

Kate Greenwood
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9th April, 2008.

Dear Secretary,

RE: Inquiry into the Stolen Generation Compensation Bill 2008

I am writing to express my support for this bill. I believe that the members of the Stolen Generations have a right to claim compensation due to the wages that were stolen away from them and the pain that was caused due to racist government policies.

It is time to really demonstrate that the Australian Government is truly sorry for the pain and destruction it has caused to Aboriginal communities. Compensation is a great way to start the healing process between the Australian Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, however I believe that the Government needs to take a further step and establish cultural revival programs with Traditional Custodians.

I am currently working in the Sunshine Coast in Queensland on Aboriginal Cultural heritage and I am finding there is a huge need to establish cultural revival programs and implement proper laws that protect Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and are not just a token affair.

In order to 'protect' Aboriginal people, the Queensland government established a removal policy. It was carried out before being enacted in parliament as law in 1897, known as *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 (Qld)*. This act enabled Aboriginal people to be removed from their traditional lands and placed within missions and reserves throughout Australia. Within the Sunshine Coast, missions and reserves were established before this act came about. A mission was established at Fraser Island (North White Cliffs 1870- 1870), the people there were then moved to Noosa Heads, where 10, 000 acres were created into a reserve for Aboriginal purposes. It was gazetted in 1872 and then cancelled in 1878 (this area encompassed the whole of Lake Weyba and Noosa Heads). In 1877 an Aboriginal reserve was established near White Patch on Bribie Island. 'Durundur' another Aboriginal reserve was established in 1877 at Woodford near the police paddocks and Monkeybong Creek. After 1887 any remaining Aboriginal people in reserves, missions or still living on their Traditional lands who could not be 'hidden' were made to walk to Barambah (now Cherbourg), about 200kms away. Whilst at Barambah Aboriginal people were not free to move around and from the age of nine and up they were made to work as domestic servants for whites in town or as labourers. They received no wages for this work.

Due to the policy of dispersal and removal, many Traditional Custodians were forced into living outside of the footprint of their old clan/ language group boundaries. This has had HUGE implications for any work on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage identification or planning due to the 'loss' of knowledge of sites and the fact that the upkeep and protection of sites known is very limited compared to what it once was. CULTURE was stolen as well as people. I believe that the Australian Government has a duty to right that wrong and should be designing and implementing Aboriginal Cultural Heritage revival and protection programs with Traditional Custodians across Australia.

Yours in the struggle for social and environmental justice,

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Kate Greenwood