make Mr Trevorrow's achievement even more important. He now has acknowledgement of a life-long struggle and confirmation that his family did not give him away.

"Mr Trevorrow's unjust removal from family caused identity issues which resulted in mental, social and general health problems.

"Many other Aboriginal people have suffered the same fate, with forced removals from families occurring since colonisation under the guise of various government policies including assimilation, segregation and welfare.

"These policies have devastated a nation causing trauma, grief and loss, anger, poverty, parenting problems, abuse, incarceration and mental health issues.

“The pain and suffering doesn’t just stop at the Stolen Generations but continues on as the trauma affects each and every generation to follow.

“It will take years and a process of reparations to heal the wounds caused by such unjust policies.

“Many Aboriginal people do not even know their real name so it is difficult for them to trace their family. Some are lucky and may be able to piece back together the jigsaw puzzle of their lives.

“But nothing will ever replace those lost years of being held in their mother’s and father’s arms, playing with their sisters and brothers, and being part of their own family.

“And the only thing that will replace the feeling that perhaps ‘my parents didn’t want me because they didn’t get me back’ will be acknowledgement by governments that separation was unlawful and unjust, and compensation for the associated losses and pain.

“The 1997 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report, *Bringing Them Home*, made 54 recommendations, which addressed issues of reparations and compensation, acknowledgement and apology, professional training, assistance in family tracing and reunion, access to records, counselling services, and national standards for Indigenous children.

Each state and territory, as well as the Commonwealth, has responsibility to address these recommendations and to report annually on their implementation.

However, except for the recent decision by Tasmania, the *Bringing Them Home* Report’s recommendations that all Australian Parliaments make a formal apology and reparations have been largely ignored.

“The Stolen Generations issue is at the very core of why many Aboriginal people suffer from ill health, and we, the Aboriginal Health Services are left to pick up the pieces.

“Until governments make a formal apology and establish appropriate compensation packages, Aboriginal people will lack proper acknowledgement of the crimes committed against them and the associated trauma and ill health will continue.

“Bruce Trevorror’s landmark court ruling has forced South Australia to the forefront of this issue. It is time for Premier Mike Rann to lead the other remaining states in establishing a suitable compensation package for all SA victims of the Stolen Generations.

ENDS. For further information contact: Mrs Mary Buckskin, Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia Inc., 08 8132 6700.