



LETTER OF APOLOGY

8th August 1999

Dear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

We, the Sisters of St. Joseph, founded to respond to the spiritual and material needs of Australia's disadvantaged people, express our deepest sorrow that we fail to recognize and address many of the injustices caused by your dispossession of land and culture.

Our neglect has been on going and has covered many facets of your lives.

We are particularly sorry for the times that we:

- questioned your traditional values associated with land, language and culture.*
- devalued the place of kinship of your daily living*
- interacted with your people from a standpoint of power*
- were patronizing in our dealings with you taught Australian history only from the European viewpoint*
- stood by as your children were taken from families.*

Mindful of our past failure, we now commit ourselves to:

- recognise, value and respect you as a people of a unique cultural heritage and spirituality enriched by thousands of years of belonging to, and knowing this land, as mother*
- stand in solidarity with you in your struggle for justice particularly in relation to land*
- work with you in relationships that aim to bring about attitudinal and structural changes and a new understanding, respect and recognition of your spirituality and culture.*

In solidarity with you, we sign this letter

*Sr. Giovanni Farquer
Congregational Leader
Sisters of St. Joseph
North Sydney 2059*

*Mrs. Brenda McDonnell
Coordinator
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
Erskinville*