

## Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!

### National Aboriginal and Islander Observance 3-10 July

*We respect and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the land on which this Carmelite newsletter is written and published.*

A reflection by Peter Thomas, JPIC Team

Forty-five years ago I was introduced to the injustices that have been enacted on our Indigenous peoples since the arrival of Europeans. I learnt nothing of this at school but in the late 1970s I interviewed a 29 year old 'Stolen Child' who, under protest, was taken from her family in the far north of South Australia to a State Children's home near Adelaide. She cried as she recalled the night police and an officer of the Aboriginal Protection Board snatched her and her sister as her mother and aunties looked on helplessly, screaming at the injustice. The removal of Aboriginal children occurred over a 100 year period from 1869 to 1969 although there are some records that show it continued into the late 1970s.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd offered a formal apology for this blight on Australia's human right's record and the suffering and injustice this policy had brought to the indigenous population.

Forty-five years later much has been done to right these wrongs but much

more remains to be done. In NAIDOC week all Australians are asked to **Get Up! Stand Up! And Show Up!** so that together with our indigenous brothers and sisters we will help to amplify the voices calling for change and narrow the gap between aspiration and reality, good intent and outcome.

There are thirty motions to be considered during the Second Assembly of the Plenary Council of Australia meeting this month. Among them are three important motions together with their sub-sections concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.\*

Under the heading, **"Reconciliation: Healing Wounds, Receiving Gifts"** the Plenary documents recognize that .....  
*all Australians have much to learn from the cultures, spirituality and knowledge of country of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people"*



In 1986 Pope John Paul speaking to indigenous and non-indigenous people in Alice Springs made a similar point. *"Your culture, which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race, must not be allowed to disappear.....your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages, must never be lost."* On an earlier papal visit to Australia in 1970 Paul VI said, *"We know that you have a lifestyle proper to your own culture, a culture which the church respects and which she does not in any way ask you to renounce."*

The Plenary Council has received recommendations from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) "in the hope that the Catholic Church in Australia will more resemble the Church that Jesus Christ wants her to be in relation to Australia's First Peoples."

They have recommended developing the cross-cultural competency of clergy, religious and lay workers and asking the Church to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics to undertake formation training with the proviso that existing retreats and courses are culturally appropriate. Options for liturgically and culturally appropriate use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander symbols and rituals in Catholic liturgical settings is another of the NATSICC recommendations to the Plenary.

Perhaps the most encouraging statement to emerge from the Plenary Council is that they endorse the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. The Council's endorsement should give momentum to the newly elected Federal Government which has promised to legislate to accept the Uluru statement in its entirety.



Australia's ambassador to the Holy See, Chiara Porro arranged for Ms Ardler, a Catholic and a campaigner for a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous voice, to meet the pontiff

The Plenary acknowledges that our society is yet to fully recognize the traditional owners of the lands and waters that we know as Australia. Land rights is still in its infancy with 40% of

Australia's land mass owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Most of that land is non-arable. As aboriginal land ownership is based on custom and tradition, not a formal written land title system, the issue of native title rights, which determines the ownership and who has rights to access, use and occupation of land, has been and remains controversial. It wasn't until 1992, 30 years ago this year when the Mabo case, saw the first recognition of land rights. Up until that time Australian land laws were established on the claim that Australia was terra nullius or nobody's land a claim that justified the acquisition by British occupation without treaty or payment.

Eddie Mabo was a Torres Strait Islander who was under the misapprehension that his people owned the land on Mer (Murray Island) the place of his birth. Mabo went to court and won. The Act stated that if Aboriginal people could show a traditional connection with their land they could have title providing the land had not been sold to others. Although this was a victory it was also an unsatisfactory result that was resolved when the Wik people of Cape York won a High Court decision that said native title and pastoral leases could co-exist.

There is nothing revolutionary in the Plenary recommendations concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people however the re-stating of some important principles helps to re-enforce among the Catholic community the moral responsibility to help develop policy that advances reconciliation.

The theme of this year's NAIDOC week reflects the proud history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of getting up, standing up, and showing up. As the NAIDOC organiser's state in their publicity..."from the frontier wars and our earliest resistance fighters to our communities fighting for change today we

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National  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait  
Islander Catholic  
Council  
(NATSICC)

<https://www.natsicc.org.au/>



# Walking in the Spirit at THE PLENARY COUNCIL



## 1 National Prayer Pilgrimage for the Plenary Council

People across the country are invited to participate in a national prayer pilgrimage as the Catholic Church in Australia prepares for the Second Assembly of the 5th Plenary Council of Australia in Sydney from 3-9 July.

**WE PRAY** for the Holy Spirit's guidance and grace for the Members who will gather, particularly our own Carmelite Prior Provincial Paul Cahill O.Carm.

**WE ALSO PRAY** for ourselves and the Church, that we may have the courage to follow where God is leading us.

2 \* **Access the Framework for Motions** document at <https://bit.ly/FrameworkForMotions> (mentioned on page 1)

3 **Follow the Second Assembly** <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au>

There will be daily content produced during the second assembly that can be found on the [Plenary Council's news page](#) and on their [Facebook page](#). All Masses during the second assembly will be livestreamed. The opening session each day from July 4 to July 8 will also be livestreamed. [Click here](#) to view the livestream schedule. The livestream will be accessible on the Plenary Council website's home page and the [Plenary Council YouTube channel](#)

## 4 Share your prayers and hopes

The Plenary Council continues to be a journey for the whole Church in Australia. A message wall is being placed at the entry to the assembly venue, allowing Members to read what people around the country are saying to them – their prayers, their hopes, their words of support. (see Plenary Council link above)

## 5 Plenary Tracker

Join Garratt Publishing who are hosting a program called **Plenary Tracker #2**, a daily Zoom with news, insights, and panel discussions hosted by former ABC presenter Genevieve Jacobs AM and journalist Paul Bongiorno AM

By registering you will also receive daily emails with a video recording of the previous night's session, and links to blogs from John Warhurst, Francis Sullivan and Geraldine Doogue.



Registering for *Plenary Tracker #2* is **FREE**. [Simply fill in your details here](#) to receive the one web link that allows you to join each night.

### **Prayer for Guidance**

Creator of all things,  
both seen and unseen,  
speak to us in your great wisdom.  
Make us strong as we seek  
Your help and guidance.  
Teach us to love all people,  
regardless of race or colour or belief.  
May we listen with great care  
to the heartbeat of this land  
and to its people  
who have cared for it so well  
and for so long.  
May the peace these people and their land  
have always enjoyed  
continue to be strengthened and  
preserved  
by all who wish to come and be part of  
this country and its "Ancient Dreaming".

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<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/walkinginthespirit/>

Prayers from the ABORIGINAL PEOPLE