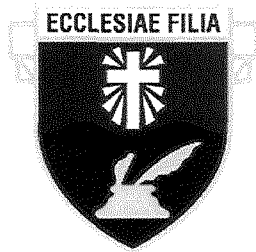


R
23/8/08



TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition from Avila College draws to the attention of the House our concern that Indigenous Australians are not being *given a voice*.

We say "thank you" to the House for the apology to the "Stolen Generations" and the commitment to address the gap in life expectancy between Australians. Our College has a long tradition of working for reconciliation and believes there is a powerful and important process of healing in the act of saying sorry. We have yearned for this acknowledgment of past wrongs. However, this will mean nothing without reparation.

Those of us who are young believe that it is important to acknowledge what the House has achieved. You have given hope to a generation that will shape the future. We have been fortunate to have experienced this moment. We, the youth of our nation say, "thank you".

Those who are older recognise this historic moment in the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non Indigenous Australians. It was celebrated and wept over in our community, with hearts touched by the goodwill and sincerity of the apology. We say again, "thank you".

In the spirit of the 13th February, 2008, **we therefore ask the House to actively work with the leaders of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples, listening to their wisdom, and understanding their needs, by giving them a voice as you implement the work that was outlined in the apology.**