

WOMEN FOR WIK

Women for Wik are organising a unique gathering of notable women from all sections of the Sydney community including Jane Campion, Kate Grenville, Genevieve Lemon, Lynne Spender, Professor Yasmine Gooneratne, Professor Marie Bashir and other leading women in business, law, medicine, politics and the arts, on Sat. 12 July at 9.30am

They will listen to the personal stories of Lois O'Donoghue, Jean Carter of World Vision and Marlene Wilson concerning their childhood experiences as children of the stolen generation.

Facilitators will be leading broadcasters and journalists, Anne Deveson, Caroline Jones, Claire Dunn and Julie Nimmo.

Women for Wik, patrons of which are Judith Wright, Lois O'Donoghue, Elizabeth Evatt, Wendy McCarthy and Stella Cornelius is part of A.N.T.A.R. (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation) which is the broad national coalition of all organisations and individuals working in support of the High Court Wik judgement and Native Title.

The overwhelming success of A.N.T.A.R. with 60,000 signatures already collected since May, has indicated that there is a huge groundswell of ordinary Australians who are outraged at the direction which our country is taking. In view of the urgent situation we now face in Australia as a result of the Prime Minister's ten point plan for Wik, we believe that that this is an important initiative in the grassroots women's movement for reconciliation throughout Australia.

This gathering will release a public statement opposing the Howard Government's proposal to effectively extinguish Native Title and call upon it to make full and sincere apology for the stolen generation, as a vital requirement for the process of reconciliation.

'We of this generation must take responsibility to ensure that Native Title is not undermined; we cannot bring the children home, but we can ensure that their land is not taken away.'

Venue; St Pauls Conference Centre, 1 Roma Ave. Kensington

Tel Win Childs
Rosie Scott
Caroline Jones
Anne Deveson.

Footage and photos available on the day from 9.30 to 12 and interviews available after 12.

STATEMENT

We are deeply grateful to Lois O'Donoghue, Jean Carter and Marlene Wilson for their courage and generosity in coming here this morning to talk about their experiences as part of the stolen generation.

This gathering of 200 women, representing all sections of the community of Sydney would like to express their sorrow, regret and outrage that these terrible events happened to them and thousands of other indigenous Australian children in the name of the government of Australia and according to its law.

We believe it is imperative that the Howard government make full and sincere apology for these wrongs as a vital requirement for the process of reconciliation in this country to come back on track.

In addition we recognise that Native Title, as endorsed by the High Court Wik decision, is a basic human right crucial to the wellbeing of indigenous people and their culture, and to a truly democratic society for all Australians.

We of this generation must therefore take responsibility to ensure that Native Title is not undermined. The Howard government's proposed changes to the Native Title act, to be debated in Parliament in September, negates this right. We cannot bring the children home, but we can ensure that their land is not taken away.

We accordingly call upon all Australians to strongly oppose the proposed extinguishment of Native Title by the Howard government as unnecessary, divisive, unjust and unworkable.