



# Today

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## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

'We have on the table before us a clean page on which great things may be written.'

Former chairman of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Pat Dodson.



Pictures: KARLEEN WILLIAMS

### Emotion-charged day

THE AIR of expectation was combined with the scent of ceremonial burning eucalyptus and the sight of Aboriginal flags flying in the foreground of Parliament House to set the scene for a day on which Australia changed profoundly and thousands were here to witness it.

Many had travelled from around Australia to take part in the historic event and watch the Prime Minister say sorry on the giant screens erected on the lawns of Federation Mall, while Canberrans also came along in their thousands.

It was an attentive crowd: this was important after all. When Kevin Rudd said "sorry" for the first time, the crowd cheered, jubilantly. As he delivered his speech they listened

silently, some nodding, many with tears in their eyes, others weeping. As he commended his motion to the House, there was enthusiastic applause.

But when the Opposition Leader, Brendan Nelson, said, "Our generation does not own these actions, nor should it feel guilty for what was done in many, but not all cases, with the best of intentions," there were jeers.

As he spoke of "unintended consequences" they heckled and some turned their backs to the screen. When he said there should be no compensation the crowd chanted, "Get him off," while some simply walked away, having heard all they needed to hear. Which was, of course, the word sorry.

### 'This is for you, mum'

AS THE speeches continued, Rita Wright, 55, who had travelled to Canberra from Mt Druitt, called her mother on the phone and wept. "This is for you," she said. "This is for you. Love you, mum."

Ms Wright was stolen from her



FOR YOU, MUM: Rita Wright, 55, of Mt Druitt, speaks by phone to her mother.

mother, Grace Shillingsworth, at the age of two, along with her sisters, four-year-old Christine and Jenny, who was eight. They were reunited when Ms Wright was 17.

Holding a banner of the Aboriginal flag and a photo of the three as little girls, Ms Wright said the apology meant recognition for her mother's anguish, allowing her "to start her healing. She doesn't talk about it much."

But the scars won't fade for the woman who was wrenched from her mother as a child. "Sorry's not enough for me," Ms Wright said. "We lost mum's love because we didn't know her."

### Homage to boys' home

MAVIS DAVIS, 56, was one of a busload of members of the Dughutti

nation of Kempsey to travel to the capital for Sorry Day. Paying homage - with T-shirts and banner - to the Kinchela Boys' Home, a place where many stolen children were housed, the group was emotional yet buoyant.

Ms Davis, who described her early life on a mission as similar to that depicted in the movie *Rabbit Proof Fence*, said the Prime Minister's apology was recognition of their pain.

"We listened to the Prime Minister acknowledge all the hurt. It's not only the people of the Stolen Generation it affects, it's all of us. Acknowledging



BUOYANT: Members of the Dughutti Nation Homelands group of Kempsey.

the past of what happened to us as Aboriginal people, it was just great."

But for one member of the group - a man who was stolen from his family as a child - the event was distressing and he had to leave.

For Ms Davis, the only disappointment of the day was caused by the Opposition Leader's words.

"And then to hear the arsehole who followed the Prime Minister was disgusting. You know, he just tried to rip us apart. We've always acknowledged no one is to blame, it just happened. But I always say we need to acknowledge the past to live the present to make a future."

### Power and pride

THE POST-formalities entertainment was kicked off by the surprise appearance on stage of multi-ARIA award-winning musician John Butler, who launched into an acoustic version of the protest song *From Little Things Big Things Grow*.

The crowd joined in at the chorus of the moving melody, penned by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody in 1992, about a land rights dispute.

As Aboriginal flags waved in the view up towards Parliament House, indigenous musician Kutcher Edwards climbed on stage and took over the vocals. "Gather round people and I'll tell you a story. An eight-year-long story of power and



MY COUNTRY: Kutcher Edwards, left, and John Butler share the stage.

pride." At the end of their poignant performance, Butler said, "It's been a long time coming and we've got a long road ahead of us. Keep your endurance."

Kutcher, 42, of Melbourne, said he'd travelled to Canberra with seven of his siblings to represent their parents at the apology.

"They had to deal with six of their children being forcibly removed, ironically in the same year that the Australian people waved a magic wand and bestowed citizenship to indigenous people who have been here since time immemorial."

Asked what it meant to him to perform at the event with Butler, he said, "How was it for him? more like it, is the question. This is my country, I come from here... he should be honoured that he's up on the stage with an Aboriginal person."

### Bringing it on home

CANBERRA Girls Grammar student Chloe Breakwell, 17, was moved to tears during the apology because, she said, being there on the day showed



MOVED: Canberra Girls Grammar student Chloe Breakwell, 17, of Forrest.

her the extent of the suffering of the indigenous people. "It was very moving. I didn't know

what to expect on our way down. It's just very deeply touching, especially what [Rudd] said about imagine if it happened to you and just hearing people's stories and the atmosphere, incredible."

Chloe asked for permission from her school to attend the Federation Mall event because she had been following the issue and is studying protest art. She said it seemed to unify those in the crowd, regardless of background.

"The atmosphere, the understanding from everybody and people crying when you're looking around, it just really brings it home," she said.

### End of masquerade

BOUNDING up on stage, his chest emblazoned with the word "SORRY", Environment Minister Peter Garrett held out a hand in his characteristic Midnight Oil manner, reaching out to the crowd, as he brought a microphone to his mouth.

But as the crowd rapturously applauded, he refrained from bursting into song, addressing his fans instead, describing yesterday as "hugely important in Australia's



SORRY, NO SONG: Peter Garrett said the day was "hugely important".

history". As the chant went out for him to sing *Beds Are Burning*, he went on to say, "When we wore these T-shirts during the 2000 Olympics, I didn't think I'd be in a situation where I could stand as a Member of Parliament with a Sorry T-shirt on again, in front of a Parliament on these lawns where you all gathered this morning."

Calling it one of the most important days in the Federal Parliament, he said it was a new beginning and a welcome change from the old regime.

"But what's important is what we had to put up with for a decade, of some kind of masquerade that people hadn't been hurt, hadn't been removed, that it hadn't affected them

and their country, their culture, their family and their lives. That masquerade has gone. The slate is in part clean now. And it gives us a fantastic foundation to actually move forward together."

Then, without striking a tune, he promptly left, changed back into his suit backstage and hurried off back up the hill.

### Important for all

THE MOST popular man at the event was not the Prime Minister, it was actually Troy Cassar-Daly.

The country music star is an



POPULAR MAN: Singer Troy Cassar-Daly was much in demand with his fans.

indigenous heartthrob. And, as such, he caused a fair amount of hysteria at the Sorry Day event, with a crowd of adoring fans waiting to have photos taken with their idol.

During a quick break from the attention, Cassar-Daly said the day had been an "emotional rollercoaster" for him, but the acknowledgement brought a sense of peace.

"It's like you feel like you belong more so than any day today. There's something about the unity this event has brought to Aboriginal Australia. And I really feel that it's a positive step."

"It's a really important day for Australian people in general, not just indigenous and non-indigenous, but for us as a whole, to be able to pull together now and walk forward."

With a crowd beginning to form around him again, Cassar-Daly said he was proud to be a popular figure in the community.

"Sometimes you forget about it and you arrive here and, I don't know, I just do my job. I'm a singer, I try to preach a positive message about what unity is all about."

"I've always tried to do that, even since I was a kid," he said, before being swamped by his admirers once more.



### 10 YEARS AGO

14 February, 1998

Australians will vote in a referendum next year on a compromise "bipartisan" model for a republic, in spite of its failure yesterday to win an absolute majority of votes on the final day of the Constitutional Convention. A decisive majority of delegates, 89 out of 152, backed a republic in principle, but only 73 came out in favour of the model under which an Australian president would be appointed by a two-thirds majority of a joint sitting of both houses of Parliament.

### 50 YEARS AGO

February 14, 1958

Canberra is in spic and span readiness and gaily beflagged for the arrival this afternoon of the Queen Mother, making her first touch-down in Australia on a tour that will last three weeks. Preparations were completed yesterday for the official and public receptions and other arrangements made for Her Majesty's stay of four days.

### Also on this day

1989: Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini issues a fatwa encouraging Muslims to kill the author of *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie.



CONDEMNED: *The Satanic Verses* author Salman Rushdie.

# Weather

<b>Today</b> Fine, mostly sunny. Max 24°	<b>Tomorrow</b> Fine, mostly sunny. Min 11° Max 26°	<b>Saturday</b> Fine, mostly sunny. Min 12° Max 25°	<b>Sunday</b> Fine, mostly sunny. Min 12° Max 24°	<b>Monday</b> Fine, mostly sunny. Min 12 Max 25	<b>Tuesday</b> Fine, mostly sunny. Min 13 Max 27	<b>Wednesday</b> Possible late shower. Min 14 Max 27
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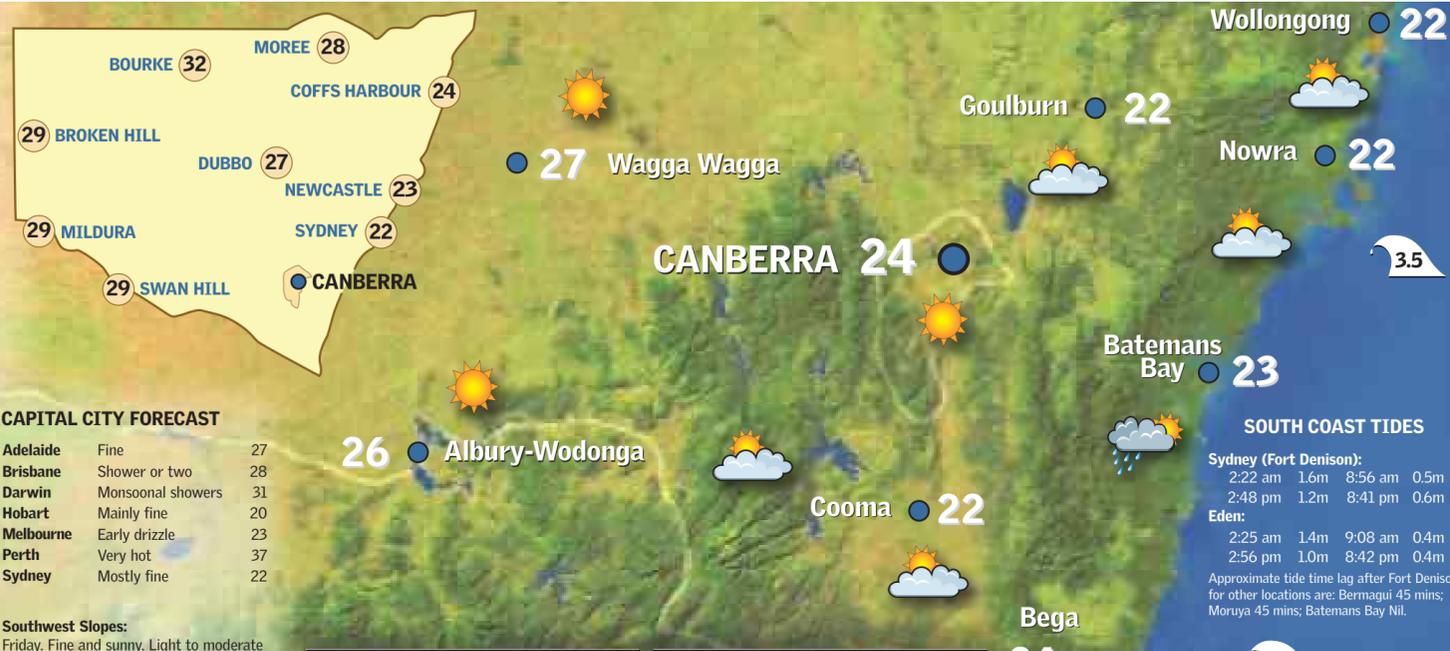
**TODAY**

**Canberra:**  
For latest Warnings: 1300 659 218  
www.bom.gov.au/weather  
**General:** Fine. Mostly sunny with light to moderate southeast to northeast winds.  
**Canberra lakes:** Southeast to northeast 15 to 25 km/h.  
**Illawarra:** Isolated showers, mainly morning and night. Light to moderate south to southeast wind, fresh at times on the coast.  
**South Coast:** Isolated showers, most likely in the afternoon. Light to moderate southerly wind, fresh at times on the coast.  
**Southern Tablelands:** Isolated showers developing in the southeast. Fine and mostly sunny elsewhere. Light southwest to southeast wind.  
**Southwest slopes:** Fine and sunny. Light to moderate east to southeast wind.  
**The Alps:** Fine and mostly sunny. Moderate to fresh southwest to southeast wind.

**OUTLOOK**

A ridge of high pressure will extend across the region today with a return to fine conditions expected for the remainder of the week.

**Illawarra:**  
Friday. Isolated showers, clearing. Light to moderate south to southeast wind.  
**South Coast:**  
Friday. The chance of an early shower in the north, otherwise fine. Light to moderate southerly wind.  
**Southern Tablelands:**  
Friday. Fine and partly cloudy in the east. Light to moderate southeast wind.

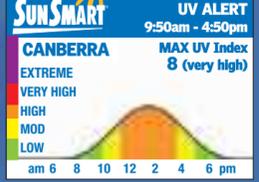
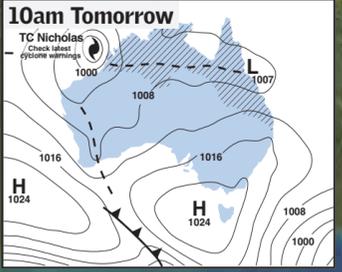
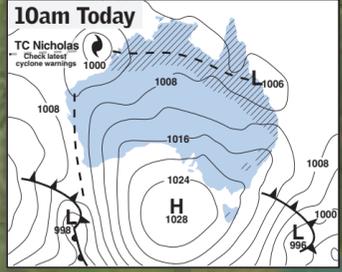


**CAPITAL CITY FORECAST**

Adelaide	Fine	27
Brisbane	Shower or two	28
Darwin	Monsoonal showers	31
Hobart	Mainly fine	20
Melbourne	Early drizzle	23
Perth	Very hot	37
Sydney	Mostly fine	22

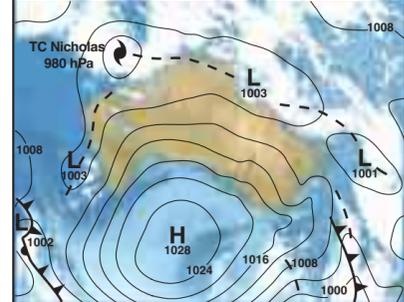
**Southwest Slopes:**  
Friday. Fine and sunny. Light to moderate easterly wind.

**The Alps:**  
Friday. Fine and mostly sunny. Moderate to fresh southwest to southeast wind.



**THE WORLD**  
24 hours to 10am yesterday

Amsterdam	clear	2	13
Apia	haze	23	29
Athens	windy	5	7
Auckland	windy	16	24
Barbados	fine	25	28
Bangkok	mist	26	31
Barcelona	windy	4	12
Beijing	windy	-5	1
Belgrade	mist	-3	3
Berlin	overcast	4	6
Bermuda	windy	15	17
Bogota	na	na	na
Brussels	clear	0	12
Bucharest	clear	-6	3
Budapest	mist	-5	2
Buenos Aires	windy	13	22
Cairo	clear	13	18
Calgary	windy	-4	2
Chicago	snow	-9	-6
Christchurch	fine	13	15
Colombo	fine	24	31
Copenhagen	overcast	0	4
Denpasar	rain	24	29
Dhahran	windy	15	26
Dhaka	haze	14	22
Dublin	windy	0	10
Frankfurt	windy	-1	11
Geneva	fine	-4	6
Hanoi	overcast	-11	13
Harare	clear	11	24
Helsinki	fine	0	1
Hong Kong	windy	9	14
Honiara	rain	24	31
Islamabad	clear	2	15
Istanbul	windy	4	7
Jakarta	rain	24	29
Johannesburg	rain	17	24
Katmandu	clear	-8	2
Kiribati	fine	26	29
Kuala Lumpur	haze	23	32
Lima	fine	20	26
Lisbon	windy	8	17
London	fine	0	13
Los Angeles	clear	-1	11
Madrid	cloudy	-11	21
Manama	windy	22	22
Manila	windy	24	28
Mawson	windy	-7	-4
Mecca	clear	21	32
Mexico City	smoke	5	18
Miami	rain	22	23
Montevideo	rain	18	24
Montreal	windy	-19	-14
Moscow	overcast	-3	0
Mumbai	haze	16	30
Nairobi	windy	18	27
Nassau	windy	21	26
New Delhi	haze	-7	19
New York	snow	-7	-2
Nicosia	rain	9	16
Noumea	fine	25	32
Oslo	mist	-1	0
Paris	windy	0	11
Rarotonga	cloudy	23	28
Rio De Janeiro	haze	22	33
Rome	clear	1	11
San Francisco	mist	17	9
Santiago	windy	14	30
Sao Paulo	windy	23	30
Seoul	windy	-9	-4
Singapore	haze	24	30
Sofia	clear	-6	0
Stockholm	windy	-7	3
Suva	rain	23	28
Taipei	rain	7	10
Tehran	rain	1	7
Tel Aviv	na	na	na
Tokyo	rain	1	6
Toronto	snow	-14	-9
Valletta	rain	7	13
Vancouver	rain	5	6
Vienna	fog	-5	2
Vila	rain	25	26
Warsaw	mist	-2	3
Washington	windy	-4	-2
Wellington	windy	15	18



**CANBERRA FACTS & FIGURES**

City	Condition	Max	Min	Temp	Hum	Bar	Wind
Adelaide	Fine	24	13				
Brisbane	Showers	31	21	3AM 14.0	93	1007	E/6
Darwin	Rain	28	23	9AM 16.3	81	1010	SSE/13
Hobart	Cloudy	19	7	3PM 16.8	73	1011	SSE/15
Melbourne	Cloudy	20	14	6PM 16.4	76	1014	ESE/17
Perth	Fine	35	22				
Sydney	Shower	23	18				

**Evaporation (mm):**  
24 hours to 9am: 3.2

**Rainfall (mm):**  
24 hours to 9am: 11.0

**SUN, MOON & PLANETS**

Rises	Sets
Sun 6:34 am	8:02 pm
Moon 2:07 pm	11:56 pm
Mercury 5:30 am	7:03 pm
Venus 4:12 am	6:27 pm
Mars 4:29 pm	1:52 am
Jupiter 3:15 am	5:42 pm
Saturn 8:34 pm	7:39 am

9am to 3pm: 0.0  
Average annual: 618.9  
To 9am to date for 2008: 91  
For same period 2007: 21.6  
February Rainfall: 47.2  
February Average: 55.4

**Yesterday's extremes**  
Minimum 12.6 at 4:57 am  
Maximum 18.2 at 10:27 am

**SURF REPORT**

**ILLAWARRA COASTAL WATERS, PORT HACKING TO ULLADULLA AND 60NM SEAWARDS:**  
TODAY: S'ly winds 15/20 knots, increasing to 20/30 knots during the afternoon/evening, chiefly offshore. Sea: 1.5 to 2 metres, rising to 2 to 3 metres offshore during the afternoon/evening. Swell: S/SE 2 to 3 metres.

**TOMORROW:** S/SE winds 20/25 knots easing to 13/18 knots later.

**SOUTH COASTAL WATERS, ULLADULLA TO GABO ISLAND AND 60NM SEAWARDS:**  
TODAY: S/SW winds 15/20 knots, increasing to 20/30 knots during the afternoon, chiefly offshore. Sea: 1.5 to 2 metres, rising to 2 to 3 metres offshore. Swell: S 2 to 3 metres.

**TOMORROW:** S/SE winds 20/25 knots easing to 13/18 knots later.

**February 14, 2008**  
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