

Speech delivered in February 2025

by Tony Hansen

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Genocide Convention, which clearly defines genocide as actions intended to destroy a group—such as forcibly transferring children from one group to another.

This is exactly what happened with us. These were not random events; they were planned and carried out by the government to break apart Indigenous families and communities.

The 1997 "Bringing Them Home" report uncovered the full extent of these policies, recognising them as acts of genocide and a crime against humanity. It was an attempt to destroy our identity and culture.

The Apology acknowledged that the removals were a grave injustice. It mentioned that the goal for some in authority was to eliminate the "so-called problem of the Aboriginal population", by gradually eliminating Aboriginal people of "mixed heritage".

This wasn't just bad policy, the result of some kind of ignorance or misguided paternalism — it was a deliberate attempt to erase Indigenous identity by "breeding out the black."

One of the key figures behind these policies was A.O. Neville, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia from 1915 to 1940. He ran a system designed to ensure that Indigenous people of mixed descent, whom he referred to as "half-castes," were 'absorbed' into white society.

Neville's goal was to erase Indigenous identities by taking children with lighter skin and segregating them from their families and communities in settlements and church missions.

The WA Government also strictly controlled who Aboriginal people could marry. 'Breed out the Colour' is what they called it.

Indigenous families were torn apart, and their cultural bonds were broken. This wasn't about integrating people into society—it was about wiping out everything that made us distinct.

These policies were not carried out in isolation. They were backed by the law.

Religious institutions, working closely with the government, also played a key role in carrying out these removals to dozens of missions throughout the state.

Thousands of children continued to be taken away up until the 1970s. It wasn't just a few bad actors—it was a system supported by the law, the church, and society at large.

Yet despite these well-established historical facts, some prominent Australians, in my view, continue to promote the cover-up and denial of them to this day.

The legacy of these government policies is still with us today. Many Indigenous Australians continue to suffer from the intergenerational trauma caused by these removals—loss of culture, identity, and connection to family.

They suffer worse mental and physical health, more time in jail, worse unemployment, homelessness, and deeper poverty to list a few. This ongoing damage is a direct result of these policies.

For the survivors of the Stolen Generations and their families, it is only fair that we acknowledge the harm done and provide compensation for the suffering they endured. Compensation isn't just about money—it's about recognizing the deep pain caused and restoring the dignity and value of Indigenous cultures.

While many states and territories have set up schemes to provide redress and compensation, Western Australia and Queensland still have not done so. It's time for the whole nation to step up and support these survivors in meaningful ways.

The forced removal of children in Australia wasn't an isolated policy; it was a deliberate, systematic attempt to destroy a people.

It was genocide. We must face this truth.

“The poison must be exposed, before the healing can start!”

Only by acknowledging it, providing redress and compensation, and continuing to support survivors can we move forward—together—toward healing and justice.

My organisation, Yokai Healing Our Spirit, made a documentary film about this issue in 2024. **Genocide in the Wildflower State.**

I urge you to watch it.



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