MEDIA RELEASE
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Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc.
100 Years 1912–2012

Federal apology to victims of forced adoptions

Today Prime Minister Gillard delivered a national apology to victims of forced adoptions.

According to the Commonwealth Senate Committee Inquiry report tabled during February 2012, this practice saw as many as 250,000 babies forcibly taken from their mothers at birth.

The practice of forced adoptions was widespread from the 1950s to 1970s, with the vast majority of babies taken from young, unmarried mothers.

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare - the peak body for the Victorian child and family services sector - welcomes the federal apology to victims of forced adoptions.

The Centre's interim CEO, Kevin Larkins, said "it is vital that we take this opportunity to recognise the hurt experienced by each party these flawed policies and practices impacted, and acknowledge the resultant disruption to family ties".

"We should also stop to recognise that the forced separation of children from their families represents a failure of the community to support those that need assistance when most vulnerable, and vow to never repeat these failures... we must promote a culture of family preservation and recognition of entitlement to information".

He stated that "we understand that nothing can undo the damage caused by our past policies and practices, but this apology is a vital and long-awaited step in the reconciliation process".

The Centre welcomes Prime Minister Gillard's announcement of increases in funding to improve access to specialist support, records tracing services and mental health care for those affected by these practices.

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