

confines of the institutions they work in, it's not a criticism of them, but many of those attitudes you see from welfare workers are also held by politicians. They still have this saviour attitude, and it's no better than the perceptions of people who were involved in the part policy of removal. I mean quite frankly, I'm bloody fed up with people trying to save us. We can save ourselves if we're given a chance.

Q: I'd like to applaud your work and I can't believe you're just talking about Aboriginals, because it seems you're talking about Afro-Americans too. I've been told that people who work in other nations where there are a significant number of people of colour (phrase indistinct) ... and for that reason alone I'd like to thank you for speaking for them and for people who work in the States, thank you.

A: If I could just briefly respond to that – one of the things that perhaps people don't realise is that during the course of our Inquiry we had submissions from many parts of the World, including from the United States from the 'Lost Bird' Institution. From Canada we had a Submission from the Commissioners who conducted the Royal Commission on the dormitory system that was back to back in Canada and the US, we had submissions from Maoris from Aetorua, we had submissions from the Romany people of Switzerland where a similar thing happened to them. For the Romany people in Switzerland, the response of the Swiss Government is in stark contrast to the Australian Government's response.

Wherever Europeans colonised indigenous people, these practices in one form or another took place. □

DRAFT

Declaration for Reconciliation

Speaking with one voice, we the people of Australia, of many origins as we are, make a commitment to go on together recognising the gift of one another's presence.

We value the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of traditional lands and waters.

We respect and recognise continuing customary laws, beliefs and traditions

And through the land and its first peoples, we may taste this spirituality and rejoice in its grandeur.

We acknowledge this land was colonised without the consent of the original inhabitants.

Our nation must have the courage to own the truth, to heal the wounds of its past so that we can move on together at peace with ourselves.

And so we take this step: as one part of the nation expresses its sorrow and profoundly regrets the injustices of the past, so the other part accepts the apology and forgives.

Our new journey then begins. We must learn our shared history, walk together and grow together to enrich our understanding.

We desire a future where all Australians enjoy equal rights and share opportunities and responsibilities according to their aspirations.

And so, we pledge ourselves to stop injustice, address disadvantage and respect the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to determine their own destinies.

Therefore, we stand proud as a united Australia that respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and provides justice and equity for all.

(Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation)

This draft declaration was launched in June 1999 by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation for nationwide discussion and public consultation. It is proposed to draw on responses to the draft for its revision in the year 2000.

Further details can be obtained from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Locked Bag 4, Kingston, ACT 2604 or from their website: www.austlii.edu.au/car/