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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE

media release

NEW SOUTH WALES ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

Land Council welcomes increase in stolen wages payments

2 April, 2009

Newly announced State Government changes to the “stolen wages” scheme were welcomed by affected Aboriginal people throughout the State, the Chairperson of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Bev Manton said today.

“Thousands of Aboriginal people have yet to make claims.

“The Government has already extended the cut off date for claims to June 30 and now it has increased lump sum payments up to \$11,000 and also changed the rules so that the Aboriginal panel which over-sights the scheme can take into account non-documentary evidence when considering applications,” Ms Manton added.

“I urge Aboriginal people who were removed and brought up in various homes operated by the former Aborigines Protection Board and the Aborigines Welfare Board up until 1969 to lodge claims.

“Anything that can improve the chances people who were robbed of their wages to gain proper compensation is welcomed.

“They deserve every penny they can get,” Ms Manton said.

“After all, the stories of how this money was earned but never repaid are horrendous”.

Ms Manton said it was believed that accumulated funds owed to Aboriginal people could be as much as \$70 million dollars.

“We are delighted that the Government has listened to the views of the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme’s Aboriginal advisory panel which is chaired by Aden Ridgeway.

“Panel members had urged the Government to make the latest changes,” Ms Manton said.

“Applications must be lodged by May 31.”

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