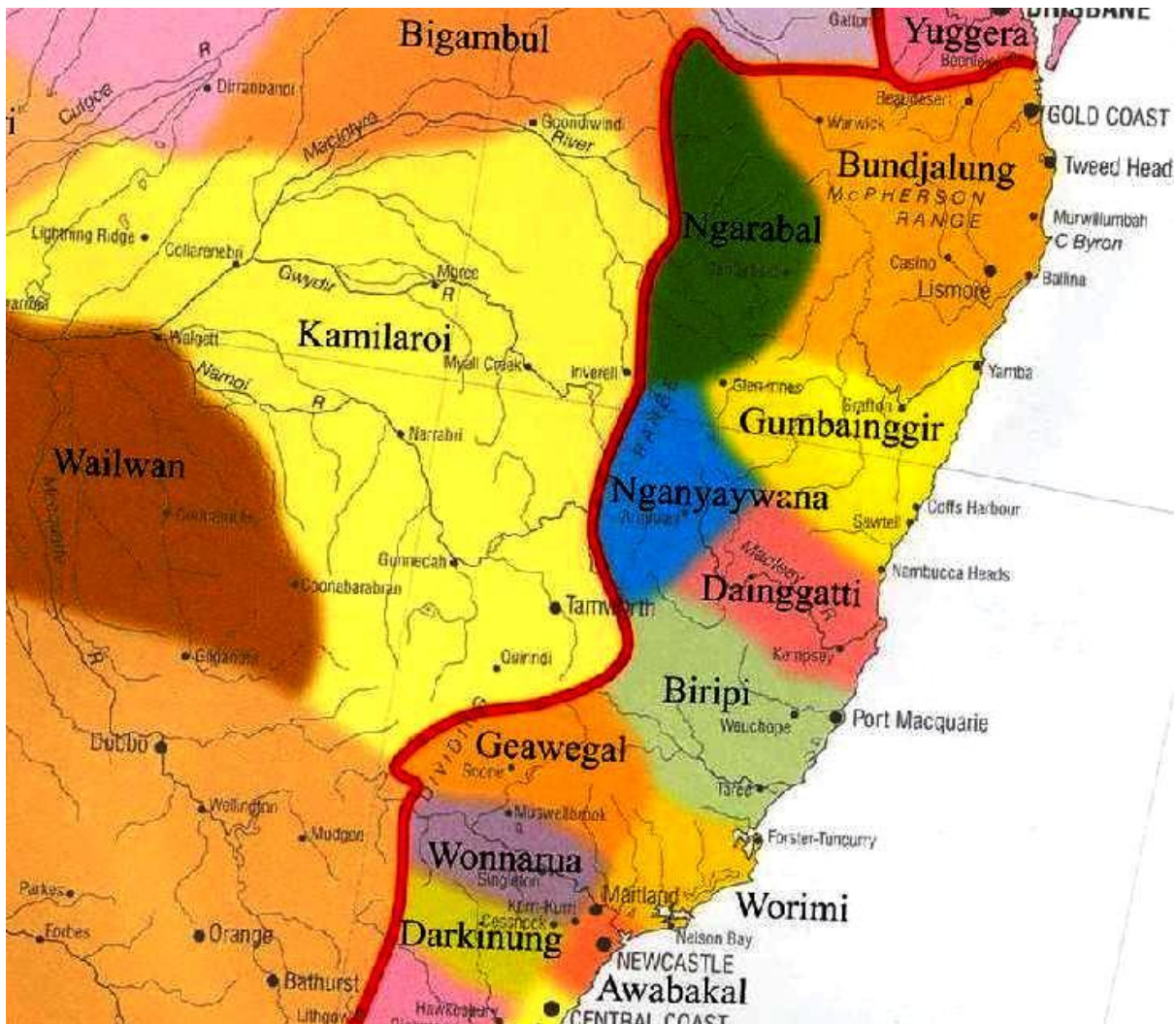


## RECONCILIATION TRAIL - Armidale to Myall Creek

As we start off in Armidale and travel to Mt Yarrowyck, Tingha, Goonawigall, Inverell, Cranky Rock and Myall Creek we are making a long curving path that joins onto the one at the Memorial site which for Aboriginal people speaks of the path of the Rainbow Serpent moving through the land and creating the features of the landscape.



Aboriginal language groups in the area <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>

Who belongs to this land?

The traditional custodians of the New England Region are the Anaiwan people living around Armidale and Tingha and the Kamilaroi around Inverell. The Anaiwan language is being revived and taught. The **Kamilaroi** nation is the second largest in Eastern Australia after the Waradjuri land that lies further south and west of the Blue Mountains. The Kamilaroi (pronounced Gamilaroi) inhabited a large country, stretching from as far as the Hunter Valley in NSW through to Nindigully in Qld and as far west as the Warrumbungle Mountains near Coonabarabran. They maintained fertile soil, running rivers and streams, and plentiful fish supplies. Today, descendants of the traditional people of the

Kamilaroi Nation continue to occupy these lands. They are known as 'Murri' people. The towns in their country include Moree, Inverell, Narrabri and Gunnedah.

The Kamilaroi (Gamilaraay language) belong to Australia's largest language family, the *Pama-Nyungan*. *Before 1788 this language family covered 90% of the country and comprised hundreds of languages.* Today the Gamilaraay language remains an important part of Kamilaroi heritage. Although there are no fluent speakers, the language is being reconstructed from recordings and dictionaries, and is being taught by Kamilaroi people. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamilaraay> )

In the early days of colonisation Europeans were awarded land in NSW by the Governor because it had been annexed as Crown Land by the British Government and the country declared Terra Nullius, meaning 'No-man's land'. This fiction was used by the European invaders to justify dispossessing Aborigines of their lands and of the sovereignty they had asserted for at least 60,000 years. At that time Europeans were ignorant of the complex nature of Aboriginal culture, language and beliefs which includes the sacredness of the land and the tribal boundaries.

### **The Frontier War**

The Kamilaroi people fought back with the move northwards of white pastoralists in the 1820s and 30s, which saw the country on which they depended for food and ceremony, occupied. Native animals were destroyed and the land was stocked with sheep and cattle. The Europeans would take advantage of their women and sometimes kill the men when they hunted livestock to feed their clan. The Aboriginal people would then kill in return and so a guerrilla frontier war developed, whereas around Sydney, although there had been killings and massacres, larger numbers had died from European diseases for which they had no immunity. In the north there was less contact but nevertheless around 50% are thought to have died from Smallpox\*. Many also died from skirmishes with both government soldiers and groups of local squatters, convicts and freed men. In 1828 Acting Governor Colonel Snodgrass sent Major Nunn with a mounted police detachment to track down Kamilaroi people who had killed five stockmen in separate incidents on the Gwydir River area. On January 26 1838 a disputed number of Kamilaroi were shot dead after one of the troupers had been speared in the leg at Waterloo Creek. When Major Nunn left the area he told the local stockmen that they would need to take care of the situation. This led to several massacres of which Myall Creek was the most infamous.

As early as 1855 the missionary William Ridley found that the Kamilaroi were "much reduced" through introduced diseases, massacre, and deprivation of traditional tribal lands and foods. Those Aborigines left were settled in small groups at almost every pastoral station. Aboriginal women were exploited by white station workers, and many children were born to these liaisons. Because of the rush to the goldfields by the white stockmen, Aborigines were indispensable in stock keeping, droving (men and women), helping in domestic work for the free settlers and other occupations.

These changes led to the destruction of the Aboriginal social order and a significant loss of Aboriginal culture. This loss of culture can be seen in the ending of the great religious festivals such as the Bora ceremonies.

**How would you feel if the place you lived in was taken over by someone else?**

## Government Reserves

By the 1880s Crown land was gazetted as “Reserved for the use of Aborigines” and in 1883 the Aborigines Protection Board was set up by the NSW government to monitor the church missions and reserve activities and to give out rations. There were 114 reserves by 1895 including Terry Hie Hie. Missionaries first came to the north west in 1909.\*

## Segregation and government control

To keep Aboriginal peoples from encroaching on lands now no longer legally theirs, they were herded or encouraged into missions and reserves. In 1902 till the 1960s aboriginal children were excluded from public schools.\* In 1909 the Aboriginal Protection Act was passed, giving the Aborigines Protection Board the power to establish reserves and force Aboriginal people to live on them. In 1915 The Board was given the power to remove children and place them in white care.

Managers ruled over Aboriginal people without recognition of their culture or customs, and permission had to be sought from the Manager to go fishing, hunting, to visit relatives or attend a funeral. Reserves and missions became prisons without walls.

New powers in 1936, included power to confine Aboriginal people against their will and to regulate their lives such as who they could marry, their finances and any travelling outside the reserve .

In the 1940s the Board was reformed as the Aboriginal Welfare Board with more focus on training for employment and assimilation. In the 1950s and 60s there was an emphasis on moving people out of the stations into smaller reserves on the edges of towns.

[www.ENVIRONMENT.NSW.GOV.AU/CHRESEARCH/RESERVESTATION.HTM](http://www.ENVIRONMENT.NSW.GOV.AU/CHRESEARCH/RESERVESTATION.HTM)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterloo\\_Creek\\_massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterloo_Creek_massacre)

*Burrul Walaay* Noelene Briggs-Smith Northern Regional Library 2001

## The stolen generation

In NSW an amendment to the Aborigines Protection Act, in 1915 stated that any Aboriginal child might be removed without parental consent if the Board considered it to be in the interest of the child’s moral or physical welfare. Forced removals without a court case became normal. This discriminatory law had the purpose of assimilating Aboriginal children, especially those with whiter skin, into white society. Over 6,000 children in NSW had been removed by 1969.

The Kamilaroi at Terry Hie Hie were so afraid of their children being taken away that they scattered, and the manager lost his job.

A National Apology was given by Prime Minister Rudd to the Stolen Generations in 2008. This was an important step that helped in healing the deep hurt caused by removal and the refusal to apologise, although many are calling for reparation, not just apology, and in 2014 a group of Gunnedah grandmothers organised the *Grandmothers March Against Removal*, showing the issue of removal has not yet been totally resolved.

## **Aboriginal control**

There is a long history of indigenous activism seeking equality and government action. In 1972 the Whitlam Government started a new era with the key guiding principle of self-determination. It created the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, ushering in a period of significant Commonwealth expenditure and programming in Indigenous affairs, and in 1973 initiated moves towards Aboriginal Land Rights.

Federal funding of community organizations enabled Indigenous communities to set up their own legal services, health services and co-operatives. At Pius X Mission in Moree, for example, the Aboriginal community took over the management of the pre-school and medical service. Since that time many significant changes have occurred towards the Indigenous people's goal of becoming equal citizens with full recognition of their First People status, and their land rights and cultural heritage and right to self-determination.

In Moree, community organizations include Pius X Aboriginal Corporation, the Aboriginal Land Council, the Dhiiyaan Aboriginal Centre and the art centre Sisters Under the Skin.

### **Why is this history important for us?**

Australia's Indigenous peoples have been living with injustice for generations – loss of land, language and culture, and children or parents as well as racial prejudice and lack of understanding. This has led to poverty, ill-health, lack of work, alcohol and drug dependence, depression, suicide, violence and incarceration at rates far above the general population. Even so and against many odds they have contributed far above their population percentage with sporting heroes, artists, musicians, dancers and political leaders. We have appreciated and absorbed some of the richness of the Aboriginal culture but there is so much more to learn and benefit from.

From the newspapers and documents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was clear that people knew what was going on – they admitted that the land belonged to the Aborigines and that it was being taken without treaty or recompense. They knew about the frontier wars and the massacres. But for those coming after the turn of the century there was silence. Little or nothing was taught in the schools; there was little awareness or understanding in general society. Where the two cultures lived near one another, particularly in the country, there was often segregation and always racial prejudice. This was brought to prominence in the 1960s when Charles Perkins, an Arrente man, and the first Aboriginal university graduate, led the Freedom Ride through country NSW.

Gradual progress in rights was made up to the early 90's and the decade was dedicated to move towards reconciliation. But little happened when Prime Minister John Howard was elected in 1996. He derided the black armband view of history and refused to say sorry to the stolen generation of children taken from their parents by the government and put into institutions between 1910 and 1970. Then came the Rudd apology at the beginning of his Prime Ministership in 2008 and now there is a new move towards constitutional change and treaty.

In the present day so much more of the past history is available and is becoming known giving us the opportunity to move towards meaningful dialogue and action. The Reconciliation Trail has the potential to help in this process by selecting a number of places for us to visit that have stories

ranging from before settlement up to the present day. This booklet will help us to understand more as well as giving us the opportunity to record our thoughts and sorrow for things that, while we may not have been involved in, we have inherited. We have the opportunity to take some responsibility as fellow citizens in helping to make amends and to say "Sorry".

**DO YOU KNOW? (answers are on the Answers document ) Find answers using a search engine via your phone or ipad.**

1. What state has the highest number of Aboriginal people?
2. Can you be an Aboriginal person if you have light skin or blonde hair and blue eyes?
3. Who was the first Aboriginal person to be elected to Parliament?
4. Which State has had an Aboriginal Governor?
5. Who was the first Aboriginal graduate from a university?
6. Who are some famous Aboriginal sports people?
7. What Aboriginal people have been Australian of the Year?

Source: <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/famous-aboriginal-people-role-models#ixzz5By0qqFDI>

8. What is the name of an indigenous musical instrument?
9. Do you know the name of any Aboriginal music group, singer, actor, film-maker or artist?

Find some songs on You Tube and listen to them.

10. Who wrote *Take the children away*? Listen to it on You Tube.
11. Who wrote the song "Let's dance?" and where was it filmed? Find the town on your map and find the song on You Tube and listen to it. What was important about this song?
12. Who is Stan Grant? Listen to him on You Tube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEOssW1rw0I>
13. Can you put the places you visit for the Reconciliation Trail in Moree in historical order starting with the oldest?

<http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au>

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-history>

## COLOUR MEANINGS AND QUESTIONS

**GREEN** is for directions and travel information

**BROWN** is usually for questions you can research and answer

**BLUE** is for headings and links

The answers to questions from now on can be found at each site you visit and then checked on the Answers document.

### THE RECONCILIATION TRAIL

**WILLOW TREE** From Willow Tree you branch to the west if going to Moree or east if going to Armidale. It is worthwhile to stop at the Willow Tree visitors' Information Centre to read the story boards about the Kamilaroi nation and pick up some brochures. The answers to questions below can be found on the storyboards in front of the Information Centre.

#### THE GOMEROI

1. Did the Aboriginal people have written languages?
2. What is the pronunciation of Kamilaroi that is the generally accepted one in the area?
3. Why did the Gomerai selectively burn the land?
4. What was traded among neighbours?
5. What were other things they made? Name 2

#### THE ORDER OF SOCIETY

1. Who was elected in Kamilaroi society?
2. Could you marry anyone you wanted to? Explain.
3. What had to happen before a man married?
4. What was a bora ring like?
5. Which state in Australia has the most carved trees?
6. What did the initiate have in the possum skin bag worn around his neck?
7. How were people invited to ceremonies?
8. What was the bullroarer for?
9. What two kinds of corroborees were there?
10. What other games did they play?
11. What were the doctors and wizards called?
12. What is the name of the supreme being the Kamilaroi believe in?
13. What is the Emu in the sky?
14. What month of the year can it first be seen?
15. What month of the year are Emu eggs laid?
16. Where does Baiame live?
17. Who is Daramulun? Baiame's son
18. What is the mound in the picture?
19. How were old people treated?

#### SHADOWS ON THE LANDSCAPE

##### Songlines

1. What are songlines?

2. What are some of the paths today?

3. How long did it take the Mundlunga corroboree to travel from North West Queensland to South Australia?

4. Where are songlines still used today?

5. What is one of the most important things that songlines identify?

#### Axe grinding grooves

6. What are the grooves for?

7. Where are they usually found?

#### Scarred trees

8. Are there many scarred trees in NSW?

9. What kind of trees will you find them on?

## ARMIDALE

Armidale's indigenous are the Anaiwan people and they represent around 7% of Armidale's population. There is a push to revive the Anaiwan people's language - Nganyaywana and to build a memorial to the Anaiwan people. In 1987 the Ooralala centre was established at the University of New England in Armidale to support the more than 800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students on campus and there is an Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping place in East Armidale.

**The Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place 96-104 Kentucky St Ph 6771 3606**

**Open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm Saturday 10am-2pm**

**Phone: (02) 6771 3606**

**Email: [director@acckp.com.au](mailto:director@acckp.com.au)**

**[www.acckp.com.au](http://www.acckp.com.au)**

The Centre includes many tools, musical instruments, artworks and other artifacts of indigenous culture. There are regular exhibitions as well as a cafe and shop.

**What are two things you were most interested in?**

#### **From the bush garden**

1. What was Tea Tree used for?

2. What seeds were used to make flour for damper

3. What was the sap of this plant used for?

4. What plant's leaves were used to weave baskets?

**East Armidale New Indigenous Community Garden, LOT 4 Mossman St, Newling NSW**

The community garden is next to Doody Park oval and on the edge of a housing area. It has a number of vegetable beds and a campfire circle.

**Minimbah Primary and Pre- School caters for the local Aboriginal population**

From Mossman St follow Long Swamp Rd to Galloway St and you will pass by Minimbah Primary school.

## **MT. YARROWYCK (34 kms from Armidale)**

- From Armidale take Thunderbolt's way to Bundarra
- Mt Yarrowwyck is on the right just before you come to Yarrowwyck
- The trail to the rock art is 1.5kms one way (3 kms)

The reserve sits within the traditional lands of the Anaiwan people, the main Aboriginal tribe of the New England High Country. The reserve protects an Aboriginal Rock Art Site and the surrounding natural environment. The three kilometre walking trail is mostly flat and goes past the rock art site that is believed to be between 150 to 500 years old. The reserve has barbecues, tables, amenities and a car park.

<https://www.australias.guide/nsw/place/mount-yarrowyck-nature-reserve/>

**From the storyboards on the walk :**

1. What are 3 characteristics of an Aboriginal tribe? Same language, customs and rules
2. What are the two levels of meaning in traditional Aboriginal art? Private and public
3. What were art sites for? to show land ownership, part of ceremonies to increase plants and animals, initiation, creative expression
4. What did Aboriginal elder Victor Shepherd think the drawing was? Plains Turkey – the Bustard
5. What was the red ochre paint made from? Rock mixed with water

## **STONEWOMAN ABORIGINAL AREA**

From Mt Yarrowwyck (90 kms)

- Continue on the Bundarra Rd.
- After passing through Bundarra turn right onto Thunderbolt's Way
- Turn right onto Howell Rd. to Tingha
- At Tingha continue onto Opal St (.3km) then turn right onto Ruby Street which becomes New Valley Rd south for 700m, then turn right onto Kempton Road.
- Follow Kempton Road for 3km before continuing straight ahead on what becomes Long Gully Road
- Continue along Long Gully Road for 2km to the carpark adjacent to Long Creek. You may then either drive or walk a further 300m to a pedestrian gate in the fence.

**Stonewoman Aboriginal Area holds special cultural significance for local Aboriginal people, who have traditionally used it as a woman’s teaching and ceremonial site.**

After a short 750m walk from the main entrance to Stonewoman Aboriginal Area, you come across something very special. Tingha Stonewoman is an unusual rock formation with spiritual and cultural significance for local Aboriginal people,. Nobody knows how old Tingha Stonewoman is, but her legend is a Kamilaroi story. A sign prepared in collaboration with the Tingha community – which also helps maintain the site – tells the tale of a young woman punished for breaking traditional marriage laws.

"There was once a young girl who decided to choose her own husband, and not let the older people choose one for her, as was the custom of those days. She married a person who was not of her right group and did not belong to her people. The young girl ran away with her husband, but the girl stopped to have a drink of water. The Elders had sent people after her to kill her, because she had broken the law, and when they found her bending over drinking the water, they hit her on the back of the head with a nulla nulla, causing her neck to break. She is still there today with her head in the water, and she is a warning to all young girls not to break the laws of marriage."

Stonewoman Aboriginal Area is a sacred place, used as a woman’s teaching and ceremonial site. A visit here today is both intriguing and memorable. Anybody with an appreciation for Aboriginal heritage will want to make the trip and appreciate the site’s significance.

[www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/stonewoman-aboriginal-area](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/stonewoman-aboriginal-area)

**What can you learn from the story about Aboriginal marriage?**

An interesting connection is Currey Park, Chatswood, in Sydney. The park features a unique fountain and sculpture of Tingha Women, an artwork by Joe Hirst that feeds water in to the fountain.

<http://www.visitchatswood.com.au/art/public-art/tingha-woman>

**TINGHA (8 kms from Stonewoman)** Nucoorilma group, which is an associated group of the Murri [Aboriginal](#) people

Tingha is a small town of around that grew around tin mining. Founded in 1872 in the 1870s the population was 5 or 6,000 at the height of the rush. Today its population is less

than 1,000 and is around 50% Aboriginal. The public school of 55 students has 82% Aboriginal students. <http://www.tingha-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/our-school>

## INVERELL

### The Goonoowigall State Conservation Area (pronounced goonywigall)

- Take Ruby St north from Tingha where it becomes Guyra Rd
- Turn right (north) onto Bundara Rd towards Inverell
- Go through Gilgai and continue on till you see the signage for the Goonoowigall State Conservation Area after the Inverell Golf Club.

[\(02\) 6739 0700](tel:(02)67390700)

The area has an indigenous name meaning "plenty of rock wallabies", and it is home to a vast array of native fauna and flora.

Part of it was also once the home of many indigenous families known to the locals as the fringe dwellers and also Chinese settlements.

Not a lot remains of the camps, but what is there is being preserved along with some of the stories of the families.

[www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2012/01/10/3405085.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2012/01/10/3405085.htm)

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au>

### Pioneer Village

- Continue north on Bundara Rd which becomes Tingha Rd.
- You will see it on your right as you start to come into the built up area of Inverell

Open Tuesday to Friday 10am – 4pm Saturday and Sunday 9.30 – 1.30. Mondays in school holidays only or by special arrangement. Phone 6722 1717 Entrance fee.

Exhibits include the Goonoowigall one teacher school established in 1887 and attended by many of the local Aboriginal children along with non-aboriginal children from farm, tannery and wool-scouring workers.

<http://www.inverellpioneervillage.org.au/>

### Garden 87 Vivian St., Inverell

- Continue north on Tingha Rd
- Turn left (west) onto Gwydir highway
- Turn right (north) onto Vivian St

This area was a meeting place for Aboriginal people when visiting Inverell. The Aboriginal people from Inverell and surrounding districts wish for this garden to be known as a symbol of harmony, unity and peace to be used for the enjoyment of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous visitors to this area.

<http://monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/culture/indigenous/display/112036-aboriginal-tribes-and-clans>

## **CRANKY ROCK NATURE RESERVE (58.4 kms from Inverell)**

**296 Cranky Rock Rd, Warialda NSW 2402**

**(02) 6729 0046 From Warialda take the Gwydir Highway B76 east until you reach Cranky Rock Rd on your left. Open 24 hours**

- **Travel left (west) on Evans St at the north side of the park**
- **Turn right (north) onto B76 Gwydir Highway**
- **Follow B76 through Delungra and turn right (north) onto Cranky Rock Rd**

This is a classified nature reserve. Walking trails are established to suit either an easy stroll or a more challenging walk for the adventurous hiker. The name Cranky Rock was derived from an old legend which said that an old 'Cranky Chinaman' jumped to his death from the highest point of the balancing rocks after being accused of some wrong doing.

Visitors can go fossicking along the creek. Signs of aboriginal life can be seen within the nature reserve amongst the many plant life.

## **MYALL CREEK MASSACRE MEMORIAL SITE**

**From Cranky Rock Reserve, either**

**a) Take the quickest route to Myall Creek Memorial by driving back to the Gwydir Highway and east to Delungra. Take the Delungra Rd south and the Memorial is on the Whitlow Rd close to where it intersects with the Delungra Rd.**

**b) As shown in the Trail Map – drive back to Warialda and take the B95 to Bingara and then the Delungra Rd up to the Memorial. This is part of the the walking and cycle trail which can also be driven. 17kms of the Whitlow Rd is unpaved. This route is 20kms further.**

**The memorial site is open to the public at all times. It is a self guided site where you walk down a path reading the story in stages as you pilgrimage to the memorial stone at the end of the path which is close to the site of the massacre. There is an opportunity there to write your own reflections and apologies.**

Several hundred people come to the site every year on the Sunday of the June long weekend for a memorial event. All are welcome. You can find more information on the Friends of Myall Creek website. <http://www.myallcreek.org>

### **What happened?**

*10 June 1838:* 12 heavily armed colonists rounded up and brutally kill 28 Aboriginal people from a group of 40 or 50 people\* gathered at Henry Dangar's Station, at Myall Creek near Inverell (NSW). The massacre was believed to be a payback for the killing of several hut keepers and two shepherds. But most of those killed were women and children and good relations existed between the Aboriginal people and European occupants of the station. Seven stockmen are eventually hanged for murder. This outrages the colonial press and parts of the public who cannot understand why anyone should hang *for murdering Aboriginal people*.

\* these were from the Wirrayaraay tribe of the Kamilaroi nation

Source: <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-history-timeline-1770-1899#ixzz4dLIZKm8D>

[http://soundtrails.com.au/web-app/new-england-and-north-west-nsw-region/gwydir/myall-creek/?hs\\_id=99](http://soundtrails.com.au/web-app/new-england-and-north-west-nsw-region/gwydir/myall-creek/?hs_id=99) Hear some of the locals reflecting on the massacre.

### **Lyne Payne January 1965**

In 1965, Len Payne, a Bingara resident, proposed the erection of a memorial in the memory of those who died at Myall Creek and elsewhere. There was not broad community support though. An article in the Bingara Advocate titled "Memorial to be erected at Myall Creek" drew a letter the following week condemning Len's proposal and describing it as "ill conceived, unconsidered, mischievous and an insult to the Bingara people ". Len's letter in reply was refused publication. The local Apex Club decided against supporting the memorial and the idea was banished.

Throughout the 1980s, Len Payne, along with others, laid a wreath at the site every 10<sup>th</sup> of June. Len never lost his hope that one day a memorial would be built and up until his death in 1993 he continued to visit the site

### **Development of the Memorial site**

#### **October, 1998**

A conference convened by the Uniting Church at Myall Creek on the invitation of Sue Blacklock a descendant of those who survived the Massacre, decided to erect a permanent memorial. The Myall Creek Memorial committee was formed.

#### **February 20th, 1999**

The grounds for erecting the memorial were established: If we and our descendants are to live in peace in Australia then we have to tell and acknowledge that truth of our history. It is not that all of our history is bad, but the bad must be acknowledged along with the good, if we are to have any integrity. There is a code of silence surrounding the massacres.

If we and our descendants are to live in peace in Australia then we have to tell and acknowledge that truth of our history. It is not that all of our history is bad, but the bad must be acknowledged

along with the good, if we are to have any integrity. There is a code of silence surrounding the massacres.

We want Australia to be an inclusive society, where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal are honoured and respect each other. This cannot happen until the history includes the stories of how Aboriginal peoples as well as non-Aboriginal people experienced the history.

We owe it to those who died defending their country and families, or died as innocent victims of vengeance, to create a memorial which reminds us of their part in our common history.

It is important to acknowledge the people who acted for justice in the story: Mr Hobbs, the manager of Myall Creek Station; Edward Denny Day, the officer who investigated the crime and others. The fact is that for the first time, the perpetrators of such crime in this country were brought to justice.

We are not pointing the finger at the people of Myall Creek or Bingara. The massacres went on all over the country.

### **March 10th, 1999**

The descendants of those massacred at Myall Creek were unanimous in their support for a project involving both Indigenous and non-indigenous people. The meeting decided on the site for the memorial.

### **May 1st, 1999**

In a meeting including many elders from throughout the region, Sue Blacklock spoke of having a simple memorial. A large granite rock was suggested. The Rural Lands Protection Board gave permission to use part of the travelling stock route for the memorial. Bingara Shire Council gave enthusiastic support. A grant was sought. Architect Tim Shell-Shear developed sketch plans and commenced the wording for the plaques.

### **June 29, 1999**

It was decided the memorial "is also for the purpose of reconciling Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people". The wording and art work for the plaques was discussed and publication of a booklet about the massacre planned.

### **March, 2000**

The Local Symbols of Reconciliation Project grant was successful. A 50 tonne rock was located. State Forest gave permission to move the rock and Transfield offered to move it. When the rock thudded into place, the memorial was at last tangible. In the words of Paulette Smith speaking on behalf of the Myall Creek Memorial Committee at the opening of the Myall Creek Memorial,



### **June 10th, 2000:**

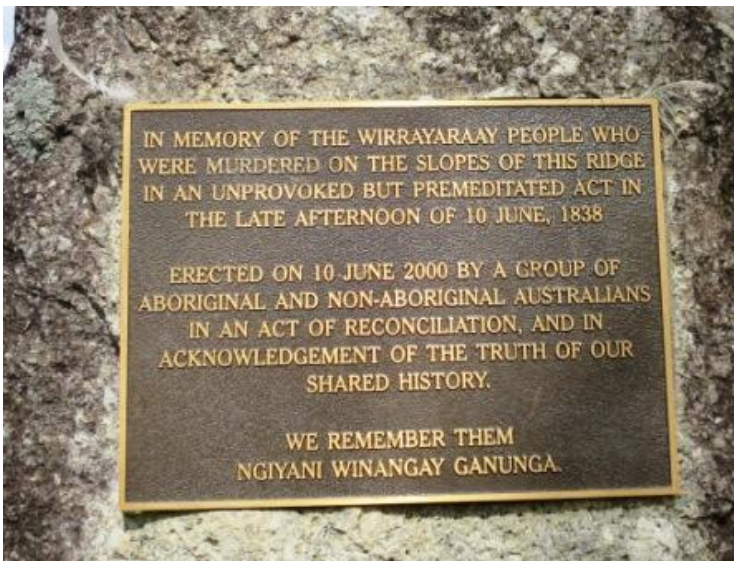
"We started out as a group of strangers from all around this area, all united in a common ideal of truth, justice and reconciliation. As the meetings progressed, we became closer. I can remember the days when we all sat around the large table at lunchtime and shared our food amongst us..."

"It was a memorable day when Des Blake, a descendant of one of the perpetrators arrived at our meeting. We had not expected to hear from any of these descendants, but months later, another descendant Beulah Adams came to a meeting. When she and Sue Blacklock hugged, we all felt we had really taken a step into the future."

"Very soon we will all take a journey together. We will walk up the

hill and along the serpentine path together, and as we walk down towards the rock, we will read about the massacre that happened here 162 years ago today. And as you walk, I ask only this of you. Think about those who died, speak to them, say a prayer for them, remember them. And as you return back along the path, take a stranger by the arm and walk back in peace, knowing that today you have taken a very big step towards justice, truth and reconciliation."

The Walkway at the Memorial is a winding path representing, for Aboriginal people, the Creator Rainbow Serpent which wandered across the earth, forming the features of the landscape. The Memorial Rock is surrounded by crushed white granite, white being the colour of mourning for Aboriginal people. The red gravel walkway reminds us of the blood that was shed in the massacre. The Memorial Rock was surrounded with stones brought from all around the country, acknowledging that this history is part of the history of each one of us, and symbolizing the commitment of each of us to truth-telling and reconciliation.



<http://www.myallcreek.org/index.php/2-uncategorised/25-timeline-of-the-creation-the-memorial>

ATOP a hill in the New England ranges, Nathan Blacklock stands beside a huge basalt rock monument to the killing of his people. About a kilometre away a mob of sheep is being mustered by somebody in a Toyota ute.

One hundred and seventy years ago today, 12 men rode on horseback along the plain below and as dusk fell they rounded up at least 28 Aborigines - old men, women and children - camping beside the waterway that ran through Myall Creek station. They herded them up the hillside to slaughter them with swords, decapitating many. Only two little boys survived.

Blacklock, now 32, grew up not knowing that his great-great-great-grandfather, John Munro, was one of the little boys.

His mother, Sue Blacklock, an elder of the Gamilaroi nation, wanted to protect her children and never told her son, even when he soared to fame as a St George winger.

"I grew up scared of white people," Mrs Blacklock said, "and I didn't want my children to be that way. My father told us kids about great-great-grandfather and the killing when he'd take us children bush ringbarking.

"Throughout the 1950s and 1960s I used to think, 'If they could do that then, they still might'. Deep down I sometimes still think that way ... it's sometimes hard to lose the young girl inside."

A decade ago, Mrs Blacklock and the Uniting Church were the driving forces behind the giant granite memorial of the massacre site, which was unveiled in 2000. Today, in a second line drawn

in the sand, following Kevin Rudd's apology to the stolen generations in February, the Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, will add Myall Creek to the Australian Heritage Council's national heritage list.

Mr Garrett said the Myall Creek listing recognised the site's pivotal point in Australian history. "The conflict of 170 years ago has given way to a new understanding of Aboriginal peoples' attachment to the land.

"Recognition of this attachment, and the sometimes brutal ways in which Aboriginal people were dispossessed, are important in the journey of reconciliation," he said.

Mr Garrett will attend today's memorial service at the massacre site, an annual event since 2000. Fred Chaney, an Aboriginal affairs minister in the Fraser government and co-chairman of Reconciliation Australia, will deliver the keynote address.

The Myall Creek massacre's true significance in Australian history is not the killings - plenty occurred before and after 1838 as colonists and Australians pushed into Aboriginal country - but rather the fact that the murderers were the first to be prosecuted.

<http://www.convictcreations.com/history/aborigines.html>

### **QUESTIONS from the plaques along the walk**

- 1. Who were the Wirrayaay?**
- 2. Why did the Kamilaroi kill stock and attack Europeans?**
- 3. What started the killing of the Kamillaroi in 1837 by local stockmen and stations hands?**
- 4. Why was it only old men, women and children killed?**
- 5. How many trials were there and how many of the men were executed?**
- 6. Why has this massacre site an important one?**

### **The Walk**

**The suggested walk is 17 kms of unsealed road on the Whitlow Rd between Bingara and the Memorial site. Driving out of Bingara on the B95 – Allan Cunningham Rd, cross over the river and take a right onto the Whitlow Rd before the Delungra Rd. Drive north until you come to the end of the paved road and park your car there. It is then 17 kms to the Memorial site. There is the occasional car or truck on the road whose driver will not be expecting walkers, so take care. If you don't want to walk back you will need to make arrangements to be picked up or leave the car closer to the site so you don't have so far to walk.**

### **Two places to visit on the way are:**

Before you come to the Rhodonite mine you can walk into the bush on your left to a small creek. You may wish to take some of the water with you to the site for cleansing and life giving intentions.

**The Rhodonite mine - 5.2km on the Whitlow Rd there is a small Rhodonite mine on the right which is sign posted.** Rhodonite is a red or pink stone or crystal with black veins of manganese oxide running through it. Two of the best mines in Australia are in Danglemah near Tamworth and Broken Hill.

Traditionally it is believed to have healing and heart qualities. You might like to take some with you to the massacre site.

## QUOTES FROM ABORIGINAL LEADERS

*We as Aboriginal people still have to fight to prove that we are straight out plain human beings, the same as everyone else. You know, I grew up, born on a government blanket under a palm tree. I lived under lantana bushes, I've seen more dinner times than I've seen dinners, I've known discrimination, I've known prejudice, I've known all of those things... but some of that is still with us... and it's got to be changed.*

**Neville Bonner**

*Unfortunately for many Aboriginal people, of course, they've been in the situation of being herded on government reserves. Their own responsibility's been assumed by Protectors of Aborigines and by government officials and if you become part of that system, it's always difficult to break out of it.*

**Lowitja O'Donoghue**

*It's something I've always wanted - to be known as an Australian. When I was younger I was always referred to as an Aboriginal tennis player. Now I think the award means that I have been recognised as an entertainer and that makes me happy... It's given me probably as big a kick as winning Wimbledon.*

**Evonne Goolagong Cawley**

<http://www.azquotes.com/quotes/topics/aboriginal.html>

*I have been told many times that when I win I make my people proud to be Australian. I am Aboriginal, I am one of them and every time I win or am honoured like this it should be an example to Aboriginal people who may think they have nowhere to go but down. But more importantly I am an Australian and I would like to make all Australians feel proud to be Australian. Ours is a truly multicultural society and should be united as such. I would like to believe that my successes are celebrated by all Australians, bringing our nation together. – **Catherine Freeman**, 1960-2010  
Australians of the Year, Wendy Lewis*

*We want to walk with you, we don't want to walk alone. — **Pastor Doug Nicholls***

*Much trouble has come from people forgetting the land, the spirit. Many people are sick and have lost their spirit. The white government has cut their culture; we grieve for them. But we can all learn and make our spirit strong. My teaching is about opening your spirit, working together to build*

*understanding. Opening our way, opening our hearts to share the spirit of the land with all who want to learn.* – **Nganyinytja** – an elder of the Pitjantjatjara people of Central Australia

*We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love... and then we return home.* – **Aboriginal Proverb**

*The history of human suffering of the indigenous people of this country cannot be assuaged by legal decisions or the opening of a purse. It can be assuaged only by the opening of hearts.* – Professor **Michael Dodson**

[http://www.soulfood.com.au/programs/SoulFoodVic\\_Reconciliation.pdf](http://www.soulfood.com.au/programs/SoulFoodVic_Reconciliation.pdf)

*If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is tied up with mine, then let us work together.*

**Lilla Watson**

<http://www.azquotes.com/quotes/topics/aboriginal.html> +

**QUESTION: What is your favourite quotation? Can you find out more about the person who said it?**

## **Watch on You Tube**

1992 Prime Minister Paul Keating's Redfern speech

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKhmTLN3Ddo>

2000 South Africa's Nelson Mandela's Melbourne speech on Reconciliation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UQG7VpOMuo>

2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RThkO3XBThs>

2013 Opposition leader Tony Abbott on Neville Bonner the first Aboriginal Senator 1971- 1983

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ENXV\\_s1R5A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ENXV_s1R5A)

2013 Nova Perris – 1st indigenous woman senator [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-VWPgKNUH8)

[VWPgKNUH8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-VWPgKNUH8)

Stan Grant – journalist <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eA3UsF8yyho>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nC1eNAr\\_zog](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nC1eNAr_zog)

Stephen on being human beings [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeVBt536w\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeVBt536w_U)

First Australians – ABC six episode series

clips <https://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/first-australians-episode-1> These are the 3 clips from Episode 1. Change the 1 to 2 and so on to work through the series.

## **A TIMELINE**

**50 – 70,000 years ago** Aboriginal people were spreading across Australia, the oldest continuing people in the world. They established many different nations, tribes and clans using over 250 languages and inhabiting the whole of Australia.

**1788 First British fleet** arrives to settle in Sydney cove with consequent death to Aboriginal peoples through disease, killings and dispossession.

**1824 First Aboriginal mission** established

**1850s First Aboriginal reserves** set aside by government

**1883 Aborigines Protection Board** established to make land grants for Aboriginal people where there weren't missions.

**1880s and 90s** A new wave of reserves set up with an increasing number being managed often after complaints by local residents.

**1901** When the Commonwealth of Australia was formed Aboriginal people were not counted as Australians. They were excluded from voting, pensions, jobs in post offices, and were not allowed to join the armed forces.

**1909 Aborigines Protection Act NSW** was passed which gave power to the Aboriginal Protection Board to control where Aborigines could live. The Act made it illegal for 'half-castes' to live on reserves. This Act enabled the government to take children away and place them in institutions between 1910 and 1970. The children became known as the Stolen Generation.

**Aboriginal schools were also established in NSW** following the exclusion of Aboriginal children from public schools after requests by the white community.

**1915** The Act was amended to allow Aboriginal children to be removed without parental consent.

**1925 Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association** is formed in Sydney to oppose New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board. Its inaugural president was Fred Maynard.

**1930** Yorta Yorta man from Cummeragunja, William Cooper, petitioned the King to have an Aboriginal representative in the federal House of Representatives, the main chamber of the national Australian parliament. A similar attempt is made in NSW. They were unsuccessful.

**1936 The Act was amended** giving it new powers such as the power to confine Aboriginal people against their will to larger and more tightly controlled stations, moving them out of town camps, small reserves and stations.

**1937 Aboriginal Welfare - Conference of Commonwealth and State Authorities** called by the federal government, decides that the official policy for some Aboriginal people is **assimilation policy**. Aboriginal people of mixed descent are to be assimilated into white society whether they want to be or not. Those not living tribally are to be educated and all others are to stay on reserves. Segregationist practices continue until 1960s with separate sections in theatres, separate wards in hospitals, hotels refusing drinks and schools able to refuse enrolment to Aboriginal children.

In Dubbo, western NSW, trade unionist and Aboriginal politician William Ferguson launches the **Aborigines Progressive Association**, in opposition to the Aborigines Protection Board, after officials of the Board had arbitrarily used their powers to harass Aboriginal people.

**1938** 26 January: 150 years after European occupation the Aboriginal Progressive Association declares a **Day of Mourning**. An Aboriginal conference is held in Sydney. These are the first of many Aboriginal protests against inequality, injustice, dispossession of land and protectionist policies.

A monthly newspaper, **Australian Abo Call** is published in Sydney, advocating equality of treatment and opportunity for Aboriginal people.

**1939** The first-ever mass strike of Aboriginal people in Australia occurs, called the **Cummeragunja Walk-off**. Over 150 Aboriginal people pack-up and leave Cumeragunja Aboriginal Station in protest at the cruel treatment and exploitation of residents by the management. They walk 66kms and cross the border from New South Wales into Victoria in contravention of the rules of the New South Wales Protection Board.

**1940** **APB reformed** as Aborigines Welfare Board. There was more emphasis on assimilation into the general community and training for employment but still efforts on containing them on stations.

**1943** A further amendment to the Aboriginal protection legislation in NSW gives two Aboriginal people - one 'full-blood' and one 'half-caste' - representation on the Aboriginal Welfare Board. Walter Page and William Ferguson, both Aboriginal Progressive Association members, take up the positions.

An **Exemption Certificate** is introduced, exempting certain Aboriginal people from restrictive legislation and entitling them to vote, drink alcohol and move freely but prohibiting them from consorting with others who are not exempt. Their children are allowed to be admitted to ordinary public schools.

Whilst giving them opportunities this limited citizenship separated them from family, culture and language. Aboriginal people use the derogatory terms '**dog tags**' or 'dog licences' to refer to the certificates. Most Aborigines choose not to apply.

**1949** The Australian Citizenship Act 1949, gave Aborigines the right to vote in federal elections if they were enrolled for state elections or had served in the armed forces.

**1950** Aboriginal children assimilate into NSW local schools, if all other parents agree. This right of veto is removed in 1960.

**1950s and 60s** Many reserves are revoked and replaced by smaller reserves set up on the edges of towns. Assimilation into the white community started.

**1957** The **Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders** is set up. This group brings together a number of civil rights and Aboriginal welfare organisations. FCAATSI begins a ten year campaign to end Constitution's discrimination against Indigenous people. Its work plays a large part in bringing about the 1967 referendum.

**1960** **First Aboriginal Co-operative**, Cabbage Tree Island, leased from AWB.

**1962** All Aborigines were given the **right to vote** in federal elections.

**1965** **Freedom Ride** led by first indigenous university graduate Charles Perkins around country NSW.

**1966 – 1975** Gurindji people walk off the **Wave Hill** cattle station in the Northern Territory. The original strike began over wages and living conditions, but shifted to the Gurindji people demanding the return of their traditional lands. It ended with Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pouring earth into strike leader Mr Lingiari's hand as a symbol of the giving of a lease of 3,300 square kilometres to the Muramulla Gurindji Company.

**1967** May 27 **Referendum** to count Aborigines in the census and allow the government to make laws for them when 90.77 of Australians voted “yes”, now marked by National Reconciliation Week.

**1969** Australia Welfare Board abolished ending what has been called the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal ‘half caste’ children forcibly removed from their parents and put into institutions

**1970-1971:** Aboriginal Legal Service and Aboriginal Medical Service set up in Redfern (grassroots activists include Mum Shirl, Fr Ted Kennedy), followed by Aboriginal pre-school, Black Theatre and the Aboriginal Housing Company.

This event is followed later by the establishment of a wide range of community and state groups concerned with education, the arts, housing and medicine - initiated and organised by Indigenous people.

Neville Bonner becomes the first Indigenous member of Parliament when he filled a casual Senate vacancy.

**1971** Jan 26 Four Aboriginal men planted the **Tent Embassy** in front of Parliament House, Canberra, In response to the McMahon’s government refusal to recognise Aboriginal land rights. The Aboriginal flag, designed by Luritja artist Harold Thomas , was flown at the Embassy.

**1972** The Whitlam government introduces the first **Department of Aboriginal Affairs** (DAA), employing Aboriginal people for Aboriginal issues. It also introduces the first national body elected by Aboriginal people, the **National Aboriginal Consultative Committee** (NACC), which has only an advisory role, however.

**1974** A Commonwealth Act establishes the **Aboriginal Land Fund Commission** to buy land for Aboriginal corporate groups.

**1975** **Racial Discrimination Act** is passed in the federal parliament. The Australian Senate unanimously endorses a resolution put up by Senator Neville Bonner acknowledging prior ownership of this country by Aboriginal people and seeking compensation for their dispossession. It also made it illegal to not employ someone because of the colour of their skin or because of their beliefs.

**1980**

Link Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation established. Link Up provides family tracing, reunion and support for forcibly removed Indigenous children and their families.

**1983** Aboriginal Land Rights Act NSW provided for Aboriginal communities to claim Crown Land to compensate them for historic dispossession of land and to support their social and economic development.

**1985** **Uluru** was handed back to the traditional owners, the Anangu people, and its name changed from Ayer’s Rock.

**1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody** presents report. 339 recommendations, with the final recommendation being that a formal process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia be undertaken.

Government launched the **Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation** as a result of the report which had shown how the disadvantages Indigenous Australians experienced had been a product of the history of dispossession. It was established by an Act of Parliament for a 10 year lifespan.

**1992 June 3 Mabo High Court decision** acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island land claims and annulling Terra Nullius, enabling further land claims throughout Australia. The decision rules that native title exists over unalienated Crown land, national parks and reserves.

**1992 Dec 10 Paul Keating's speech at Redfern park** was the first by an Australian Prime Minister to acknowledge to indigenous Australians that European settlers were responsible for the difficulties and disadvantage that Aboriginal communities continued to face.

Watch the speech on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKhmTLN3Ddo>

**1998 May 26 National Sorry Day** was created by the National Sorry Day Committee, one year after the tabling of the Bringing them Home about the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. It marked the beginning of Reconciliation week which runs from the May 27, date of the 1967 referendum, to June 3 when the Mabo decision was made.

**2000 Corroboree Bridge Walk** On May 2000, more than 250,000 people took part in the Corroboree 2000 Bridge Walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge organised by Reconciliation Australia. As part of the reconciliation theme it highlighted the absence of an apology to the Stolen Generations by the Commonwealth Government.

**2008 Apology to the Stolen Generation**\_Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologises on behalf of the government to the Stolen Generation as one of the first acts of his Prime Ministership. You can watch it on You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RThkO3XBThs>

<http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au>

Source: <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/aboriginal-history>