

## 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

*Reconciliation is magnanimity in action. Reconciliation is the highest form of dialogue.*  
Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

This year has been declared the International Year of Reconciliation by the United Nations. The theme is *Unity in Diversity*. This year recognises the need for reconciliation processes in countries and regions that have suffered or are suffering the effects of divided societies. This international year also celebrates the dialogue that has occurred among and between countries from positions of respect and tolerance – essential elements of peace and reconciliation.



Bronze Statue by Uwe Brecht.  
<http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/uploads/image/chrisin>



February 13 marks the first anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations. Australians everywhere stopped to hear Prime Minister Rudd deliver the national apology. This provided the foundation for Australia to heal and it is helping to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Thus reconciliation is becoming a reality for all Australians.

*We remember:*

During the 2007 election campaign, then Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd also recognised the significance of the word sorry: *“... simply saying that you’re sorry is such a powerful symbol. Powerful not because it represents some expiation of guilt. Powerful not because it represents any form of legal requirement. But powerful simply because it restores respect”*

Prime Minister Rudd presented the Apology, commenting: *“We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.”*

*What can you do to commemorate the first anniversary?*

- Pray for peace, respect and tolerance
- Download and use the resources in the National Apology from <http://www.reconciliation.org.au/i-cms.jsp?page=827>

*We pray:*

God of all creation,  
We who have come from every land give thanks for Australia;

We stand together, united as one people;  
Proud of our ability to work together;  
Grateful for our gifts;  
Nourished by our diversity and our harmony.

Let us look back with courage, see the truth and speak it.  
Let us look around with compassion; see the cost and share it.  
Let us look forward with hope; see what can be and create it.

Give us courage to face the 'truth'  
Compassion to share the burden -  
Strength to play our part in the healing -  
And hope to walk forward to a place of justice.

With courage, compassion, strength and hope,  
We will walk together on the journey of healing.

Amen.

**Prayer for the Journey of Healing**

(A contribution to the nation, for use and adaptation,  
from the WA Reconciliation Inter-faith Working Group)