



MEDIA RELEASE (NATIONAL SORRY DAY)

29 years on, only 6% of Bringing Them Home recommendations delivered

Winnunga demand action as seven Prime Ministers come and go

Twenty-nine years after the [Bringing Them Home](#) report, **only five of its 83 recommendations** have been fully implemented. Six per cent.

In that time, Australia has had seven Prime Ministers. Countless reshuffles. Machinery-of-government changes. Departments renamed and restructured. And survivors have kept waiting.

So whose responsibility is it now?

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health say the answer cannot keep being “the government of the day.” Delivering on *Bringing them home* belongs to every jurisdiction, every parliament, and every Australian — and the broader community must stand with survivors to push states and territories into action.

National Sorry Day was never meant to end with an apology. Together, Winnunga and The Healing Foundation are calling for culturally safe and affordable aged care, easier access to records, equitable and accessible redress no matter where a survivor lives, stronger survivor-led organisations, and clear accountability mechanisms so recommendations are actually delivered — not shelved.

Survivors have waited too long. Change must be visible, funded, and sustained.

Today’s National Sorry Day gathering at Winnunga Nimmityjah in Narrabundah will bring together survivors, families, community members and allies for a morning of reflection, truth-telling and action.

The event features addresses from Winnunga Nimmityjah CEO Julie Tongs OAM, a long-time Aboriginal health advocate and leader in community-controlled health, and The Healing Foundation CEO Shannan Dodson (Yawuru), who leads the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation supporting Stolen Generations survivors and communities.

The gathering will also feature a truth-telling session led by survivors of Kinchela Boys Home — the former NSW institution that housed between 400 and 600 Aboriginal boys forcibly removed from their families between 1924 and 1970. Children were given numbers instead of names, and many survivors have spent decades leading truth-telling and healing work.

The program also includes a performance by [Sister Helen Kearins](#), a singer-songwriter and long-time community advocate, alongside a schools banner competition and community performances throughout the day. There will also be a special vocal performance.

Winnunga Nimmityjah CEO Julie Tongs OAM (Wiradjuri) said:

“We’ve had seven Prime Ministers since *Bringing them home*. Seven. Governments have come and gone, ministers have come and gone, departments have been renamed and restructured. This can’t keep falling to the government of the day.

“The broader community needs to get behind this. We need to stand together and put pressure on states and territories. Survivors have done their part. Now the rest of us have to do ours.

“We are sick of going round in circles. Reports get commissioned. Recommendations get made. Then they sit on someone’s desk and collect dust. Twenty-nine years on, only six per cent of recommendations have been fully implemented. That is not progress — it is a national disgrace.

“Survivors told their stories. They relived their trauma. They sat through inquiries and gave governments the roadmap. Yet the goal posts keep moving. Why are survivors still ageing and passing away while governments move at a pace that suggests this can wait? It cannot wait.

“Saying sorry was the beginning. It was never meant to be the end.”

The Healing Foundation CEO Shannan Dodson (Yawuru) said:

“The devastating impacts of racist policies that tore apart our families and ripped us away from our culture are still deeply felt today. Today’s leaders can turn that around by driving real reform that supports healing — not only for survivors and their families, but for the nation as a whole.”

Ms Tongs said:

“We hold this event to reflect on the families, languages and kinship that were broken. That hurt walks through our doors at Winnunga every day. As Aboriginal people, we all know someone who has been stolen or impacted by Stolen Generations policies — or we have been impacted ourselves.

“Across Australia there are still families carrying unanswered questions about loved ones who never came home, children who disappeared from records, and deaths linked to missions, settlements and institutions. Communities have spoken for decades about missing children, unmarked burial sites and stories that were never properly recorded.

“We have survivors with us today and we honour their strength, but we also carry those we have lost. Too many people passed away before reunions happened, before records were opened, before truth was acknowledged, and before justice came. We owe them more than remembrance.

“Every state and territory needs to stand up and support truth-telling. But truth-telling alone is not enough. States and territories also need to make it

easier for survivors to access redress no matter where they live. Support should not depend on a postcode, a border or what state someone was taken from. Survivors should not have to navigate a maze of different schemes while carrying a lifetime of trauma.”

The Healing Foundation Chair Professor Steve Larkin said:

“The time for symbolic words is over. Stolen Generations survivors and their families need action now, so they can see justice in their lifetimes.”

The national picture

While the ACT has taken steps through reconciliation initiatives and inclusion in the Commonwealth Stolen Generations Redress Scheme, survivors across Australia continue to navigate a patchwork system of support.

The ACT was the first Australian jurisdiction to establish a public Reconciliation Day, and survivors removed from the ACT are covered under the Commonwealth redress scheme. But survivors and advocates continue to raise concerns about barriers to accessing records, family tracing, culturally safe supports and equitable redress.

Five states and the three Commonwealth territories have offered some form of redress to Stolen Generations survivors, with Western Australia announcing reparations in May 2025. Queensland remains the only Australian jurisdiction not to establish a Stolen Generations redress scheme, and in late 2024 repealed its Path to Treaty legislation and ended the work of its Truth-telling and Justice Commission.

Winnunga Nimmityjah and The Healing Foundation say there should be equal access to support and that it should not depend on where a person lives or which jurisdiction removed them.

A call to community

Non-Indigenous allies, schools and community organisations have a role to play in this work — not just on Sorry Day, but every day.

Ms Tongs said:

“Showing up matters. Stand with survivors. Come to community events. Listen to truth-telling. Speak to your children and families about our shared history. Write to your local members and ask them to prioritise action.

“Prioritise truth. Prioritise justice. Prioritise the voices of Stolen Generations survivors while they are still here to be heard.”

Event details

What: National Sorry Day Gathering

When: Tuesday, 26 May 2026 | 10:00am–1:00pm

Where: Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, 63 Boolimba Crescent, Narrabundah ACT

Program

- 10:00am — Event opens
- 10:30am — Official proceedings and Welcome to Country
- 10:45am — Introductions and housekeeping
- 11:00am — Winnunga Nimmityjah CEO address
- 11:05am — The Healing Foundation CEO address
- 11:10am — Kinchela Boys Home truth-telling session
- 11:20am — Sister Helen Kearins performance
- 11:30am — Lunch
- 12:00pm — Schools Banner Competition
- 12:30pm — Special performance
- 1:00pm — Event close

— ENDS —

Media contact

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About Winnunga Nimmityjah

Aboriginal community-controlled health service in the ACT providing holistic primary health care, social and emotional wellbeing support, and advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region.