

Alliance for Forgotten Australians

Patrons: Andrew Murray and Jack Thompson

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until Saturday 29 August 2009

WARM WELCOME FOR FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS APOLOGY

The national coalition, the Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA), today welcomed wholeheartedly the Australian Government's announcement that it is committed to apologising to Forgotten Australians and to Child Migrants.

The Rudd Government has announced that it will implement the first recommendation of the 2004 Senate report, *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children* by acknowledging publicly the nation's sorrow for the neglect, abuse and ongoing pain experienced by adult survivors of childhood abuse while in state care.

Ms Caroline Carroll, Chair of the Alliance, spoke today of the long term outcomes for survivors of that childhood abuse, including loss of family, isolation, an inability to trust others, difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships, trauma and depression, low education levels, widespread illiteracy and poor physical health.

Ms Carroll recalled how Senators wept in 2004 as they told of the cruel and brutal treatment and criminal neglect of young children in institutions that were supposed to care for them. 'Now it is our turn to weep – but with relief and joy,' Ms Carroll said. 'Finally, our Australian Government will openly acknowledge that what happened to us was wrong. This is a turning point for Forgotten Australians.'

'As children, many of us experienced horrors in the places that were supposed to care for us: serious and often criminal physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and assault. As adult survivors, we need acknowledgement of, and an apology for, the harm that was done to us. We thank the Government, especially Minister Jenny Macklin and her Department, for understanding our need for this apology. We look forward to working with them to ensure the consultation process over the next few months produces a unique and worthwhile experience for those who will receive the apology.'

Ms Carroll added, 'We also appreciate the Australian Government's ongoing support for AFA and its commitment to projects that will record our history. We still need redress and targeted services from the Australian Government and all States and Territories and other past providers of care, including Churches. The apology is an excellent beginning to what we hope will be a comprehensive Government response.'

For further information, contact Caroline Carroll on 03 9094 3527 or 0438 460 184 or the AFA Secretariat on 02 6273 4885 or 0407 343 741.