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Time to Revisit, Research and Reflect – Remembering the National Apology to the Stolen Generations

Australians are encouraged to revisit, research and reflect as we approach the one-year anniversary of the national Apology to the Stolen Generations, delivered by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on 13 February last year.

“A new comprehensive online collection of audio, visual and printed materials enables Australians to recapture the mood of the day of the Apology, to reflect on the significance of the Apology and to research the unique, rich and diverse cultural heritage of the First Australians,” said Dr Luke Taylor, Acting Principal of AIATSIS.

“Visitors to the website can watch the delivery of the Apology to the Stolen Generations by Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, which signaled a new era in reconciliation for all Australians,” said Dr Taylor. “It was a shared experience for all Australians, with thousands of people gathered within and around Parliament House in Canberra and around the nation to witness this historic moment.”

The AIATSIS online exhibit includes the historic Welcome to Country speech by Matilda House, Ngambri Elder, at the opening of the 42nd Parliament at Parliament House in Canberra on 12 February 2008, the day before the Apology.

The online resource features links to stories from the Stolen Generations, photos from around Australia on the day of the Apology, and videos, music and media articles. A video from the highly acclaimed SBS series, ‘The First Australians’ includes footage not featured in the television series. AIATSIS made a substantial contribution to ‘The First Australians’ through extensive research and provision of rare images and footage contained in the AIATSIS collections. The online resource also provides extensive resources for teachers and students.

The 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations came just over 10 years after the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families and *Bringing Them Home* Report, tabled in the Parliament of Australia on 26 May 1997. It recommended that all Australian Parliaments - state, territory and federal – apologise to the Stolen Generations for the laws and practices of past governments, which had led to the forcible removal of children from their families.

In the 1990s, many Australians supported the *Bringing Them Home* Report’s recommendation for a formal Apology to the Stolen Generations, making their own personal apology as part of the national Sorry Book campaign by Australians for Native Title. This campaign took place in the lead up to the first National Sorry Day on 26 May 1998 - one year after *Bringing Them Home*. The Sorry Books are listed on the Australian Memory of the World Register and held within the AIATSIS Library Collection.

Visit the online exhibit for the Anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generations:
<http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/exhibitions/apology/home.html>

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