



MEDIA RELEASE

WA STOLEN GENERATIONS SURVIVORS CALL FOR APOLOGY FROM POPE FRANCIS

26 July 2022

The Western Australian Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (WASGAC) and Bringing Them Home WA (BTHWA) have today called on Pope Francis and the Catholic Church to issue a formal Apology to Stolen Generations Survivors in Australia in the light of his Apology today to First National People in Canada.

Aboriginal Co-Chair of BTHWA, Tony Hansen, himself a Stolen Generations Survivor, was pleased to hear that Pope Francis has made a formal apology to Survivors of the Residential Schools Program in Canada in relation to the years of physical and sexual abuse perpetrated by people associated with the Catholic Church.

“Stolen Generations Survivors in Australia have a strong connection with First Nations Peoples from Canada who suffered under the Residential Schools Program in that country, but we need the Catholic Church to acknowledge that similar abuse happened in this Country.”

Another concerning parallel with the Residential Schools in Canada is the growing evidence that there are also unmarked graves of Aboriginal babies at Catholic run institutions in Australia such as St Mary’s Mission and St Joseph’s Native School at New Norcia.

Mr Hansen said, “We simply don’t know how many of our people were buried at some of these Missions. It’s never been properly investigated.”

Jim Morrison, the Chair of WASGAC, which represents many hundreds of Stolen Generations Survivors, said “The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse demonstrated that the Churches were complicit in implementing policies associated with the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Sadly, many of the Missions, which were run by Churches were the worst offenders and data from the Royal Commission highlighted the fact that over 60% of survivors who reported sexual abuse in institutions were from Catholic Church run institutions!”

“We would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Catholic Church in Australia and the Vatican to facilitate a formal Apology to Survivors in this Country,” Mr Morrison concluded.

For further comment:

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