

MEDIA RELEASE

THOUSANDS OF INDIGENOUS FAMILIES IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY FILE CLASS ACTION AGAINST COMMONWEALTH FOR STOLEN GENERATION

Survivors of the Stolen Generation have issued legal proceedings against the Commonwealth, demanding compensation for the forcible removal from their families as children, from 1910 to the 1970s.

First Nations Australians based in the Northern Territory filed the class action in the NSW Supreme Court for the injustices they endured.

“It’s impossible to improve the future, without acknowledging the past,” said Shine Lawyers Special Counsel, Tristan Gaven, who is legally representing the group.

“We estimate that there are around 4000-6,000 Northern Territory members of the Stolen Generation eligible to register for this class action. The Commonwealth was responsible for tearing apart Indigenous families in the Territory and it’s up to the Commonwealth to make amends.”

“Nearly every state and territory has acted on recommendations to compensate Indigenous Australians who were victims of the Stolen Generation, but nothing has been offered to those affected in the Northern Territory, that’s why we’ve filed this class action,” said Mr. Gaven.

Stephen Conrad, CEO of Litigation Lending Services (LLS), who is funding this class action said “as a consequence of the Commonwealth Government’s inaction over too long a period of time to address this terrible injustice.

LLS is honoured to provide a pathway for a resolution. We are proud to support First Nations Australians in this fight for justice.”

Aboriginal leader and Director of LLS, Warren Mundine said he was proud to see First Nations People fighting for a meaningful apology and resolution. “If this was to happen today, there would be serious public global outrage and criminal charges laid on all involved for these barbaric acts.”

“The Government needs to acknowledge that First Nations People will never know what life might have been like if this tragic theft of innocence and identity didn’t occur,” said Mr. Mundine.

Heather Alley calls her life a ‘tragedy’

Group member, Heather Alley was nine years old when she was forcibly removed from her mother. “I loved my mother and when she passed away, it took me thirty years to find the strength to even say her name. That’s how much the loss of her shook me,” she said.

“In my eighty-four years, I think I only ever got to spend eight with her, and she was a good woman who loved me dearly.”

Heather was born at Roper River Mission. In 1924 she was taken from Mataranka to Mulgoa in NSW. She eventually found her way back into the Northern Territory and from ages 9-14 she was placed into St Mary’s Hostel in Alice Springs where she was flogged for no reason.

“I couldn’t understand why this was allowed to happen and I was very broken for many years.”

Heather ended up studying and attaining a Diploma of Counselling after years of searching for answers.

Ms. Alley and her daughter have tried to trace her ancestry without any luck.

“My mother never knew her mother. They’ve wiped away entire generations, like they never existed,” Ms. Alley said.

“I joined this class action because I believe our stories have to be told.”

LLS Chairman Shaun Bonett added, “Our organisation is honoured to continue supporting Australia’s First Nations People in seeking compensation for the loss and damage resulting from having been subjected to inhumane acts. It is shameful that the Commonwealth has refused to pay compensation to members of the Stolen Generation in the Northern Territory, despite their own recommendation to do so. All other states with similar policies have paid compensation to those affected.”

The case follows extensive consultation with affected Northern Territory community members and follows the resolution of another First Nations class action against the Queensland Government in 2019 on behalf of affected Indigenous people in QLD, which LLS also supported.

To register, head to: <https://www.shine.com.au/service/class-actions/northern-territory-stolen-generations-class-action>

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About Shine

Shine Lawyers is one of Australia's largest compensation law firms with offices across Australia and New Zealand. For more than 40 years, Shine have helped thousands of Australians to right wrong by always standing up for the little guy. For more information visit www.shine.com.au

About LLS

LLS is an Australasian provider of disputes financing. Since 1999, LLS have been pioneers in litigation funding. Over this time, we have brought together our breadth of knowledge and depth of financial resources to fund commercial and insolvency claims, through to large-scale class action matters. Further information can be found at www.litigationlending.com.au