

The Bishops Committee for Relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, acknowledges the special significance of this year's Sorry Day in Australia.

Sorry Day , Monday 26 May 2008, is the first since the momentous Apology offered by the Prime Minister, The Hon Kevin Rudd on February 13th this year. That apology was the culmination of many calls to acknowledge the harm done to Australian indigenous people, not only at the time of white settlement, but through a prolonged lack of respect for aboriginal people, including the removal of children from their parents – the Stolen Generation.

Aboriginal and Islander people believe that the truth has finally been acknowledged, allowing them to experience an equality, a dignity and an acceptance in their own land. The hope of all Australians is surely that the Prime Minister's apology and this annual Sorry Day, will translate into a continuing process of cultural respect and acceptance for all the peoples who make up the Australian nation.

For the Christian community, the words of Jesus are a challenge to us all "by this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have love, one for another" (Jn 13:35) There is no room for racism or discrimination; there is only a call to harmony through mutual respect and a future based on hope.