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STOLEN GENERATIONS VICTORIA MEDIA RELEASE

Stolen Generations Victoria Mourns Passing of Bruce Trevorrow (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 24-6-08)

Members and staff of Stolen Generations Victoria are saddened with the passing of Ngarrindjeri man Bruce Trevorrow. Mr Trevorrow, 51, passed away on Friday June 21 in Sale hospital.

Mr Trevorrow became the first member of the Stolen Generations to be awarded compensation. In August 2007 South Australian Supreme Court judge Thomas Gray determined his removal from family at age 13 months caused lifelong psychological and emotional problems.

His death has complicated South Australian government's attempt to overturn the decision, fearing further appeals for compensation. The resistance of both State and Federal governments to award compensation to those removed continued with the recent rejection of the Stolen Generations Bill 2008 by the Federal Senate.

The bill, which seeks compensation for all removed from family, culture and community, was passed over in favour of a 'healing fund' which targets all Indigenous peoples. However, this does little to identify the Stolen Generations as a unique group with specific emotional, social and psychological needs.

Stolen Generations Victoria chairperson Lyn Austin stated:

“That Mr Trevorrow died at such an early age demonstrates the adverse effects of his life experiences. We welcome any effort that will raise life expectancy and health rates in our community. However, our governments need to recognise that people removed from their families as a result of past policies have suffered a unique tragedy, even within the wider Indigenous community.”

The death of Mr Trevorrow is a significant reminder that many members of the Stolen Generations continue to grow old and pass away.

“Bruce created history, but suffered in doing so. This needs to be acknowledged.” said Lyn. “Our people continue to suffer. We waited ten years for an apology. Some of our members passed on during this time. The fulfillment of the Stolen Generations Bill would relieve our elders of the burden of a lengthy court battle. Another ten years will be too late.”

The debate regarding compensation heightened this year after the Prime Minister’s apology in February. Members of the Stolen Generations, while welcoming the apology, still feel that reparation is a necessary step in their healing journey.

That debate seems set to continue after it was announced a Bruce Trevorrow Foundation would be launched to promote the Stolen Generations and to support families of victims.

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