



CHIEF MINISTER
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS POLICY

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Mr Tom Calma
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Social Justice Commissioner and
National Race Discrimination Commissioner
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
GPO Box 5218
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Commissioner

Thank you for your letter of 2 April 2007 regarding the tenth anniversary of the tabling on 26 May 1997 of *Bringing them home*, the report of the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

Since 2001 my Government has been strongly committed to addressing the social and economic issues that were identified in *Bringing them home*. We have introduced a wide range of measures based on mutual respect and aimed at developing partnerships, and improving services and the living conditions of Indigenous Territorians.

As you may be aware, one of our first actions was to formally apologise to the members and families of the Stolen Generations. Further, one of the underlying approaches to our policy direction on Indigenous Affairs, as outlined in the *Agenda for Action: a whole of government approach to Indigenous Affairs in the Northern Territory* is the recognition of "injustices perpetrated against the first Australians and the forced separation of Indigenous children from their families".

The Overarching Agreement on Indigenous Affairs between the Northern Territory and Australian Governments, which I signed together with the Prime Minister in April 2005, commits both our Governments to work together and in partnership with Indigenous people and communities to address entrenched levels of disadvantage among Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. This is being achieved through



a number of schedules around key areas of health, education, economic development, etc.

More recently I have advocated for a national plan to tackle Indigenous issues and bring about long-term, sustainable change. In July 2006 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that a long-term generational commitment is needed to overcome Indigenous disadvantage and to close the gap in outcomes between Indigenous people and other Australians.

COAG has established a national working group to develop a detailed approach to national Indigenous generational reform that reflects the diversity of circumstances in Australia, including the ongoing effects of past Commonwealth Government policies that saw the separation of Aboriginal children from their families.

As well as chairing the national Intergenerational Reform Working Group, which is due to report back to COAG in December 2007, the Northern Territory is currently developing a 20-year generational plan for the Northern Territory.

The Office of Indigenous Policy in the Department of the Chief Minister is currently seeking information from Indigenous community organisations about planned activities to commemorate the 10th anniversary, and will forward details as they come to hand. If you have any queries, or would like further information, please don't hesitate to contact Ms Francine Chinn in the Office of Indigenous Policy, telephone (08) 8999 5164.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clare Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

CLARE MARTIN

30. 4. 07