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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

4th April 2008

Dear Secretary

Re: Submission into the Senate Committee Inquiry into the Stolen Generation Compensation Bill 2008

As one of the agencies with whom children of the Stolen Generations were placed, we, the Uniting Church WA Synod, have acknowledged the wrongs done by our organisation in relation to Indigenous people of the Stolen Generations, and are making our own attempts to reconcile with the Indigenous community. We want to ensure that our ongoing relationship with Indigenous communities is positive, productive and just.

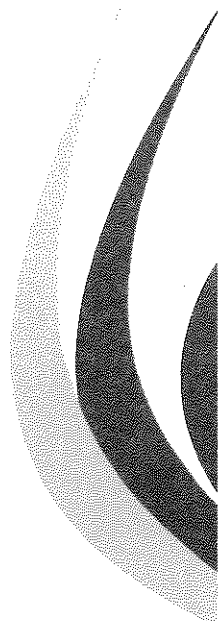
We support the payment of compensation to the Stolen Generation, and it was with great interest that we read the Stolen Generation Compensation Bill 2008.

We were pleased to note that:

1. Living descendants of deceased persons who satisfied the criteria are eligible to make a claim for compensation. The trauma suffered by the Stolen Generations has affected not only those who were taken from their parents, but later generations as well.
2. Applicants will get the opportunity to present oral submissions to the Stolen Generations Tribunal.
3. A reasonable limit has been placed on the length of time the Stolen Generation Tribunal has to respond to applications.
4. At least half of the Stolen Generation Tribunal members are to be Indigenous people.

However, we are concerned that:

1. The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee may not hold a hearing in Perth as a part of their Inquiry into the Bill.
2. The existence of the Redress Scheme in Western Australia, which allows members of the Stolen Generation who were abused whilst under State care, may prevent people from applying for compensation for the original injustice of being removed from their families.



We believe that the Stolen Generation should be compensated in line with the recommendations included in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission's "Bringing Them Home" report.

We consider the Stolen Generation Compensation Bill to be of great importance and thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Robert Watson.

Robert Watson
Moderator
Uniting Church in Australia – WA Synod