



MEDIA RELEASE

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Ten years after The Apology, there's more than ever to be sorry for

Ten years on from Kevin Rudd's famous apology to the Stolen Generations, authorities continue to remove well over 17,000 Aboriginal children from their parents.

In fact, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in out-of-home care has almost doubled since The Apology on 13 February 2008.

"Kevin Rudd's apology referenced that 'the time has now come for the nation to turn a new page', and he was right – but this page is even worse than the last," said Tim Ireland, CEO of AbSec (Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat). AbSec is the peak body for Aboriginal child protection in New South Wales.

"We can't speak of the shame of the Stolen Generations as if it's something in the past, when Aboriginal children are still 10 times more likely to end up in care than their non-Indigenous peers."

Even though the number of Aboriginal children in care and their over-representation in the system is increasing every year, Mr Ireland says there are reasons to be hopeful for a turnaround.

He points to the Victorian Government's commitment to devolve the management of Aboriginal children's care to Aboriginal organisations, and the NSW Government's promise to provide 30% of targeted earlier intervention funding to Aboriginal agencies by 2020.

"It's obvious that the current approach isn't working, but these are small steps in the right direction. The only way we'll see change is through equipping Aboriginal organisations with the tools to help our families and communities," Mr Ireland said.

"We need investment in family support programs that get in early, giving parents the help they need before the family reaches a crisis point.

"It's important to remember that most children are removed from their families not because of abuse, but what's seen as neglect. The vast majority of these parents love their kids and just need some support to raise them.

"Many of these parents were members of the Stolen Generations themselves, and were robbed of their own parenting role models. They're still living with that trauma to this day."

Mr Ireland encourages members of the public to join the [NSW Family Matters campaign](#) to eliminate over-representation of Aboriginal children in care.

"There's a lot you can do. Join the NSW Family Matters campaign, read up on the issues and then talk about them with your family and friends. Call your local state MP and demand better from them.

"It's up to us to make sure we're not apologising to yet another generation of kids in another decade's time."

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Statistics in this media release come from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services, published in January 2018. You can access AbSec's analysis of the wide range of Productivity Commission statistics [here](#).