

'Words are not enough' – musicians celebrate the Apology while calling for renewed commitment to healing

Busby Marou will take to the stage next month in Canberra for #Apology10 – a concert to mark the 10 year anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations.

The Rockhampton duo are keen to celebrate the significance of the Apology and its impact for Stolen Generations members, while also highlighting concerns around increasing levels of disadvantage for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders including the impact on young people.

"I still clearly remember watching the Apology that Kevin Rudd delivered in 2008," says Torres Strait Islander Jeremy Marou, who formed Busby Marou with Thomas Busby in 2008.

"For many Elders it was an emotional event and it is one worth celebrating. 10 years on, sadly, I feel words are not enough."

At the time of the Apology Busby Marou were earning some major stripes, touring the country and playing support to Pete Murray. Two well received studio albums, a hit single (*Days of Gold*), and a 2012 APRA Award ('Blues & Roots Work of the Year') have followed.

During the same passage of time that marks their upward trajectory in the Australian music scene, the band has seen a rapid decline in the optimism for a new dawn of Reconciliation which surrounded the National Apology.

"There's a lot more that needs to be done. "I'd like to see Reconciliation led and driven by White Australia. When that happens, we will live in a different environment," says Jeremy.

The band hopes #Apology10 will renew hope and energy for the Reconciliation journey, and raise awareness about the ongoing impacts of Intergenerational Trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

It's a hope shared by Aboriginal singer-songwriter Shellie Morris, who will also perform at the #Apology10 concert.

"It is very important to acknowledge the Apology. It's like a gauge that we can use to see whether real change has been made," says Shellie, whose late Grandmother participated in the drafting of the *Bringing them Home* report, which precipitated the Apology.

Also performing at the concert is Sydney-based, multiple ARIA Award nominated band, The Preatures. Lead singer Isabella Manfredi emphasises the importance of properly acknowledging the nation's past while embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as an intrinsic part of a broader Australian identity.

"The National Apology was the first time I saw a politician, in my lifetime, standing up and speaking the truth of our country."

"To hear the truth -our truth - was at that time the most powerful thing I had known as a young Australian.

"I dream for a country where to be Indigenous or to have Indigenous heritage is not to be 'other'. It is 'us'," says Isabella.

Comedian, performer and television personality Steven Oliver, a driving force behind hit ABC show *Black Comedy*, will share event co-hosting duties with popular radio announcer and television personality Myf Warhurst.

"I think we still have a long way to go," says Steven.

"We must never forget the history that happened on this land and we must learn how that history has shaped us - both good and bad."

#Apology10 is a free event hosted by the Healing Foundation, a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation established in 2009 to address the ongoing trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Other artists to perform live at the event include legendary Aboriginal troubadour Archie Roach and electro-funk band Electric Fields.

Event Details:

Federation Mall, Canberra (the lawns in front of Parliament House)

Tuesday 13th February 2018 / 6pm – 10pm

Facebook: facebook.com/healingfoundation

Twitter: @HealingOurWay

Website: www.healingfoundation.org.au

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