

Western Health apologises for historical forced removal of babies and adoption practices



First Nations people are advised that this apology references events that may trigger traumatic memories, sadness or distress.

Regrettably Western Health has historically played a role in the forced removal practices that were imposed upon First Nations women and babies due to the racist policies dating back over a century, separating them creating the Stolen Generations. We recognise the lifelong impact of pain, suffering and ongoing distress that these policies and practices created for all those affected.

On behalf of the staff, past and present, of the maternity services operated at hospital sites that were or are now part of Western Health, we express our deep sorrow and regret for Western Health's role in the historical forced removal of First Nations babies. We apologise to every mother, parent and family who experienced the devastation and trauma of having their babies forcibly removed for adoption whilst in our care at Footscray, Sunshine, Williamstown and Bacchus Marsh Hospitals.



We offer an unreserved apology to the children forcibly removed from their mothers and families and to their extended adopted and biological families. We acknowledge that multiple generations of families continue to live with the traumatic impacts, deep sense of loss and sustained feelings of grief and anger for removal of children under such cruel circumstances resulting from the deplorable policy and practices.

Western Health is committed to the preservation of First Nations culture, keeping families together and respectfully listening and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Western Health will protect all First Nations women and babies from ongoing institutional racism and harm and will work to reform the system so that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait mothers and babies are safe.

For families who experienced firsthand the impact of historical forced removal of First Nations babies in our hospitals, we encourage you to make contact with us, so we can provide you with as much information as we can about the circumstances of your delivery or birth. A tailored freedom of information (FOI) request form is available on our [website](#). All fees in relation to FOI requests for medical records relating to adoption will be waived. So as not to cause further distress to individuals seeking access to historical medical records, please note that for reasons beyond our control we are not able to locate records for Bacchus Marsh Regional Hospital for the periods 1952-1956, 1958-1969, 1989-1992 and 1998-2000.



Western Health



The Victorian Government has established a redress scheme to acknowledge the impact of historical forced adoption practices. For more information about the Historical Forced Adoption Redress Scheme, please visit [Historical Forced Adoptions Redress Scheme](#).

First Nations people and their families can access services and support to address challenges and trauma experienced as members of the Stolen Generations. This includes inter-generational and trans-generational family members. Services available include counselling, family history services and healing programs. These services will also help you explore your Aboriginal family history:

- [Stolen Generations Funeral Fund \(administered by Connecting Home\)](#)
- [Connecting Home – other support services](#)
- [Koorie Family History Service](#)
- [Link-Up Victoria](#)
- [Public Record Office Victoria - Koorie Records Unit](#)