

APOLOGY BY A.I.M. REGARDING ABUSE SUFFERED BY FORMER RESIDENTS OF RETTA DIXON HOME

Australian Indigenous Ministries (formerly Aborigines Inland Mission) was responsible for running the Retta Dixon Home in Darwin between 1946-1980.

Retta Dixon Home has been the subject of a case study inquiry by the Federal Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Evidence at that enquiry was given between September 22-October 1, 2014 in Darwin. That inquiry continues.

Having heard the evidence of numerous witnesses who gave evidence that they were sexually or physically abused when they were children in Retta Dixon Home, the Council of AIM would like to state the following:

1. To all those children who were sexually abused at Retta Dixon Home, we offer our most sincere apology to you. Retta Dixon Home was dedicated to the fundamental principle that you would be looked after in a caring and Christian fashion. It is readily apparent that those children who suffered sexual abuse, which sometimes endured for years, have suffered greatly. It is also apparent that in many cases the effects of that abuse has lasted for many years and that the abuse destroyed the innocence of their childhoods. To them we owe a heartfelt apology.
2. It is also apparent that some children were physically abused whilst they were at Retta Dixon House. In many cases that physical abuse occurred at or about the same time as they were sexual abused. Again, to those children who suffered in this fashion, we offer our sincere apologies.
3. Our organization continues. We no longer run homes for children and have not done so for many years. However, we do operate many churches throughout Australia, which are mostly in remote Aboriginal communities. Our Mission is dedicated to empowering Aboriginal people within the spirit of Christ with the aim of one day not having any non-indigenous people as missionaries in AIM.
4. We acknowledge that many people who lived at Retta Dixon Home as children want some form of a commemorative memorial placed there. Whilst we do not own the land on which Retta Dixon Home once stood, and understand that the NT Govt does, we encourage all efforts by former residents to create a memorial on the land that Retta Dixon Home once stood.
5. We are committed to offering a process of engagement and reconciliation with all people who were the victims of abuse at Retta Dixon Home, whether sexual, physical or both. To that end, we are dedicated to supporting victims attending a counselling service run by Anglicare,

under the auspices of the NT Govt funded program that would accommodate all victims of sexual abuse at Retta Dixon Home. We encourage contact in this regard with NT Resolve Counselling, Education and Meditation, which is a division of Anglicare. The contact number is 1800 898 500

6. We regret that we cannot offer financial compensation to those who suffered at AIM. The reason for this is that in our view our financial resources, which are limited, are best dedicated to continuing the various activities of our organization. Most of our property is held in trust on behalf of local Aboriginal Church groups. However, we are committed to doing all that we can, practically, to redress the suffering that occurred at Retta Dixon Home. To that end, we solemnly give our word.

Reverend Trevor Leggott
General Director
For the AIM Council
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