

Read the article and then answer the "Character Counts" essay on the back. →

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN – AUSTRALIA'S STOLEN GENERATION



Between 1910 and 1970 the Australian government took 100,000 Aboriginal children away from their homes. These children, known as the Stolen Generation, were often under five years of age. They were taken away from their families because the government did not believe in the future of the Aborigines. They thought it would be better to bring them to white families.

Many methods were used to separate Aboriginal babies and children from their families. Children were simply taken away by government officials and later told that they were orphans. Mothers often were given documents to sign. They could not read or write and they were told it was some kind of vaccination programme. Others were taken to hospitals and never seen by their families again. In most cases, rich white families were given money to bring them up. Some went to orphanages or church missions.

In 1995 an investigation was stated to bring more truth to the topic. The government however did not apologize to the victims. The new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was the first Australian politician to make a formal apology to the Aborigines in 2008. However, he also said that the government would not give any money to the victims. He claimed that it was in the interests of government to raise the children in the best way.

Up to now only one member of Australia's Stolen Generation has received money from the government. Bruce Trevorrow was taken to hospital on Christmas Day in 1957. His father never saw him again and the government sent him to a white foster family. He came back to his mother when he was ten years old. In his further life he suffered from depression and turned to alcohol. In 1998 he went to court and succeeded in getting about 500,000 dollars from the Australian government as a form of compensation.

There are many others in Australia who have suffered the same fate. Organizations are being set up to work for the rights of the Aborigines and to make sure that nothing like this ever happens again.

age

apologize

documents

fate

foster

future

government

interests

investigation

member

missions

officials

orphans

politician

programme

raise

rights

separate

signed

succeeded

suffered

vaccination

victims

white

