School of Mathematics and Statistics

National Sorry Day 2017
National Sorry Day - history

National Sorry Day is held on 26 May each year to acknowledge and recognise members of the Stolen Generations, and to remember and commemorate the mistreatment of the country's Indigenous population.
National Sorry Day has been observed in Australia since 1998.

The first National Sorry Day was held one year after the tabling of the report *Bringing them Home* (May 1997).
The *Bringing them Home* report acknowledged that:

'Indigenous children have been forcibly separated from their families and communities since the very first days of the European occupation of Australia' by governments and missionaries.
The report was the result of an inquiry by the **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission** into the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

The children who were removed came to be known as the **Stolen Generations**.
National Sorry Day - politics

The 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report recommended that the Prime Minister apologise to the Stolen Generation.

Then-PM John Howard refused to do so.

A popular movement to celebrate “Sorry Day” evolved in the absence of formal political recognition from the government.
Apology in 2008

On 13 February 2008, then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd moved a motion of Apology to the Indigenous Australian Stolen Generation.

Kevin Rudd became the first Australian PM to publicly apologise to the Stolen Generations on behalf of the Australian federal government.

“To the stolen generations, I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the government of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the parliament of Australia, I am sorry. I offer you this apology without qualification. We apologise for the hurt, the pain and suffering that we, the parliament, have caused you by the laws that previous parliaments have enacted. We apologise for the indignity, the degradation and the humiliation these laws embodied…”
Today, 26 May 2017, marks 20 years since the handing down of the Bringing Them Home Report.