

1. POETIC RESPONSE

The Stolen Generations began in 1905 and lasted all the way up until the 1970's. This involved over one hundred years of Aboriginal children being forcibly removed from their parents, their families, country and culture. The effects of these painful years are traumatic and still carry on today.

The following poem is written by **Kamilaroi man, Neville James Draper**

Sorry

Sorry for the lies you told
For the children you stole
Hearts that don't bleed
Hearts so cold.
Came to this land
With guns in hand
An ancient culture
You wish to disband.
Taken our rights
By days and by nights
Killing our people
And not hearing our plights.
Now it's the future
And someone has spoken
Time to move on
And to heal the broken



Task:

Your task is to *consider the experiences of Aboriginal people* who suffered through the stolen generations. This could be a person who was taken away from their family or a person who had someone taken away from them.

You need to write a poetic response, using your preferred poetic format, which reflects the way you feel about the suffering experienced as a part of the Stolen Generations.

The poem can be written from personal experience or written on behalf of Aboriginal people whom you learn about. It can be written based on how you feel about what went on or even about the current impacts that we still see as a result of the years of the Stolen Generations.

To help with your understanding of the Stolen Generations, you can find many personal testimonies of Stolen Generations survivors at websites such as: <http://stolengenerationstestimonies.com> or <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/stolen-generations-stories> or consider movies that tell the stories of Stolen Generations survivors such as *The Rabbit Proof Fence* or *Australia*.

2. SPEECH

The *“Bringing Them Home Report”* is a large report about the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (now known as the ‘Stolen Generations’)

The *“Bringing Them Home Report”* was presented in Federal Parliament on 26 May 1997 (this is the date that is now remembered every year as “Sorry Day”)

The Former High Court Judge, Sir Ronald Wilson, who chaired the National Inquiry said that:
“Children were removed because the Aboriginal race was seen as an embarrassment to white Australia. The aim was to strip the children of their Aboriginality, and accustom them to live in a white Australia. The tragedy was compounded when the children, as they grew up, encountered the racism which shaped the policy, and found themselves rejected by the very society for which they were being prepared.”

A part of the *“Bringing Them Home Report”* included 54 recommendations that needed to take place in our country to make changes to fix the damage of the past. For example, one recommendation was that Federal Parliament say “Sorry” to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This ‘Apology’ eventually occurred in 2008.

2017 is the 20 year Anniversary of the *“Bringing Them Home Report”* and many would say that as little as only 4 of the 54 Recommendations have been achieved in these twenty years.

Task:

Your task is to imagine that you, as a young person, have been asked to write your own powerful **speech** about **Why we need to learn about the past to make a better future for Australia** to be presented to Federal Parliament.

Your **speech** must highlight some of the things that happened in the past as well as some things that need to take place into the future for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians to heal.

Consider the following questions when exploring what is needed in order to foster this healing and Reconciliation in our Australian community:

What are some of the damaging events that took place in Australia’s history and why is it important to understand the true history of Australia?

What values, attitudes and belief systems need to change?

What things can be done to enhance positive change and what things need to be stopped?

How do you think this will help Reconciliation and healing move forward?

A **SPEECH** can be considered a persuasive text where the main purpose is to present a point of view to persuade an audience. Your Speech will need to have the structural components of an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

Your speech should be between 4-5 minutes long when spoken and should be submitted as a written word document.

You can read about the *Bringing Them Home Report and the 54 Recommendations* at the following website:
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-report-1997>

3. Design a new Australian FLAG

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians belong to the oldest continuous living culture in the world, having existed for somewhere between 40, 000 to 60, 000 years.

In the last few hundred years of history however, Aboriginal people have suffered great mistreatment after the arrival of white settlers on Australian soil who set up the Australian Constitution (the legal document by which the country is run). When it was written more than a hundred years ago, the Australian Constitution did not recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had already lived in this land for tens of thousands of years. Until 1967, the Constitution did not even count Aboriginal people in the Australian population count.

In 2014 young Noongar woman Tiana Culbong said,

"...It is time to move forward as a nation united; a time to remove a constitutional silence; a time to recognise Aboriginal people and our history in this country."

Task:

Your task is to imagine that you have been employed to design a new Australian Flag - which reflects the importance of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as our First Australians within a modern day, multicultural nation.

The new Australian Flag needs to explore the idea of how recognition for our Indigenous Australians will help with healing and Reconciliation and for our nation to move forward united, embracing our history, our present and our future.

Your new Australian Flag will need to be accompanied by a reflection (of between 200-250 words) that explains the significance of your design and the story behind it.

Your Flag Design can be entered in as a hard copy document via the mail or sent via email as a scanned or photographed (jpeg) attachment.



Competition Rules

Entry is for students aged between 11 – 18 years of age. Students do not need to be attending the Sorry Day Event to enter.

Students may enter a maximum of one piece of work in each category and each piece of work needs a separate cover page.

Winners will be announced at the Sorry Day Event at Wellington Square on May 26 and by email beforehand.

Entries must be unpublished and have not been recognised in any other competition.

There will be a winner and prizes for each Category!

Student Cover Page to be submitted with your work

Name of Entrant: _____

School of Entrant: _____

Home/mailling address of Entrant: _____

Email address of Entrant: _____

Contact telephone/mobile number of Entrant: _____

If you are aged between 11-18, have your registration signed by your teacher to be eligible for the Sorry Day Competitions

Age: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

Title of Work: _____

Date handed in: _____

Category of Work (please tick one box):

Poem

Speech

Flag Design



Declaration

I certify that the work/image entered in this competition is my own, is unpublished, will not be offered for publication before the announcement of the awards, and has not won a prize in any previous competition. By entering this competition I agree to my work being published and displayed in any way Reconciliation WA deems appropriate, including display at the 2016 Sorry Day Event in Wellington Square. I understand that copyright will at all times stay with me, the author of the work.

I have read the conditions of entry into this competition and agree to abide by them.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Entries are to be submitted via Email or Post and will not be accepted after the DUE DATE – Friday 19 MAY
Email Entries to: admin@reconwa.org.au (Subject Line- Sorry Day Competition)
Post Entries to: Attn Reconciliation WA - PO Box 3247, Broadway, Nedlands WA 6009
For any further information please call Brianne Yarran on 0425 880 435