

CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN NSW



Member of Catholic Church Religious Group
ABN 52 476 362 010

7th April, 2008

The Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
Minister for Indigenous Affairs
P.O. Box 316
Heidelberg VIC 3084

Dear Ms Macklin,

I write on behalf of the Social Justice committee within the NSW Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. CLRI (NSW) represents approximately 3,500 Catholic religious, men and women, throughout the state, as well as many people working in organisations run by religious institutes.

It was so evident on the day that the formal apology to aboriginal nations was given by our Prime Minister that this was a much-awaited and extremely important moment in Australia's history. Religious institutes have representatives working among aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples and, together with many Australians, rejoiced when finally a Prime Minister of Australia said "sorry".

I would like to express our hope as we see evidence of the fact that concrete steps are being taken to "Close the Gap". It is shameful that in a prosperous country like Australia, part of our population lives in such conditions.

I would also like to commend the move by the present Government to study the question of signing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As with the apology, this would be another symbolic gesture that points in the right direction. The apology was a clear testimony to the fact that the symbolic is important.

Every best wish in your efforts in favour of our aboriginal Australians.

Yours sincerely,
Grace Ellul sm

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

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