



MEDIA RELEASE
27 January 2012

School Curriculum changed to recognise Stolen Generations

The National Sorry Day Committee (NSDC) today welcomed the Australian Curriculum, Assessments and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) adoption of a number of recommended changes to the new history curriculum for all Australian schools.

With these changes, the significance of National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and the Anniversary of the Apology are now introduced in Grade 3.

More references to the Stolen Generations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history are included throughout the primary school years.

NSDC campaigned for these changes because previously, Stolen Generations history and most Aboriginal history weren't covered until Grade 10.

"Australian children deserve to be taught the full picture of Australian history from the beginning with age-appropriate resources that inform, challenge and inspire them" said Helen Moran, Indigenous co-chair of the NSDC.

Other changes proposed by NSDC that were adopted include:

- Amending a section in Grade 4 so Australia's First Nations peoples are not grouped with 'flora and fauna' when considering the impact of British colonisation.
- The teaching of colonial history in Grade 5 now includes a clear reference to the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In Grade 6, the experiences of *children* are now considered when studying experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship. The forcible removal of children from their families leading to the Stolen Generations is included as an example of the lack of citizenship rights of Australia's First Nations Peoples. The significance of the 1962 right to vote federally and the 1967 referendum is also now included.
- In Grade 9, an elective study now considers the motivations for the laws and practices that led to the forcible removal of Indigenous children, which started in the 19th century and continued into the 20th century. It also explores experiences of separation.

ACARA has also confirmed that an in-depth study in Grade 10 on the rights and freedoms of Australia's First Nations peoples in the 20th century is mandatory. This includes the *Bringing them home* Report and Stolen Generations.

NSDC encourages all teachers and parents to learn about these changes, and to also think about what they will do to celebrate the Anniversary of the National Apology on 13 February 2012.

Schools can join the **Australian Schools National Sorry Day Program** through the NSDC website (www.nsd.org.au) to receive free information and resources to support school activities.

NSDC thanked ACARA for making these changes as an important gesture of good will and compromise.

“We were very pleased ACARA were open to improvements, and that Education Ministers approved the changes,” said Sally Fitzpatrick, non-Indigenous Chair of the NSDC.

“Nevertheless, many education leaders may feel these changes don’t go far enough, with Aboriginal references being slotted in rather than influencing the curriculum at a deeper level.”

“We hope that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and curriculum experts are now involved in the design, writing and review of all subject areas.”

A copy of the updated History Curriculum will be available at www.nsd.org.au.

Media Contact: Rita Markwell on 0426 250 764 or rita@nsdc.org.au