

PETER GOERS



goersp@sundaymail.com.au

WHAT'S HOT

- The dignity of sacked Mitsubishi workers.
- Graffiti mural in York Ave, Clovelly Park. I watched whole families involved.
- Bitsa dogs – best dogs.
- *Juno* and *No Country For Old Men* – great films.
- Mary Shattock and Betty Tohill and all CWA ladies.
- Ben Cousins admits his problem and begins to show the guts that made him great.



WHAT'S NOT

- Tobacco companies funding political parties which prohibit smoking. Who's wrong?
- *Sweeney Todd* – Sweeney Scissorhands – boring, stupid movie.
- Martin Hamilton-Smith repeatedly fails to identify the Mall's Balls on Neil Mitchell's 3AW radio show in Melbourne.
- The elite private school lobby gets annoyed at the State Government because more students are going to Government schools.
- *Dr Phil* on Channel 10.



Sorry, but we share the guilt

BLESS his heart. John Howard said sorry in 2000. John Howard made a frank, complete, heartfelt and emotional apology to Aborigines for the Stolen Generation and centuries of abuse and denial. Unfortunately it was John Howard the actor on the TV show *The Games* rather than the other one. Until now saying sorry has been a sorry business. PM Kevin Rudd will apologise next Wednesday.

Who's sorry now? Brendan Nelson and

most of the coalition of the previously unwilling are sorry now, although Dr Nelson thinks the word "stolen" has pejorative connotations. Well, yes ... when Howard's mate Senator Bill Heffernan agreed to say sorry it was all over for the Opposition, except for a few Western Australian rabble rags like Wilson Tuckey. Many Australians have waited 10 years for the Federal Government to say sorry. Black Australians have been waiting for 220 years. Better late than never.

Meanwhile, we still have white Australians running around like chooks with their heads cut off and their hearts still bleeding for the moral superiority of the master race.

"Nothing to do with me," they bleat. How pathetic.

Slavery, genocide and racism affect us all. We all wear the sins of the fathers.

Wisely, the Germans endlessly apologise for the Jewish genocide. It's illegal in Germany to deny the holocaust.

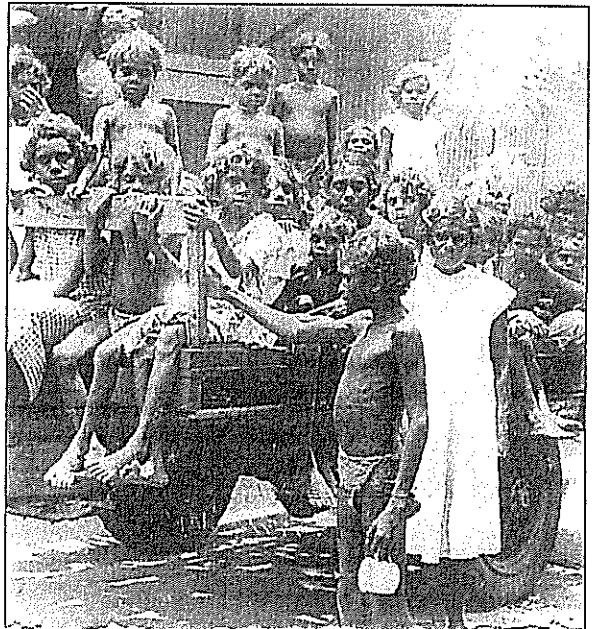
Conversely and shamefully, the Japanese apologise for nothing. They remain in appalling denial about World War II, among other things, like killing baby whales to feed to dogs.

I once asked a very nice, intelligent Japanese exchange student in Adelaide what Japanese students were taught in school about WWII. "Oh," he said, "You mean the period of American aggression against the noble Japanese people?" Well, no ...

We ache for that brave, gracious dear lady Jan Ruff-O'Herne – used like thousands of others as a sex slave by the Japanese – in her 68-year campaign for an apology.

The same thing happened to some Aboriginal women but there are still those who remain unrepentant.

They can go to hell. We are the last Western



INJUSTICES: We have much for which to apologise

country to apologise to our indigenous people and there's a lot of unfinished business. A lot to be sorry about.

Firstly, the world was told hundreds of thousands of Aborigines did not exist. Australia was apparently uninhabited. Terra nullius. Then Aborigines were destroyed by disease. Raped. They were often killed in a manner formerly associated with the police in Victoria. Bang. Stop.

They were moved on or poisoned with flour if they didn't. They were non-people except when they could be exploited for exploration, fighting our wars, as cheap labour or sexual objects.

There were forced conversions to Christianity. Their culture was denied and derided. They were

assimilated in the hope they'd be bred out. Their children were stolen and sent to often brutal children's homes where they were starved, sent shoeless to school, told they were orphans and that they were the shameful scum of the earth.

THIS was happening while Menzies celebrated the "forgotten people" – meaning middle-class whities – as he encouraged our families to want two cars.

Aboriginal settlements were used as unbridled brothels. Aboriginal apartheid ruled. Out of sight out of mind, except when they were murdered in custody and someone noticed.

Aborigines didn't even officially exist until 1967. Aborigines are still de-

nied identity and basic rights. There are still segregated black bars in country towns.

We are left with people with a broken spirit and a broken heart who live in fear.

There have always been good people who helped. We rush to claim them as our own but we must all claim the guilt, too. We must all say sorry and accept responsibility.

The apology must begin a new era of mutual respect and obligation. It goes both ways.

Come Sorry Day. I hope we can finally stop picking at a sore because as our mothers used to say, "It never gets well if you pick it." Who's sorry now? I am, you are, we are Australians.

Peter Goers can be heard weeknights on 892ABC

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