

Media Release

5th Anniversary of the National Apology to Forgotten Australians

On 16 November 2009, then Prime Minister the Hon Kevin Rudd MP and then leader of the Opposition the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, came together to acknowledge another dark chapter in Australia's history. They said 'sorry' for the often harsh and cruel childhoods that many experienced.

Ms Caroline Carroll OAM, Chair of the Alliance for Forgotten Australians said 'the National Apology acknowledged our innocence and our pain'.

Ms Carroll explained how important the work of the National Library's oral history project and the National Museum of Australia's *Inside exhibition* were in providing 'the gift of being heard.'

Some Forgotten Australians learned that their stories were not uncommon, and that they were not alone. Services have grown, and Find and Connect is a major programme working to uncover histories and to reunite lost families.

Nonetheless, many Forgotten Australians and former Child Migrants continue to live with trauma, with ill-health, with loneliness and with poverty. There is much still to be done to provide redress, on every level, for the crimes of the past.

Ms Carroll asks 'will the Royal Commission have the courage and strength to recommend an Australia-wide redress scheme that focuses on all the elements necessary to improve our lives, regardless of our adverse childhood experiences?' Given that past redress schemes have been short-lived, and often exclusive rather than inclusive, will the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse be fully implemented?

Every time survivors of abuse tell their stories, the trauma revives for them. So also does the hope that, this time, there will be an outcome that offers justice for all. It is vital that governments, institutions and the Royal Commission are able to deliver on that hope.

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