

Tune into English: Midnight Oil's Beds are Burning [B1]

Nel 1987 il gruppo di Sidney raggiunse la fama mondiale con questa canzone dal forte carattere politico, che reclamava giustizia per l'oppressione e le sofferenze inferte agli aborigeni australiani.



In 1985, Australia's Uluru (formerly known as Ayers Rock) was returned to the [First Nations people](#). Around that time, Peter Garrett, the politically-active vocalist of Australian rock band Midnight Oil, visited an exhibition on the theme of fascism in Italy during the Second World War. He was told that partisans often used the phrase "How could you sleep when beds are burning?" and saw similarities with the [fate](#) of displaced indigenous tribes in his native Australia. Beds Are Burning is a [plea](#) for justice that was written while the band toured Australia's desert and island communities, [performing](#) with local musicians. Described as a song about the nation's greatest [shame](#), the lyrics paint a vivid picture of the desolate life lived in the [Outback](#). The song is almost entirely in the present simple, and centred on that one recurring rhetorical question. Understood to be one of Australia's greatest protest songs of the last fifty years, Beds are Burning was [released](#) just months before the country's 1988 bicentenary celebrations,

becoming an unofficial alternative anthem. Midnight Oil performed it at the closing ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, with the word "Sorry" printed on their clothes. Eight years on, the Australian government finally **issued** a formal **apology** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for "the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound **grief**, suffering and loss on these, our **fellow-Australians**." In 2009, a **star-studded** cast re-recorded the song, this time **to highlight** the climate emergency before United Nations talks.

Glossary

- **to highlight** = sottolineare
- **plea** = appello
- **released** = pubblicare
- **apology** = scuse
- **fellow-Australians** = connazionali australiani
- **star-studded** = pieno di star (dello spettacolo)
- **issued** = presentare
- **grief** = dolore
- **First Nations people** = popolazioni indigene
- **fate** = destino
- **performing** = esibirsi
- **shame,** = vergogna
- **Outback.** = profondo entroterra australiano