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Anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations



By **Youssef Saudie**
Feb 10, 2022



Speaking up: Tahnee Day will be talking for the first time publicly on her and her family's connection to the Stolen Generations. Photo by Megan Fisher

Sunday is the 14th anniversary of the National Apology for the Stolen Generations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, acknowledging past government policies of First Nations children being removed from their families and forced to assimilate into white culture.

On Monday there will be a Shepparton Apology Breakfast held by Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group to honour the Stolen Generations and have further conversations about local Indigenous issues from the past, present and future.

Tahnee Day is a Yorta Yorta, Wemba Wemba, Gunditjmara woman who is a local artist and will be giving a speech about her connection to the Stolen Generations.

“It’s a big significance in just educating people and reminding people on what happened and acknowledging that we do need to start accepting some of the truths that happened back then, in order to heal and move forward,” she said.

Ms Day has had family members including aunties and uncles, as well as her own parents, a part of the Stolen Generations, which she said had lasted until the 1980s.

“At the time [in the 1960s and 1970s for my parents] it wasn’t fully called Stolen Generation, they were put in little camp outs during the school holidays, and if the white families decided they liked them, they would take them,” she said.

“Some kids were given a choice, ‘do you want to go with this family for a better opportunity?’ They said ‘no’, but they were still going to try to take you regardless of what your opinion was ... that happened to my dad.”

Ms Day remembers seeing scars on her father’s foot when she was a child, wondering where it came from.

“I remember asking him as a kid, ‘What’s wrong with your foot? Like, what’s wrong with this?’” she said.

It was not until she was in late secondary school that her father felt comfortable enough and “allowed to talk about” his experience being part of the Stolen Generations.

“He still has scars on his feet from when they tried to take him in the car that day,” Ms Day said.



A time for unity: The anniversary is a day for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to acknowledge and understand past injustices. Pictured are Tahnee Day and Deirdre Robertson. Photo by Megan Fisher

Ms Day recalls when former prime minister Kevin Rudd gave the apology at Parliament House in Canberra in 2008.

“I remember anyone who couldn't make it to Canberra, we all sat at the football oval, and we had it on the big screen watching the TV,” she said.

“The emotions of everyone that day, like just being able to hear the government acknowledged that, yeah, ‘we did stuff up’, and it's okay to acknowledge that, there's nothing wrong with that at all.”

With Ms Day's experiences of the Stolen Generations, she now wants to see “more education in schools” on Indigenous history.

“We learnt a lot about Captain Cook and all the white sides of Australian history, but we didn't really learn all the black sides of history,” she said.

Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group co-convenor Deirdre Robertson said Monday would be an opportunity for people to learn about Indigenous issues and say “we've still got a lot of work to do”.

“This is really important for the future of our nation, and for the heart of our nation,” she said.

“It's an opportunity for people to stand as allies,” Ms Day said.

The Shepparton Apology Breakfast will be held at the Queen's Gardens, Shepparton on Monday from 7.45am to 9.55am.



By **Youssef Saudie**



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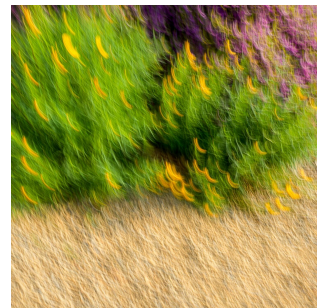
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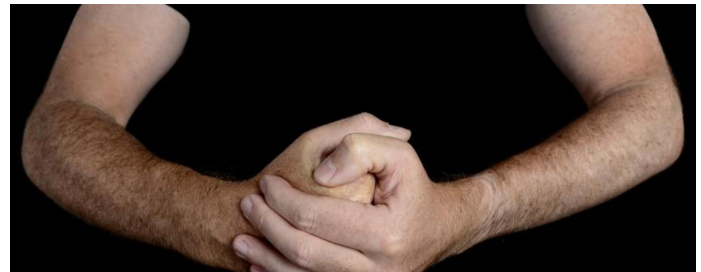
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