

## **RECONCILIATION - A STATEMENT IN SOLIDARITY**

In response to a call for support from so many participants at the recent Convention for National Reconciliation, the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Aborigines wishes to state that it stands in solidarity with the non-Aboriginal people who seek peace and reconciliation now in our land.

Moved by the efforts of concerned citizens to promote the unity of our nation under the banner of equality, the Committee urges Australians to seek the common ground and pursue the goals of truth and justice.

In turn, the Committee asks the Prime Minister to reconsider his position on his ten-point plan with a view to acknowledging that it does not reflect the aspirations and needs of indigenous people.

The sorrowful tragedy of the children separated from their families has impacted upon us as a nation, especially since the release of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Report Bringing Them Home. Given the needs of the moment, the Committee urges the Federal Government and all State and Territory Governments to apologise for the policies and practices documented in the HREOC Report. If the demands of justice involve compensation, so be it.

With humility, and in recognition of the wrongs which have flowed from the dispossession/ of our indigenous people, the Committee wishes to point out that reconciliation is impossible while the interests of only one party are promoted.

In that context, the Committee encourages public acknowledgement of the injustices of the past so that the future of Australia, and all Australians, may begin to be rebuilt, for the sake of peace and equity in our land.

Bishops' Committee for Aborigines

-Contact: Bishop Christopher Saunders on 016 981 944