

26 May 2023

## National Sorry Day: A time to be honest with ourselves

**National Sorry Day 2023  
26 May**



The forced removal of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children – over a period of more than 100 years – continues to impact significantly on the physical and mental health of First Nations people, making it critical that governments and all Australians ‘work overtime’ to achieve reconciliation and help close the gap in health and other outcomes for First Nations people, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) said on National Sorry Day.



“The tragedy of the Stolen Generations continues to bite hard not only on the generations that were immediately affected, but on each generation of First Nations people that has followed” **RDAA President Elect, Dr RT Lewandowski, said.**

“We all need to ask ourselves – are we really doing enough to promote and achieve true reconciliation, and truthfully educate ourselves on this terrible history?

“It would be hard to argue that we are.

“Twenty-five years after the first National Sorry Day (26 May 1998), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are still [10.6 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be removed from their families.](#)”

“This is a travesty, and yet it continues – and the physical and mental health impacts are enormous.

“Year after year, we continue to report only incremental steps in closing the gap in areas like health, education and other outcomes – can’t we be doing more?”

“National Sorry Day shouldn’t just be a day of remembrance, but a day to keep us honest...and continually striving for better outcomes.”

**Reconciliation is firmly in the national spotlight at the moment, with the referendum on The Voice due to be held later this year.**

“True reconciliation – and a deep respect for our First Nations people – is absolutely fundamental to improving the health and wellbeing of First Nations individuals, families and communities” Dr Lewandowski said.

“RDAA has formally endorsed the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#), a consensus document on constitutional recognition that has been the foundation for the referendum on The Voice.

“On referendum day it will be up to all Australians to decide on whether they support constitutional change to create The Voice.

“We would simply ask all Australians to reflect on whether First Nations people have had fair treatment since colonisation in Australia, and whether majority support for The Voice will enable Australia to deliver better health and other outcomes to the current and future generations of First Nations people.”

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**RURAL DOCTORS  
ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA**

# MEDIA RELEASE

A high resolution photo of Dr RT Lewandowski is [available here](#).

**Available for interview:**

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