Anniversary of the National Apology

On Monday 15th February during the whole school morning assembly Year 11 student Taliah King delivered a speech about the anniversary of the National Apology. Please see her speech below:

“The National Apology Day” by Taliah King

The National Apology by Kevin Rudd was on February 13, 2008. The Apology that meant something to every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.

To you this is nothing but words on paper and in the air, words some of which you know and some of which you don’t, dates of importance but mean little to you.

However, this isn’t just another extra long assembly you got stuck in today. Today is a day for many, who cry good tears and bad tears, in which we have all done, although today commemorates something more than just an apology but less then the end of racism and stereotypical judgement. It represents the acknowledgement that the Government made a bad decision that not only effects the health and wellbeing of the past generations, but of so many generations to come.

So what is this famous Apology that Kevin Rudd made?

The Apology is about acknowledging the forcible removing of children from their homes for no reason simply because they could. The Apology is about the heartbreak it caused the mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. The Apology is about the grief that it caused communities. The Apology is about the degrading and dishonor it left in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homes, communities and nations. The Apology was more than just the word Sorry, it was about yes saying sorry, but also taking the next step in moving forward and offering strategies and plans to be able to fix their mistake. The mistake in which caused an estimated 6,200 children were stolen in NSW alone between 1883 and 1969. In NSW alone, Australia-wide numbers are in the tens of thousands. There is no exact number because keeping count didn’t matter.

Now why does this matter?

Someone made a decision. A decision that said it was okay to take children from their mothers and fathers.
A well educated person, who grew up in a happy home, with a good education, now in a position with so much power that they didn’t know what to do with it. So they made a decision that even though said person was so lucky to grow up in that environment he would deprive tens of thousands of children in hope to achieve the extinction of a race.

The Apology said Sorry for this, we now understand what we have done is wrong and we are now taking full responsibility of this we acknowledge that we put out arrests for 6month old babies, to be arrested and forcibly removed. We went into homes and told parents we were taking the children on an education trip and never bought them home. In accepting this We as a Government are going to provide opportunities for healing and as a Nation will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The apology recognizes their mistakes, admits it, does certainly not want to forget about it, but puts in strategies in order to be able to fix the mess they made and build from it together as a Nation.

From now on I ask you all, To stop and think before you speak, before you make a decision that is going to affect you and the people around you I ask that you think twice, you get all the information and the positives and negatives of the situation and then make a decision.

I started by saying the following To you This is nothing but words on paper and in the air, words some of which you know and some of which you don’t, dates of importance but mean little to you. I hope I have helped you understand what The National Apology means and represents. and I want to finish with a quote in relation to this written by an Unknown Person.

“You can say sorry a million times, Say “I love you” as much as you want, say whatever you want, whenever you want. But if you’re not going to prove that the things you say are true and have meaning and worth, then don’t say anything at all. Because if you can’t show it. Your words…don’t mean a thing.” ~Unknown