



The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council

To all our mob in Wilcannia,

You are not forgotten.

We have heard about the struggles you are having with COVID-19 and want you to know that all over Australia, your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Brothers and Sisters are thinking of and praying for you.

You might feel alone because of where you are, but our spirit is connected with yours across the country. As a culture, we have faced many challenges for hundreds of years, but we have persisted. Ours is the oldest continuing culture in the world because we are strong, resilient and we help each other in tough times. For millennia we have come together as one people to lift one another. When one falls down, two come to pick them up.

It is in these tough times that we must call on our families and draw strength from our Creator Spirit. The Spirit is with us always, within our hearts and minds and in Mother Earth. The Creator Spirit never leaves us, especially in times of trouble where we need help the most.

We know that other organisations and the Government are helping with food and supplies to sustain your body, we are offering our thoughts, prayers and constant support to boost your spirit.

Your strength during this time is an example for not only our people, but for all of Australia. We are inspired by the stories of solidarity and your care for one another, and we are certain that you will continue to fight until the battle is won. NATSICC has members from every State and Territory and we are sharing your story and your strength far and wide.

You are not, and will not be forgotten in these difficult times. We walk alongside you in spirit and hope that you draw strength from the power of prayer from across Australia and call on the Creator Spirit to keep you safe and guide the community to health.

We offer you the following prayer. Aboriginal people composed the prayer for the Pope's visit to Australia in 1986, This prayer now is prayed by many Catholic Aboriginal groups around the country, and we are now praying it together, for you:

Father of all, you gave us the Dreaming.

You have spoken to us through our beliefs.

You then made your love clear to us in the person of Jesus.

We thank you for your care. You own us.

You are our hope. Make us strong as we face the problems of change.

We ask you to help the people of Australia to listen to us and respect our culture.

Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all people, so that you can be at home in us and we can make a home for everyone in our land.

Yours in faith,

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council.

