



JUBILEE

the olympic city



IT was bigger than Ben Hur! Sydney Catholic Schools Jubilee 2000 celebration, 17 March at Stadium Australia. As Kristi Lord from St Michael's Primary, Meadowbank says: "I tell you it was massive!"

THE 93,742-strong crowd of students, teachers and parents joined in their celebration of 2000 years of Christianity with the Governor-General, Sir William Deane, the Prime Minister, John Howard, NSW Premier, Bob Carr, the Apostolic Nuncio in Australia, Archbishop Francesco Canalini, and the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Edward Clancy.

The 90-minute performance involved more than 10,000 student musicians, actors, singers and dancers, as well as hundreds of teachers, parents and grandparents. The end result of lots of hard work and creative energy was a visual and sound spectacular depicting stories from Aboriginal Dreamtime, creation, the life of Jesus, and the modern world. As Brendan Thompson, a member of the Jubilee choir and a student at St Bernard's Primary, Botany says: "You'd think we were professionals!"

A highlight of the event was a moving reconciliation ceremony in which the Governor-General, Sir William Deane joined with indigenous and non-indigenous students to make a commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal Australians, and a plea for both black and white Australians to understand and respect each other's cultures.

Liam Ridgeway, a Year 11 student at St Mary's Cathedral College, and one of 14 students involved in the reconciliation statement, says everyone involved in the Jubilee event felt deeply about the need to reconcile past injustices and make a new beginning.

Janaya Mundine and Danielle Martinez-Kirk, from St Scholastica's College, Glebe, say they will never forget the things that were said on that day.

"They were important because they showed that we were ready to work in schools for reconciliation. The Governor-General spoke on our behalf, and we hope

that Mr Howard might have learned something about how to say sorry."

For Tim Kane from St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, the unification of indigenous and non-indigenous Australian children through linking hands was a powerful moment.

"The respect shown by each culture for the other in the words of the commitment is what I think is essential to the reconciliation process. The issue of Aboriginal reconciliation has become critical for Australia as a nation. We can complain that we shouldn't have to apologise, and show ourselves to be lacking in compassion, like past generations – or we can actively seek reconciliation, and show that Australians are compassionate and always eager to improve."

Marcus Burnett from St Mary's Cathedral College, says being part of the reconciliation statement made him realise how Aboriginal people have suffered and been subjected to injustice in the past. "It was important for us to commit to reconciliation, as a commitment such as this helps to ensure a better future together as one."

"Being part of such an important and historic event was a very moving experience for me," says Lauren Farrugia from Brigidine College, Randwick, "as I believe that it is up to our generation to take reconciliation forward into our future – a future where all Australians will be equal."

Other highlights of the performance were the resurrection of Jesus Christ rising high above the stadium arena, a guest appearance from Australian pop group, Human Nature, and a parade of all 171 schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney, with representatives from each school carrying messages of hope for the new millennium.

Peta De Michele, school captain of Holy Cross College, Woollahra, was one of her school's banner holders. She says stepping