

12 February 2010

Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generation

Shoalhaven City Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee met this week and commemorated the second anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations.

Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green said the National Apology has helped to change, in small incremental ways, the way people in the Shoalhaven think about how Aboriginal people were treated in the past.

In February 2008, Council held a special viewing of the National Apology and a flag raising to mark the Federal government's Apology to the Stolen Generations as a symbol of moving forward in unity with all people in Shoalhaven City.

"The apology by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was a wonderful step in recognising the treatment that many young Aboriginal people were subjected to over a long period," Cllr Green said. "Prime Minister expressed the view that for a nation to be reconciled with its past it needs to express the value of a Fair Go for all people in our community.

"I think that by recognising the anniversary of the National Apology, on Saturday 13 February, we help to instil the idea of a fair go among all people in our city. And at the same time it recognises those outrageous wrongs that were committed by previous governments in taking young children away from their families."

Council also now has the Aboriginal Flag in the council chambers and also acknowledges the traditional owners of the city prior to each council meeting.

Lena Bloxsome, whose father Frank Green was removed from his family aged two in 1913, said the National Apology has helped bring the history of Aboriginal peoples into the open.

"I think the apology is a great step forward and it's very pleasing to hear the apology," Mrs Bloxsome, a member of the Shoalhaven City Aboriginal Advisory Committee, said. "We've been brought up with a lot of history, but not Aboriginal history. It's good to see that Aboriginal history is now part of the curricula in NSW schools."

Frank Green was taken from the town of Angledool [near Lightning Ridge] and moved to the then United Aborigines Mission Bomaderry home, where he stayed until 1926 when he was sent to work on farms in rural NSW.

Photo caption:

Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green is joined with Lena Bloxsome and Noel Butler to cut a cake to mark the second anniversary of the National Apology to the stolen generations by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

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