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VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE AGENCY

MEDIA RELEASE

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VACCA supports call for overdue Reparations Scheme for Victorian Stolen Generations survivors on 12th Anniversary of the National Apology

As we reach the 12th Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations on 13 February 2020, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) continues to advocate for the long overdue establishment of a Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme in Victoria.

While there have been formal State and Federal Government apologies to the Stolen Generations for the harms caused by past policies – there has been no progress on behalf of the Victorian Government in relation to reparations for survivors of the Stolen Generations.

VACCA CEO Muriel Bamblett AO says “It is time we see compensation made to the survivors of the Stolen Generations in Victoria – this is one of the key recommendations of the *Bringing them home* report, which continues to be ignored since its release 23 years ago.”

“Victoria has fallen behind other states and territories as the only state without a reparations scheme, which is integral to support the healing of survivors who continue to feel the profound impacts of being removed from family, culture and Country today”, adds Muriel

“The cost of reparations would be minor compared to the costs to Victoria’s Aboriginal communities and peoples of the forced removal policies giving rise to the Stolen Generations.”

A Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme in Victoria needs to be established to provide compensation for an act of genocide in contravention of the Genocide Convention Act 1949, through forced removal, cultural denial and assimilation of the Stolen Generations.

It should sit in parallel to the National Redress Scheme which was established to provide compensation specifically to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. Eligible Stolen Generations survivors who experienced institutional child sexual abuse, should receive compensation through both redress and reparations schemes.

Providing compensation as part of a broader reparations scheme would bring Victoria in line with the United Nations’ Van Boven Principles, detailed and endorsed in the *Bringing them home* report as the appropriate framework for responding to the gross violation of human rights.

Stolen Generations survivor, Eva Jo Edwards says “At the end of the day, the apology doesn’t take away the pain or the fight for survival for us as Stolen Generations survivors. Saying sorry is an empty gesture if nothing is followed through, and a reparations scheme just needs to be done.”

“No compensation can take away the impacts of our trauma, however a reparations scheme will enable us to acknowledge the wrongs of past government policies and ensure our history is learnt and told.”

“As a survivor, this is a hard time of year but also a time of year for reflection to see how far I have come personally and how I can help support other survivors the best way I can. Healing is different for Aboriginal people and is a long time coming.”

The devastating impacts experienced by the Stolen Generations who were forcibly removed from their families under various government policies is still felt today. Receiving compensation and recognition of the devastating trauma the Stolen Generations endured is a key element of their healing journey.

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