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Need for national Stolen Generations tribunal

The Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should establish a tribunal and process to compensate members of the Stolen Generations following yesterday's landmark decision in the South Australian Supreme Court, according to Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR).

Justice Thomas Gray ordered the South Australian Government to pay Bruce Trevorrow more than \$500 000 for pain and suffering caused by the removal from his family as a child. He ruled that the state falsely imprisoned Mr Trevorrow as a child and owed him a duty of care for his pain and suffering.

ANTaR National Director, Gary Highland said that Governments should seek to avoid the costly and lengthy litigation that is likely to result from the court's decision.

"The experience of Bruce Trevorrow was repeated tens of thousands of times over across Australia. Many members of the Stolen Generations will now wish to seek justice following yesterday's ruling," Mr Highland said.

"Instead of adding to the suffering of these people, Governments should negotiate a settlement with the Stolen Generations that avoids ongoing litigation."

Mr Highland said that although the *Bringing Them Home* report had recommended compensation for Aboriginal people taken from their families, so far only Tasmania had introduced a scheme.

At the Federal level, Queensland Senator Andrew Bartlett has introduced a draft Stolen Generations Compensation Bill that he is currently seeking comment on.

"In light of the South Australian decision, we urge the Federal Government and Opposition to seriously consider supporting the Bartlett bill," Mr Highland said.

Mr Highland also urged the South Australian Government not to appeal the court's decision.

"The court has found what Aboriginal people have always known – that the Stolen Generations do exist and the practice of child removal had a devastating affect on individuals, families and whole communities," he said.

"The South Australian Government should choose reconciliation over litigation by not prolonging the suffering of Aboriginal families in that state."

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