



EXTRACT FROM
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HANSARD



Mr ATKINSON
Eastern Metropolitan

NATIONAL SORRY DAY

Tuesday, 26 May 2015

The PRESIDENT — Order! I also take this opportunity to note that today is an important day in Australia's history. It is National Sorry Day. It is a day that is part of a broader period of thought and activity in respect of National Reconciliation Week.

It is interesting to consider the word 'sorry', because it is a word that is often used, and in itself it is important. When the federal Parliament, on behalf of all Australians, expressed its sorrow at what had happened to the stolen generations and the dislocation of so many Indigenous people in this country, it was certainly something that was embraced by the Indigenous people as a very important step on the road to reconciliation between them and those people who have made Australia their home subsequent to the first European Australians arriving on these shores.

But obviously the word 'sorry' in itself is not an end, and it is not adequate in terms of addressing any of the issues outstanding in terms of the relationship between Australia and its Indigenous community, a community that has a very rich heritage and that is amongst the oldest communities in mankind's history. It is important for us, obviously, to continue the process of reconciliation, to look at addressing many of the issues that are still outstanding in the community with regard to the Indigenous people and to make sure not just that they are able to participate fully in the decisions and the activities of our country but indeed that they are able to take up leadership positions that are rightfully theirs because of the experience and the perspective they can bring to the table and the rich heritage they have as the first people of this nation.

I commend to everybody that they consider carefully some of the challenges and the possibilities of National Reconciliation Week and the importance of National Sorry Day.