ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)

TELLING OUR STORY

A report by the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (Inc) on the removal of Aboriginal Children from their families in Western Australia

[Cover photograph courtesy of Aboriginal Affairs Department - Aboriginal residents of Moore River Native Settlement circa 1940]

FOREWORD

"We took the children from their mothers"

With these words Prime Minister Paul Keating, while launching the Year of Indigenous Peoples at Redfern Park, Sydney in 1992, officially acknowledged that in the process of colonisation white Australia had cruelly denied generations of Aboriginal children their most precious and fundamental right - that of a mother's love and a family's care.

The practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families and communities was a human tragedy of profound impact - one of the most inhumane and destructive practices to accompany white settlement of Australia.

In Western Australia, as elsewhere, Government policies permitted, indeed even encouraged, the arbitrary separation of Aboriginal children from their families, to be placed in institutional care, so that their transition into white society could be more surely effected.

The ALS Removal of Children Report details the stories of some 600 of the children, or of members of their families, who were directly affected by assimilationist policies pursued by a succession of Governments in this State.

Many thousands were forcibly wrested from the security of their families and communities and taken to institutions where, with lamentably few exceptions, they were denied further contact with those they had left behind, in a deliberate and callous attempt to conceal their cultural identity. In those instances where they were or did become aware, they were made to feel ashamed of their culture and of their colour.

The anguish of their grief-stricken parents, families, kinship groups and communities, and of the children themselves, was brusquely discounted as inconsequential and, at any

event, of a temporary nature.

Today, the legacy of those policies haunts the conscience of white Australia as it has haunted the memories of generations of Aboriginal families. The residue of unresolved anger and grief that blankets the Aboriginal community has had a devastating effect on the physical, emotional and mental well-being of so many.

For a century and a half, in Western Australia as elsewhere, Aboriginal people have been left alone, unsupported, to cope with a deep and abiding sense of outrage and overwhelming loss. Non-Aboriginal people, on the other hand, have just begun the task of coming to terms with the graphic reality of having perpetrated a flagrant injustice on the State's indigenous population.

This report offers solutions for both sectors of our society.

For Aboriginal participants it provides a catharsis for feelings of sorrow and rage, and it encourages us to anticipate that, after generations of neglect, white Australia is finally prepared to own the shame of its past, and to accept the responsibility of effecting real and substantial reparation in the future.

For non-indigenous West Australians, the report is a sombre reminder of a most inglorious aspect of their history, and an incentive to take firm hold of a long overdue opportunity to make amends.

The Removal of Children report cannot be allowed to suffer the fate of previous reports that emanated from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the associated Underlying Issues investigation conducted in this State by Commissioner Pat Dodson. These documents revealed a litany of neglect and abuse suffered by the Aboriginal community in WA. Yet today, government response to the former has been tepid and unconvincing, while the latter has been virtually ignored.

This cannot happen to this report because we cannot let it happen to this report. The tormented experience of generations of Aboriginal people in being forcibly separated from their loved ones is too recent, too much a part of the experience of every living Aboriginal person.

The haunting echo of the cries of our stolen children is too loud not to hear; the physical and emotional effects of this human calamity too visible not to see; the violation we feel as a community too real not to voice.

The recommendations made in this report can and must go some way toward easing the anguish that plagues our community. These recommendations provide a blueprint for direct and unequivocal intervention, on behalf of the State Government, to repatriate families and to care for the broken spirit of thousands of our people.

The Prime Minister, in his 1992 address, stressed that the starting point in finding solutions to the problems that beset the first Australians was to recognise that the problem started with non-Aboriginal Australia.

It began, he said, with recognition that white Australia did the dispossessing; that white Australia took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life; that white Australia brought the diseases and the alcohol; that white Australia committed the murders; that white Australia practiced discrimination and exclusion; that white Australia took the children from their mothers.

White Australia failed, the Prime Minister said, to make the most basic human response and enter into the hearts and minds of the Aboriginal people.

This report invites white Australia to do just that. The stories in this report are the stories of those who suffered the trauma, and who continue to suffer the effects, of white Australia's past ignorance and prejudice.

Yet, like the Prime Minister, we do not believe that this report, nor others that have come before it, should fill the wider community with guilt. It should instead prompt that community to open its heart and to listen to what our people are saying.

We do not seek revenge, we seek justice and equity. We seek to heal the heartbreak of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, and we seek to do this in company with all Australians.

On behalf of the Executive Committee and Management of the Aboriginal Legal Service WA (Inc) I sincerely thank those Aboriginal people who displayed great courage in coming forward to tell their stories. I also thank the following for bringing the report to finalisation: Tony Buti (project coordinator), Robyn Ayres, Christine Choo, Peter O'Brien, Gavin Douglas, Merrilee Garnett, Tony Shelley, Margaret Stephens, Margaret Ward, Lesleigh Braybrook, Fred Penny, and other ALS staff in Perth and country offices.

Ted Wilkes
President

ACRONYMS

AAPA	Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority
ALS	Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (Inc)
CWD	Child Welfare Department
DCD	Department of Community Development
DCS	Department of Community Service
DCW	Department of Community Welfare
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NWD	Native Welfare Department
SKCH	Sister Kate's Children's Home
RCIADIC	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> Moore River has women of Mary's[1] type and if we permitted her to come up at our expense to see her child the other women would expect similar treatment. In general principle, however, we do not encourage visits to Sister Kate's home. The quadroon children are being reared as white and contact with natives is not desirable.[2]

Removal and assimilation

Up until at least the late 1960s, Aboriginal children in Western Australia were systematically removed from their families by police and 'welfare officers' to be raised as white children for the purpose of assimilation. Parents were often denied access to their children by their confinement on Aboriginal reserves and the removal of their children to distant homes, orphanages, missions or institutions. Some parents did not know where their children were taken.

The goal of assimilating children of 'mixed Aboriginal blood' into the 'white community' which underlined the removal of children policies and practices of the past is illustrated by a 1937 report of the views of Mr. A. O. Neville, the second Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia:

> Mr. Neville holds the view that within one hundred years the pure black will be extinct. But the half-caste problem was increasing every year. Therefore their idea was to keep the pure blacks segregated and absorb the half-castes into the white population. Sixty years ago, he said, there were over 60,000 full-blooded natives in Western Australia. Today there are only 20,000. In time there would be none. Perhaps it would take one hundred years, perhaps longer, but the race was dying. The pure-blooded Aboriginal was not a quick breeder. On the other hand the half-caste was. In Western Australia there

> were half-caste families of twenty and upwards. That showed the magnitude of the problem.
>
> In order to secure this complete segregation of the children of pure blacks, and preventing them ever getting a taste of camp life, the children were left with their mothers until they were but two years old. After that they were taken from their mother and reared in accordance with white ideas.[3]

A speech made by Mr. A. O. Neville at the Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities held in Canberra in April 1937 fully exposes the assimilation objective of the removal policies and practices of the time (refer to Appendix A for the full speech).

The past removal policies and practices of successive Western Australian, other State, and Commonwealth governments was an attempt to 'breed out' the Aboriginal race. It amounted to genocide[4].

Over six hundred people have approached the ALS to provide their personal stories of how the policies of removal affected them. Most were affected as children who were taken away, but parents whose children were removed also came forward.

The trauma of removal had dramatic effects on the parents, the children removed, other family members who were not removed, and on the next generation of children of those removed. The trauma is not just an academic historical phenomena but is real and on-going in the lives of those people affected. The enduring nature of this trauma can be seen in the case studies (chapter four), analysis of the Smith family (chapter five) and profile summaries[5] (Appendix B) contained in this submission. The following extracts typify those personal histories collected by the ALS:

> The actual affect that is still in my life by being removed from my family and placed in Sister Kate's is my relationship with my family. There appears to be some barrier that cannot be broken down that seems to somehow separate me from the closeness of my family, and for me to be fully aware of the family network. I am always surprised by people that I meet that end up being related that I never knew about before.[6]

I would like to say something from the bottom of my heart to the government, to the welfare. You have left me and my brothers and sisters with nothing of our parents but sad memories of the Kurrawang Mission which I hate.[7]

The greatest effect or the longest lasting effect on me is a sense of being robbed of the love of my parents for those years. Now that they are dead I know there is little I can do about it. I try not to think about it, but the hurt is still there. I was in the Marribank Mission which was very impersonal and institutionalised. I feel that if I had been brought up in a proper family structure I would have been a happier person.[8]

I think being taken to Wandering Mission has ruined my life. It is very difficult to describe. I feel lost and I feel that I don't fit into the white world, but it is also hard for me to get along with my own culture.[9]

The effect of my being removed from my parents at a young age and living in foster homes has resulted in my having two personalities. One is the Nyoongah way and one is the white way. There is a conflict between the two.[10]

I was only at the United Mission for two years but those two years still have an effect on me. At night we were locked in so we couldn't leave. Even now I find it distressing to be in a closed environment.[11]

People universally complained of feeling that a part inside themselves had been forever removed, and lost to them. Other commonly stated effects were:

- feelings of being alienated from their own people, combined with not fitting into the wider white community;
- feeling bewildered or confused as to the reasons and circumstances of removal;
- feelings of enormous grief at being separated from parents or children;
- feelings of loss or deprivation of childhood and great sadness that a childhood in missions, institutions and/or foster care lacked a loving and caring environment;
- feelings of hopelessness and disappointment arising from thinking they will die without ever being able to resolve or overcome the pain of separation from families;

- a lack of necessary life skills due to being raised in the rigid institutional atmosphere of missions or orphanages;

- difficulties in imparting Aboriginal culture on to their own children;

- difficulties in forming intimate relationships and trusting friendships;

- major mood fluctuations and depression;

- a tendency to use alcohol and other substances as a method of coping with the pain and grief; and

- being unable to cope with and in society.

It is not only the intrinsic impact of removal from families and culture which has contributed to long lasting ill effects. Life at the missions, foster care, or other institutions was for many a harsh experience which exacerbated the dislocation, alienation, loneliness and pain felt from being removed from families and culture.

> We slept in dormitories with about 20 girls in each of them. If we wet the bed you were flogged and your nose was rubbed into the wet sheet. The food was bad. We had maggots in the meat. We never had any shoes. We used to jump in cow dung to keep our feet warm. It was very cold at the Roelands Mission during winter.
>
> When we had our periods we used rags that we had to wash out ourselves. We were never allowed to ask the house mother for sanitary clothing. We always had to ask the big red headed Dutchman, who had a vile temper and some awful strange behaviour. He loved nothing better than to watch us have a bath. He also enjoyed giving us floggings.[12]
>
> The punishments I received at the Norseman Mission were by different people like Steve Smith who wired my penis to receive electric shocks when I wet the bed. This treatment went on for months ... Another punishment was from Gary Pill who used to put me into the pig pen naked for hours at a time. I was terrified of the pigs attacking me ... Mr. Aron also used to belt me with strips of conveyer belts.[13]
>
> I found my time at Mogumber to be very cruel and rough. In my opinion we were tortured. For example when I was nine years of age I remember a staff member at Mogumber Mission by the name of William Long who used to take me into his room and play around with my private parts. I think it went on from when I was about nine years of age until twelve or thirteen. Also at

> other stages even when I was younger than nine I was subjected to anal intercourse by older boys. Other boys were lined up by older boys too.[14]
>
> The nuns at New Norcia used to beat us every day for the simplest of mistakes; even for clearing our throats. I lived in fear of the next hiding which I knew would come at any time. Most of the time we didn't know what we'd done wrong. The nuns who were in charge of us were always telling us we were wicked, evil, dirty savages.[15]

Great physical, mental, emotional and spiritual hurt has been suffered by the people removed, by their families, and by communities. This great hurt has, on many occasions, been clearly observed by those who have worked on this project. The ALS believes the effects of removal are a significant factor in:

- the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system;
- physical, mental and emotional health problems;
- domestic violence;
- welfare dependency;
- substance and alcohol abuse;
- breakdown of traditional family structures;
- a loss of cultural and spiritual identity; and
- the loss of individual self-esteem, security and happiness.

The ALS welcomes the recent announcement by the Commonwealth Government to conduct, through the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, a national inquiry into the past policies and practices of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families and culture.[16]

The ALS has for some time advocated for the instigation of a government-funded national inquiry into the past policies and practices of removing Aboriginal children from their families and culture. These policies and practices were applied in many parts of Australia and now present a problem of national significance. It should be stressed that even after assimilation was no longer the objective, Aboriginal children were removed from families

at a rate grossly disproportionate to that of the non-Aboriginal population.

This submission should be of valuable assistance to the national inquiry. It provides information and analysis of the past laws, practices and policies that led to removal of Aboriginal children in Western Australia from their families and culture. The submission also contains primary and secondary source information of the impact and enduring nature on individuals and families, of the removal policies and practices.

The $1.5 million allocated for the national inquiry is demonstrably inadequate. If the inquiry is to be genuine it must be properly resourced. The national inquiry must be comprehensive in order to fully understand and bring to notice the impact and long lasting effects of the removal policies and practices. It is inconceivable that the process of Aboriginal reconciliation will be successful without State and Federal government commitment to comprehensively redress the ongoing effects of the policies.

Although these policies were applied in many parts of Australia, this submission clearly puts the Western Australian Government on notice that it has an immediate obligation to positively respond to and implement the recommendations of this submission. An expression of support for the national inquiry by the Western Australian Government is not enough if it is to fulfil its obligations as a crucial facilitator of the reconciliation process between indigenous peoples and the wider community.

Immediate action on the recommendations of this submission is needed to begin the process of healing the hurt and remedying the consequences of past policies. Only in this way will the Western Australian Government be attending to its political, moral and legal obligations to the Aboriginal people of Western Australia.

Recommendations

The ALS calls on the State Government to:

1. Make a public statement in parliament acknowledging the devastating impact of the

policies and practices of removing Aboriginal children from their families, on individuals, their families and the Aboriginal community, and express regret, and apologise on behalf of the people of Western Australia.

2. Commit itself to making reparation (including financial compensation) to individuals and families affected by these policies and practices.

3. Fund appropriate Aboriginal organisations to assist affected families and individuals to locate family members and enable reunions to take place.

4. Fund appropriate Aboriginal organisations to establish counselling and mental health services.

5. Amend the following Acts of Parliament to enable actions to be commenced to provide legal redress for injury, pain and suffering caused:

   (i) S.47A of the *Limitation Act 1935* (WA);
   (ii) S.6 of the *Crown Suits Act 1947* (WA);
   (iii) S.16 of the *Native Welfare Act 1963* (WA); and
   (iv) S.17 of the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (WA)

6. Take steps to improve access to personal files held by State Government departments and archive materials held by State or other institutions (e.g. religious organisations).

7. Establish a taskforce to investigate allegations of abuse of Aboriginal people resident in government institutions, missions, orphanages, and/or foster care, which may justify the laying of criminal charges, and report to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

8. In the context of the National Inquiry into the Removal of Children, provide evidence of remedial actions taken, or yet to be taken, as a result of the Underlying Issues Report prepared in Western Australia by Commissioner Pat Dodson as part of the

Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

9. Through the Education Department, develop Aboriginal Studies curricula that will educate all students about successive government policies and practices with regard to the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and the residual effects on the Aboriginal community.

10. Develop a public awareness campaign that will provide the general public with information about successive government policies and practices with regard to the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and the residual effects on the Aboriginal community.

The ALS calls on the Federal government to:-

1. Properly fund appropriate Aboriginal organisations to carry out research and to prepare submissions for presentation to the National Inquiry.

2. Establish a nationally representative Aboriginal body to the National Inquiry.

3. Commit itself to implementation of the recommendations of the National Inquiry.

4. Restate its commitment to implementation of the recommendations of the ATSIC Report to the Federal Government on Native Title Social Justice Measures as part of its Social Justice Package, in a manner that is consistent with but not limiting to the eventual findings and recommendations of the National Inquiry

Endnotes

1. This is a pseudonym. For the purposes of this report the identity of people interviewed will be disguised by the use of pseudonyms for personal names and in the case of families interviewed, the names of the towns where they lived and are now living. Pseudonyms are also utilised to disguise the identity of third persons reported in people's personal histories or native welfare file extractions.

2. Letter from Commissioner of Native Welfare to Administrator Carrolup Native Settlement, dated 5 May 1943, refusing to provide travel assistance for a mother to travel from Katanning to see her child in Perth.

3. *The Telegraph*, 5 May 1937.

4. Refer to chapter six for a legal definition and discussion on genocide.

5. It was not possible to provide a profile summary of all personal histories received by the ALS. The profile summaries reported in Appendix B correspond to the first 57 histories received, apart from the personal histories summarised in chapter four and those of the Smith family (see chapter five). Time restraints prevented preparation of additional profile summaries.

6. Malcolm, born 1954, 'taken away' aged eight and a half months.

7. Claire, born 1960, 'taken away' aged five years.

8. Paris, born 1946, 'taken away' aged 11 years.

9. Joy, born 1945, 'taken away' aged ten years.

10. Aljelica, born 1959, 'taken away' aged six years.

11. Ruth, born 1938, 'taken away' aged ten years.

12. Marilyn, born 1945, 'taken away' aged six years.

13. Brian, born 1921, 'taken away' aged approximately three to four years.

14. Alfred, born 1951, 'taken away' aged approximately one to two months.

15. Marionette, born 1940, 'taken away' aged three years.

16. The Hon. Robert Tickner, MP, "Sir Ronald Wilson to Head Inquiry into Indigenous Family Separations", *Media Release*, Parliament House, Canberra, 14 May 1995, and Attorney-General's Department, "The Justice Statement Overview", Canberra, 18 May 1995, p11.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL CHILD WELFARE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

> On the day that we were taken away two officers from the Native Welfare Department went to the school and said that they were taking myself and my sister, Rosyln, home to talk to our grandparents. The welfare officers also said they were going to take us down to town to buy some lollies. We actually thought that was what they were going to do. We got in the car and went to a shop and got some lollies. We started to eat lollies in the back seat but instead of going to the reserve they continued on and took the turn off to Williams and then to Wandering Mission.
>
> We hadn't even had the opportunity to say goodbye to our grandparents. They knew nothing about us being taken away.
>
> When we arrived at the mission it felt like we were in a completely different world. We were disorientated and confused. We just held each other and cried.[1]

Introduction

> The history of Aboriginal child welfare raises questions about the implications the past has on relations between Aboriginal and white Australia and what traces of that systematic attempt at social and biological engineering remain current in child welfare practices.[2]

The impact on Aboriginal society of the (often forcible) removal of Aboriginal children from their parents cannot be underestimated. The institutionalisation of these children, many of whom were 'wards of the State' in orphanages and missions and sometimes foster care, as part of the execution of the initial colonial strategy of 'segregation' and later Commonwealth and State policies of 'assimilation' and 'integration', allowed those in control to educate and rear Aboriginal children in the manner they saw fit. In most cases that up-bringing was informed by the opinion that "it was in the (Aborigines) best interest to be something other than Aboriginal."[3]

The RCIADIC in 1991 found that "the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents was a practice which began almost with European invasion in 1788; it was first formally enacted in Victoria in 1886, and quickly became part of a wider policy of assimilation".[4]

Throughout the mid-1800's, Christian missions and stations were established to care for and take responsibility for Aboriginal people. The *Aboriginal Protection Act 1886* (WA) established the Aboriginal Protection Board. Its administration was responsible to the Governor and its duties included the "care, custody and education of Aboriginal children"[5], a duty incorporated in the statutory powers of consequent Aboriginal Departments until 1972.

The *Australian Colonies Government Act 1850* (UK) set up a charter for the self-government of the Australian colonies. Section 12, although formulated in the "Aborigines best interests", gave wide-ranging powers to the new government including those concerning the "care, custody (and) education of the children of Aborigines."[6] The Act failed to provide the Aborigines Department with any system to regulate the way in which duties were executed or powers used.

From Self-Government to 1905

In 1897 the Colonial Office relinquished control over Aboriginal matters. The Aboriginal Protection Board (UK) was replaced in 1898 with the Aborigines Department, a branch of the newly-formed Western Australia government. The Department initially consisted of a Chief Protector, a travelling inspector and a clerk. The police, acting on behalf of the Department, were given additional responsibilities as 'protectors' of Aborigines.

John Prinsep became the first Chief Protector. He rapidly developed an independence in his views on the appropriate role of the Aborigines Department, and often came into conflict with then Premier John Forrest. Prinsep was convinced that improvement of the Aborigines' lot (and protection of wider society) was to be achieved by limiting Aborigines' contact with the white settlement and, where necessary, by removing them from society altogether. In his opinion Aboriginal children of mixed descent growing up in 'native camps', "learned only laziness" and, left to their own devices, they would grow up to be "vagrants and outcasts"

and "not only a disgrace, but a menace to our society." He believed that it was the government's duty to place the children in missions to be trained to become "useful workers ... and humble labourers."[7]

Without legislative power to remove children to missions, the Department still managed to gain control over some children against their parents' wishes. Prinsep complained in his Annual Report of 1902 that "the natural affections of the mothers ... stood much in [his] way", in inducing parents to send their children to the missions.[8]

In 1904 there was a Royal Commission into, among other terms of reference, the administration of the Department and the treatment and conditions of the Aboriginal people. The report discussed the 'half-caste problem' and approved of the Chief Protector becoming legal guardian of all Aboriginal children up to age 18.[9] The rationale for this was:

> There is a large number of absolutely worthless blacks and half-castes about who grow up to lives of prostitution and idleness; they are a perfect nuisance; if they were taken away young from their surroundings of temptation much good might be done with them.[10]

Subsequent discussion in Parliament included the comment:

> a half-caste, who possesses few of the virtues and nearly all of the vices of whites, grows up to be a mischievous and very immoral subject ... it may appear to be a cruel thing to tear an Aborigine child from its mother, but it is necessary in some cases to be cruel to be kind.[11]

Further, it was claimed to be "wrong, unjust and a disgrace to the state" to leave them with their mothers and a "maudlin sentiment" to consider the mothers' feelings as they would "forget their children in twenty four hours." Education was described to be "absurd" for Aboriginal children who, it was believed, would be "demoralised" and not "bettered" by it.[12]

The 1905 Act and the 1911 Amendment Act

In 1905, the *Aborigines Act 1905* (WA) (the 'Act'), an "Act to make for the better protection and care of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Western Australia", was enacted. Although the Act upgraded the Aboriginal Department to the status of a full government department responsible to a minister, no changes were made to its administrative structure. Its welfare duties remained the same and it continued to rely on honorary protectors at a local level.

Wide ranging powers were given to the Department under the Act. According to Haebich, "It set up the necessary bureaucratic and legal mechanisms to control all (Aboriginal) contacts with the wider community, to enforce the assimilation of (Aboriginal) children and to determine the most personal aspects of (Aboriginal) lives."[13] Under the Act, the Chief Protector became the legal guardian of virtually all illegitimate children of Aboriginal descent to the age of 16.

After 1909, police, protectors and Justices of the Peace were given power by a new regulation to remove any 'half-caste' child to a mission without the authorisation of the Chief Protector - as was previously required.[14] This served to expedite the removal of children. At the same time it represented a gross interference in Aboriginal and family life and contrasted markedly with the stated aims of the *Children's Act 1907* (WA) to provide for needy children without undue interference in family relationships.[15]

Guardianship was extended by the 1911 amendments to the Act so that the Chief Protector had power of removal "to the exclusion of the rights of the mother of an illegitimate or 'half-caste child." Accordingly the Chief Protector had the right to remove 'needy' or orphaned children from their homes to missions or other institutions. Missions for Aboriginal children, such as that at New Norcia, were also brought under the control of the Department; ceasing to come under the *Industrial School Act 1874* (WA). This formally began the separation of the institutional care of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children.

Robert van Krieken identified that between 1890 and 1915 there was extensive and formative change - a gradual rationalisation, systemisation and expansion - to child welfare agencies

and a qualitative change in the power of the State over Aboriginal families.[16]

1915 - Chief Protector A.O. Neville

A new era of Aboriginal affairs commenced with the appointment of Auber Octavius Neville as Chief Protector of Aborigines. Neville had no prior experience with Aborigines but perceived them to be "most attractive when most remote from the mainstream of Australian society."[17]

Neville attempted to enforce the segregationist provisions of the *Aborigines Act 1905* (WA).[18] With clinical precision he believed that "the sore spot must be cut out for the good of the community as well as of the patient, and probably against the will of the patient."[19] The goal Neville envisioned was one where part-Aborigines (the 'half-caste problem') would be absorbed by the white community and full-blooded Aborigines would "die out as quickly as possible."[20]

The new Commissioner rapidly came to believe that the 'reserve system' was the only solution to the native question. Under Neville the reserves came to dominate Aboriginal policy during the mid-1900s in Western Australia.

Through the 'reserve system' Neville intended to centralise the power of the State over Aborigines. Subsequently the Department came into conflict with the missions who were also attempting to 'uplift' Aboriginal people. By 1921 the only metropolitan church orphanages for Aboriginal children were closed as the Department ceased direct subsidisation. The children at the orphanages were sent to either Carrolup or Moore River reserves. However, Neville's plans to disband the missions were thwarted, particularly in the north, by the Department's lack of funds. The Department simply did not have enough money to replace the 'services' provided for by the missions. As a result an uneasy co-existence was maintained between the missions and the Department.

The reserves, according to Neville, were to be places where Aborigines would "settle down to a new life of peace, contentment and usefulness."[21] In stark contrast to this was the reality of reserve life. At the Moore River Native Settlement, for example:

- Aborigines from all over the State were inappropriately grouped together;
- the young and single were isolated in a compound from the main camp where families lived;
- children removed from their parents had names and birth dates arbitrarily given on arrival;
- parents trying to see or to have their children returned were rejected, while children were told parents had lost interest in them; and
- absconding girls and other offenders were flogged with a cane if under sixteen; if over that age they were imprisoned for up to a fortnight in the 'boob' - a windowless tin shed topped with barbed wire.[22]

Aboriginal poverty was exacerbated by the depression of the 1930s. With less money Aboriginal people found it more difficult to meet the standards set by non-Aboriginal society.[23] Public tolerance of Aborigines waned and segregation was called for. Increasingly part-Aboriginal children were discouraged, and later excluded, from attending State public schools.[24]

1936 Legislation

> I despise the authorities for taking me from my mother and father and denying me of my Aboriginality and denying me of my family.[25]

The *Native Administration Act 1905-1936* (WA) further extended the power of the newly named DNA. Section 8 increased the guardianship powers of the Commissioner to any native child without parent or living relative to the age of twenty one. Section 12 enabled the Minister to cause the removal of Aboriginal people from any place to a reserve, district, institution or hospital. No judicial process was involved and there was no mechanism for appeal.

In 1937 Neville, in his speech at the Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities said:

> The child is taken away from the mother and sometimes never sees her again. Thus these children grow up as white, knowing nothing of their environment ... it really doesn't matter if the mother has half a dozen children.[26]

In 1940 Neville retired from his position as Commissioner, having influenced the lives of Aboriginal people for a generation.

Commissioner Bray 1940-1948

> Being at Wandering mission meant that I lost a lot of my Aboriginal culture. We were never taught anything about Aboriginality ... because Wandering never prepared us for the outside world, I got married at 15. He was 18. He was abusive and used to hit me.[27]

Mr Frank Bray who replaced Neville as Native Affairs Commissioner did not differ markedly in style, approach or policy. In 1940 he praised a superintendent Bisley of the Carrolup Reserve for touring the area and removing "indolent natives and their children ... thereby cleansing the towns and districts of the worst types of natives." The work was said to have had a "wholesome effect."[28]

The missions continued to be on consistently bad terms with the Department. Several new missions opened in the 1930s and 1940s, but it was made clear that the missions were not to pass any criticisms of departmental policy or to make unauthorised experiments in Aboriginal advancement.[29]

Wartime policies and subsequent participation in the United Nations committed Australia to the promotion of racial equality.

Despite this advance, the *Bateman Report*, commissioned by the government in 1947, maintained the tradition of viewing Aborigines as something less than civilised. Bateman concluded that higher education was not necessary, except in rare cases, and that "native parents who will not make any effort to improve their conditions and help their children are not fit to retain them."[30]

Commissioner Middleton 1948-1962

> I remember the welfare and foster home trying to say that I was not Aboriginal. They said I should not be told that I was Aboriginal ... My mum used to write letters saying that she wanted me back but the Department knocked it back. Also I never received the letters from my mother.[31]

Commissioner Middleton oversaw many changes in the DNA. His strong and benevolent guidance resulted in the first Aboriginal employment in the Department and the dismantling of the reserve system. By 1952 both Moore River and Carrolup Reserves had been closed in favour of the missions.

Middleton became a great campaigner in achieving voting rights for Aborigines and Aboriginal access to better education. As a result Aboriginal children were increasingly admitted to State primary schools and upgraded mission schools. In 1952 two hostels were set up in Perth to cater for Aboriginal students completing their junior certificates. At the same time the University of Western Australia Department of Education found that the apparent retardation of Aboriginal students was not due to innate incapacity, but problems of environment and motivation.[32]

Middleton was also responsible for the formal implementation of the assimilation policy towards Aborigines. The assimilation policy was agreed to by the heads of State and Territory Aboriginal Affairs authorities in 1937. However it was not until 1951 that the Federal Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck, secured agreement amongst the States to the adoption of assimilation as official Aboriginal policy.

At the 1951 meeting assimilation was formally spelt out - that all Aborigines:

> shall attain the same manner of living as other Australians, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and being influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties.[33]

The statement created a nationalistic fiction by purporting the existence of a homogeneous and unified Australia of shared interests and beliefs. By analogy Aboriginal people were defined as 'other' - people not in fact part of this nation, this Australia. The RCIADIC concluded that "the (assimilation) formula requested that Aboriginal people stop being culturally distinctive."[34]

Middleton wrote of assimilation:

> the simple need appears to merely be one of mutual adjustment, the native must inevitably adjust himself to our way of life and we must adjust our thoughts, attitudes and actions (to enhance) our understanding of the difficulties they encounter in the complicated business of civilised living.[35]

To Aborigines, assimilation meant considerably more as it brought many new demands regarding children's schooling, clothing and budgeting. If Aboriginal men could not secure and remain in the only employment open to them, menial and unskilled work, they were considered lazy and regarded a failure.

The RCIADIC held that the stated objectives of the assimilation policy provided a harsh ultimatum to Aboriginal society - meet the ideal standards and be examined at any time, or your children will be taken away and made wards of the State.

> If parents failed in the eyes of the State, they lost the right to see their children and to play the parenting role with them. Those implementing the policy told Aboriginal mothers to blame themselves. Anxiety, depression, confusion and most of all anger and despair resulted; as much for the mothers or fathers as for the children taken away ... Children also bore great resentment of their parents for 'letting them go', feeling that they had been unwanted, and not understanding why their parents did not fight to have them

back, or keep in touch with them.[36]

In 1954 the *Native Welfare Act 1954* (WA) was enacted. Although it abolished certain restrictive provisions of the *Native Administration Act 1936* (WA), it reiterated the control of the now DNW over the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Further, the guardianship powers of the Commissioner were maintained.

Section 6 of the 1954 Act stated that the Department was to "provide for the custody, maintenance and education of the children of natives", while Section 6(f) provided that general supervision was to be exercised "as the Minister in his discretion considers most fit to assist in their economic and social assimilation." Section 8 allowed the Commissioner to "direct what person is to have custody of a native child of whom he is a legal guardian."

Van Krieken believes that "the sort of child welfare that Aboriginal families were subjected to, was largely a vehicle for the destruction of Aboriginal cultures."[37]

The 1960s

> I couldn't seem to associate or live with Aboriginal people and I couldn't associate with white people, so I was caught in between. Besides that there was this great confusion and sadness about not being able to ever see my parents and not being able to go to their funeral.[38]

The 1960s marked considerable change in the powers of the State over Aboriginal child welfare. In 1960 the Department proposed a policy that discouraged the breaking up of Aboriginal families during the years of primary school education.[39] However reliance on the missions to provide for removed children continued until the passing of the *Native Welfare Act 1963* (WA).

The 1963 Act repealed all previous Aboriginal and Native Welfare Acts, so finally removing the Commissioner's guardianship powers over Aboriginal children. Although a breakthrough, "in no sense were Aborigines equal citizens ... the change from

'protection' to 'welfare' (being) largely a change of name for the Commissioner and his officers."[40] Aboriginal children were still being removed under the broad provisions of the *Child Welfare Act 1947* (WA).[41]

In 1967 a Federal referendum decided that Aborigines should be recognised as full Australian citizens counted in the census, given the vote and that the power to legislate for Aboriginal people should be deferred to the Commonwealth Parliament.

The 1970s

The State Tonkin Labour Government, elected in 1971, began dismantling legislation which treated Aboriginal people differently. The *Native Welfare Act 1963* (WA) and the *Native (Citizenship Rights) Act 1944* (WA) were repealed and replaced with the *Community Welfare Act 1972* (WA) and the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (WA) - for Aboriginal development, social and political needs.

The AAPA which was set up pursuant to the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (WA) became the Department responsible for Aboriginal affairs.

The AAPA was to promote 'the economical, social and cultural advancement of persons of Aboriginal descent'. The Authority was directed to take Aboriginal views into consideration.[42]

The DCW replaced the CWD in 1972. The new Department became the body empowered by the *Child Welfare Act 1947* (WA) to take control of 'neglected children'.

In 1974 State powers concerning Aborigines were made subject to Federal authority with the establishment of the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

In the same year the *Royal Commission upon All Matters Affecting the Well-Being of Persons of Aboriginal Descent in Western Australia* was established. Its report recommended that Government policy address how Aboriginal people were to be given the opportunity to hold

respected and effective places in society, while preserving their own culture.[43] Further recommendations suggested that Aboriginal people should decide whether to become integrated into society or to follow the tribal lifestyle - the emphasis being on 'Aboriginal direction and little white interference'.[44]

The *Royal Commission Report in Aboriginal Affairs* discussed the DCW. As to "the unpleasant task of having children removed from the home environment" the report decided that the Department's policy should avoid removal of Aboriginal children from home and make efforts to assist domestic arrangements:

> The Department has had enough experience to be familiar with the results of parental deprivation of young children and is consequently extremely reluctant to remove any child from its parents. Removal of the children must be taken only as a last resort. The European yard-stick of suitable physical living conditions is simply not applied and removal of children is resorted to only if a child's health or life was in serious jeopardy.[45]

The Department was said to be encouraging missions to reduce centralism and instead to use cottages or 'scatter homes.' The 'normal family model' was encouraged, rather than institutionalisation. One of the reasons given for this model was to make them more amenable to family visits.[46]

The Commonwealth Government's policy towards Aborigines was altered in 1972 to 'self-determination.' It was further changed by a Coalition Government in 1975 to 'self-management.' The RCIADIC found no adequate structures to support such policies have ever been established; "their meaning has never been fully defined, and appropriate mechanisms for implementing such policies have never been set in place."[47]

Throughout the 1970's there began a trend towards de-institutionalisation, and some missions, such as St Francis Xavier Mission, were handed over to Aboriginal people. Some Aboriginal organisations were set up in the 1970's to be controlled by Aboriginal people. These were: the Aboriginal Medical service (1973); the Aboriginal Legal Service (1975) and the Aboriginal Child Care Agency (1978). The latter organisation was established to develop

links between Aboriginal parents, children and the Department of Community Welfare.[48]

The 1980's

A report commissioned by the DCW entitled the *Children in Limbo Report* was released in 1980. It stated that 57% of all children in the care of the Department were Aboriginal. Of these, two thirds were placed with non-Aboriginal people.[49]

A DCS (name changed to DCD in September 1992) review, to look into the operation of the DCW, was commissioned in 1983. Its report *For the Well-being of the People* was published in 1984 but did not deal with Aboriginal matters due to lack of resources.[50] This is despite the fact that "50% of the Department of Community Welfare's clientele are Aboriginal."[51]

Following the large numbers of deaths of Aboriginal people while in police custody or prison, the RCIADIC was established jointly by the Federal and State Governments in 1987. Of the 32 WA deaths considered in the report at least 19 involved Aborigines who had spent time in a mission.[52]

Commissioner Dodson in his report as part of the RCIADIC found that the assimilation policy, with its removal of children from parents and institutionalisation, was the cause of many current problems in Aboriginal society. The Commissioner went on to find that policies carried out by the (then) DCS continued to keep Aboriginal people "marginalised and oppressed" and prevented empowerment of Aboriginal people.[53]

Statistics compiled in 1989, quoted in Commissioner Dodson's report, showed that of 838 children in substitute care, 44% were Aboriginal, despite Aboriginal people consisting of only 2.5% of the total population. It concluded that statistics such as these 'lend weight to claims that an institutionalisation process is still being experienced by Aboriginal people.'[54] Quoting Helen Gamble, Commissioner Dodson went on, "it seems that to date there has been no generation of Aboriginal children which has been free of the threat of arbitrary removal by the State."[55]

The Commissioner stated that the welfare service approach must cease and be replaced with a "culturally appropriate framework facilitating self-determination."[56]

The 1990's

The response to the RCIADIC by the DCD was recorded in the *Aboriginal Plan* of 1993. In the *Plan* the Department committed itself to "addressing problems caused by its past policies and practices related to Aboriginal people." The stated policy was self determination and self management and this was to be achieved through increased Aboriginal employment in the Department, increased Aboriginal consultation and increased funding of Aboriginal-managed services.[57]

In 1994 the Taskforce for Aboriginal Social Justice was established. The resulting report admitted that "[H]istorically, Aboriginal people were subjected to massive welfare interference on a scale not experienced by any other group in Australia"; and that "the consequences of historic policies of assimilation and widespread removal of children from their families are evident in contemporary family dislocation, parenting problems, child abuse and neglect."[58]

Statistics published in the *Report of the Taskforce on Aboriginal Social Justice* revealed that, although Aboriginal people constituted only 2.7% of the total population, Aboriginal children constitute 33% of the 2733 children in substitute care and 21% of the 594 wards of the DCD.

The Report recommended that:

- the DCD implement programs to increase Aboriginal employment in the Department;
- an Aboriginal policy and programs unit be established;
- the Department consider establishing an Aboriginal Board of Review regarding major child welfare decisions;
- family members and community groups become involved in Aboriginal child placement; and

- more support and recognition of traditional Aboriginal child rearing practices be provided by the Department.[59]

There are now a number of Aboriginal managed non-government agencies which have a major role in Aboriginal child placement. These include Yorganup Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Manguri and Djooraminda. These agencies work to preserve Aboriginal families and to implement the Aboriginal Child Placement Policy of keeping Aboriginal children within the Aboriginal community.

The policy and practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families has always been met with great opposition from Aboriginal people. The severity of restrictions on individual and family freedom, and the abuses against human rights and dignity still smoulder in the depths of Aboriginal psychology.

> You have turned our land into a desolate place.
> We stumble along with a half white mind.
> Where are we,
> What are we?
> Not a recognised race ...
> There is a desert ahead and a desert behind.[60]

Endnotes

1. Simone, born 1961, `taken away' aged 6.

2. R Van Krieken, 144, *Children and the State*, Allen and Unwin, 1991, p144.

3. R Berndt (ed.) *Aborigines of the West*, University of Western Australia Press, 1980, p.352.

4. Commissioner E Johnston, *National Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, Vol. 2, AGPS, 1991, p.501.

5. P Seaman, *The Aboriginal Land Inquiry*, WA Government Printer, 1984, p89.

6. The *Australian Colonies Government Act* 1850 (UK), SS.3, 6 and 12.

7. A Haebich, *For Their Own Good*, University of Western Australia Press, 1988, p57.

8. J Prinsep, *Commissioner for Native Affairs Annual Report*, Aborigines Department 1902, p67.

9. P Biskup, *Not Slaves, Not Citizens*, University of Queensland Press, 1973, p61.

10. *ibid*, p61.

11. West Australia, Parliamentary Debates, 25: R 588, in Biskup, *op.cit*, p142.

12. West Australian, Parliamentary Debates, 28: 425-429, in Haebich, *op.cit*, p82.

13. Haebich, *ibid*, p84.

14. Western Australian Government, *Western Australian Government Gazette*, 19 February 1989, p588.

15. Haebich, *op.cit*, p111.

16. Van Krieken, *op.cit*, p84.

17. GC Bolton, `Black and White After 1897', in CT Stannage (ed.) *A New History of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, 1982, p138.

18. Especially Section 12.

19. Bolton, *op.cit*, p138.

20. Haebich, *op.cit*, p150.

21. Bolton, *op.cit*, p139.

22. Haebich, *op.cit*, 1988, pp208-215, and Bolton, *op.cit*, p139.

23. Aborigines were entitled to a much lower sustenance rate than white unemployed. Bolton, *op.cit.*, p143.

24. *ibid*, p149.

25. Jacob, born 1940, `taken away', aged 3.

26. Refer to Appendix A for the full speech.

27. Oreida, born 1945, `taken away', aged 10.

28. F Bray, *Commissioner for Native Affairs Annual Report*, DNA, 1940, p8.

29. Biskup, *op.cit*, 1973, pp172-178, 214-219.

30. *ibid*, p231.

31. Liam, born 1956, `taken away' aged 5.

32. F Goddard, "The Retardation of Native Children in the South-West of Western Australia, and its Possible Amelioration by Better Housing", unpublished, *B.Ed. Thesis*, University of Western Australia, 1954, AH West, "The Education of the Native Child in Western Australia", unpublished, *B.Ed. Thesis*, University of Western Australia, 1953.

33. L Lippman, *Generations of Resistance*, Longman Cheshire, 1981, p38.

34. Commissioner E Johnston, *op.cit*, p511.

35. *Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs*, 1958, p5.

36. Commissioner E Johnston, RCIADIC, *op.cit*, p513.

37. Van Krieken, *op.cit*, p132.

38. Reece, born 1965, `taken away' aged 2.

39. GC Bolton, *op.cit*, p159.

40. JR Huelin, *On the Road to Equality*, United Nations Association of Australia, 1989.

41. *ibid.*

42. *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act*, S12.

43. Mr Justice Furnell, *Royal Commission Upon All Matters Affecting the Well-Being of Persons of Aboriginal Descent in Western Australia*, Western Australia Government Printer, 1974, p45.

44. *ibid*, pp467-468.

45. *ibid*, p259.

46. *ibid*, p261.

47. Commissioner PL Dodson, *Regional Report of Inquiry into Underlying Issues in Western Australia of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, Vol. 1, AGPS, 1991, p37.

48. *ibid*, p40.

49. D McCotter, *Children in Limbo Report*, WA Department for Community Welfare, 1981, p861.

50. Department of Community Services, *For the Well-being of the People*, WA Government Printer, 1994.

51. D McCotter, *op.cit*, p42.

52. Commissioner DJ O'Dea, *Regional Report of Inquiry into Individual Deaths in Custody in Western Australia of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, Vol. 2, AGPS, 1991, Appendix 1.

53. PL Dodson, *op.cit*, p491.

54. *ibid*, p508.

55. *ibid*, p514.

56. *ibid*, p497.

57. Government of Western Australia, *Aboriginal Plan 1993*, WA Government Printer, 1993, p40.

58. Western Australian Taskforce on Aboriginal Social Justice, *Report of the Taskforce on Aboriginal Social Justice*, April 1994, WA Government Printer, 1994, pp494-495.

59. *ibid*, pp506-507.

60. Jack Davis, excerpt from "*Desolation*", Perth, 1970.

CHAPTER THREE

EFFECTS OF REMOVING CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES

> I feel very bitter, hurt and confused over what has happened to me especially being removed from my family. I have tried to commit suicide on a number of occasions and I blame the Welfare Department and my foster mother, who never told me about my mother's death until much later. I was never allowed to mix with Aboriginals and I have no Aboriginal cultural identity[1].

Introduction

The effects of the removal of children policies have been extensive and continue to have profound repercussions on Aboriginal people, their families and communities throughout Western Australia. This section of the report deals with the major effects of the removal policies based on the histories of those who were removed or who had their children taken away.

This chapter deals with the way similar policies have affected Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia. As a result of similar policies, indigenous children were also removed from their families and communities in North America, which has enabled a comparison of the impact of removal policies in the United States of America and Canada with that in Australia. The Aboriginal Legal Service has found a consistency among these countries in the way the systematic removal of children from families had a devastating effect on indigenous populations; on individuals; on families; on communities and on culture. It has also had profound effects on the relationship between indigenous people and the dominant society.

People have suffered effects on a number of levels, all of which interact and often compound each other. First, those removed have been affected at a deeply personal, psychological level. Secondly, they have been affected by being denied access to their culture. Finally the

removal and institutionalisation has affected the way people are able to relate and cope in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society. People have raised these issues on an individual basis but, because so many people have suffered, there is also a cumulative effect. The removal policies have resulted in widespread mental distress in the Aboriginal community. The policies attacked the very fabric of Aboriginal society as family and kin relationships are highly valued. There has been an extensive and devastating disruption to the transmission of Aboriginal culture from one generation to the next.

The psychological effects that come up continuously in the stories in this report is the impact of having been separated from parents and family and from being brought up in an institution without love and affection. The children who were taken away were denied the right to their mother and father and brothers and sisters, as well as their extended family. In an Aboriginal context this has important consequences for Aboriginal identity and self-esteem which are intimately linked with family and kin. As a result those removed experienced enormous difficulties in adjusting to life in the wider community, finding their families and in coping in an unfamiliar and often racist, unwelcoming world. In some cases this has resulted in continuing psychological and/or psychiatric problems ranging from self-destructive behaviour to suicide.

Many people have expressed that they were denied their Aboriginality and their culture as a result of being taken away and placed in a mission or institution. This has affected their sense of Aboriginal identity in that they were socialised to non-Aboriginal ways, and told to forget about their Aboriginal background (if they knew they were Aboriginal to start with). While growing up they were denied access to the many and varied facets which comprise a group's cultural identity such as language, cultural knowledge and information, and links with family and kin.

In many ways the removal of children also caused or exacerbated family dysfunction and the cycle of problems which flow from that such as domestic violence, substance abuse, involvement in crime and further institutionalisation or imprisonment. Some of those who were brought up in an institutional setting have also experienced severe difficulties in developing parenting skills which in some cases has led to a second generation of children

being removed. Many people have commented on the difficulties they have faced in coping with authority after being brought up in an authoritarian institutional setting. Other effects of institutionalisation that have been noted are inadequacy of education and preparation for living independently in the outside world.

Finally, in some instances, institutionalisation meant being subjected to physical and sexual abuse which has led to ongoing problems in adult life. In some instances children were denied proper medical treatment while living in institutions, the effects of which are still experienced today. Other people developed alcohol or other substance dependencies which are attributable to the psychological stresses caused either by being removed or having their children taken away.

These issues are discussed in more detail below.

Psychological Effects

(i) Effects on parents whose children were removed

Traditionally women in Aboriginal society had a very important role in nurturing and caring for children. Although bringing up children was often shared by relatives other than the biological parents, the mother had an integral role in child rearing.[2] Parents who have their children removed experience considerable trauma and distress.

There has been little written about the grief experienced by parents in these circumstances. However, there has been some research on parents whose child has died and on mothers who have relinquished their children through adoption. The grief reaction to the death of a child is most intense compared to the loss of a parent or spouse and is accompanied by feelings, of despair and guilt.[3]

A report presented at the Third Australian Conference on Adoption (1982) stated that the effects of relinquishing a child for adoption on the mother are very serious and may last for years. In the study 50% of parents said they continued to have feelings of pain, loss and

mourning over the adopted child for many years.[4] There is considerable evidence that bereavement increases the risk of death or illness. Similarly, evidence suggests that relinquishing mothers suffer a greater degree of ill-health than mothers who retain their children. Research suggests that the ill-effects on health are increased by a high degree of guilt or attachment to the child, and a low level of social support for the mother at the time of relinquishment. It has also been argued that relinquishment of a child is likely to lead to depression.[5]

It is important to note that the research involved studies of women who voluntarily decided to relinquish a child for adoption. This contrasts starkly with Aboriginal people who had their children forcibly removed. It would be expected that the effects on Aboriginal parents would be exacerbated by forcible removal. Aboriginal parents expressed that they experienced intense feelings of loss, grief and bereavement following the removal of their child. These effects have lasted for many years. It is likely that there will be a high level of depression and health problems related to having a child removed.

In some instances children were removed under the various *Native Welfare Acts*. Parents had no right to intervene in the removal process as they no longer retained guardianship of the child. However in later years, when Aboriginal children were removed pursuant to the various *Child Welfare Acts*, parents were entitled to exercise a right of appeal. In most instances, however, children were removed without any regard to due process. Even if parents were present at Court, the matter proceeded without their involvement, often without their understanding of what was going on. As it turned out, 'the Welfare' was taking away their children and there was nothing they could do. Parents often felt angry, unworthy and extremely powerless. Some parents lost faith in their ability to adequately raise their children. This resulted in some parents voluntarily admitting their children to missions and institutions. In some instances the removal of children created a downward spiral of alcohol abuse, other children were neglected, and the relationships of parents broke down under the strain.

In 1978 the United States Congress inquired into the wholesale separation of Indian children from their families and tribes and placement in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes and

boarding schools.[6] Among other things it found a lack of due process in the removal and placement of children where many parents were effectively excluded from the process.[7] The effects on parents and families were described as follows:

> Because the family is the most fundamental economic, educational, health-care unit in society and the centre of an individual's emotional life, assaults on Indian families help cause the conditions that characterise those cultures of poverty where large numbers of people feel hopeless, powerless and unworthy.
>
> Parents who fear they may lose their children may have their confidence so undermined that their ability to function successfully as parents is impaired, with the result that they lose their children. When the welfare department removes the children, it also removes much of the parents' incentive to struggle against the conditions under which they live.[8]

Similar to the Aboriginal experience, the removal of Indian children effectively destroyed the family unit. Parents invariably separated, and problems of alcoholism, unemployment and emotional stress were exacerbated.[9] Removal created enormous grief and "left open wounds of hurt and anger that eventually consumed [the parents]. Many gave up hope and incorporated the sentence of worthlessness that was handed down by the court".[10]

(ii) Effects of being separated from parents

With heart-breaking regularity people telling their personal histories lamented the fact that they had been deprived of the love and affection most people took for granted as children. As a result they felt they had been robbed of their childhood. It was almost impossible for them to comprehend how government authorities could have acted so cruelly to take small children away from their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters.

From examining the literature it is clear that the western world has had a good understanding of the serious consequences of child removal since the 1940s. From 1935 there was increasing understanding and recognition by child psychologists that children who were separated from their parents and institutionalised suffered severe deprivation and disadvantage

which could adversely affect their normal development and mental health.

In 1951 John Bowlby, a child psychiatrist, produced a report for the World Health Organisation called *Maternal Care and Mental Health* which drew together much of the research that had been conducted in this area from 1937 to 1943. He developed a theory of 'maternal deprivation' which is still widely accepted today. His basic premise was "that it is essential for mental health that the infant and the young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute)."[11]

In developing the theory Bowlby examined the work of child psychiatrists, psychologists and researchers who had examined various aspects of the psychological impact of removing children from their families.[12]

Some of the effects that Bowlby found likely to occur as a result of 'maternal deprivation' included:

- inability to make more than superficial relationships;
- no real feeling or emotional response to situations where it is normal to respond;
- inaccessibility, cut off from people wanting to help;
- lack of concentration at school, poor school performance;
- stealing, deceit and evasion;
- bed wetting; and
- anxiety and depression

Bowlby found that 'maternal deprivation' could have long term effects following severe deprivation, affecting at least some people permanently. Such effects included personality disorders in severe cases and in less severe cases other conditions such as maladjusted personality conditions, anxiety and depression. Another serious problem he recognised for separated children was the difficulty of successfully parenting their own children.

Bowlby's work has received a considerable degree of attention over the past 40 years and has formed the basis for much on-going work in the area of child development. While aspects

of his work have been discredited there has been almost unanimous acceptance of the damaging effects of deprivation and disadvantage through separation and institutionalisation on child development.[13] As a result of the work of Bowlby and others, the western world took a much closer look at the practice of institutionalising children. However what was good for non-indigenous children of countries such as England, Canada, the United States and Australia did not apply equally to indigenous children, and the removal and institutionalisation of those children continued.

While very few of the people who provided their histories for this submission were solely adopted or fostered as children, many people told of spending periods of time with foster families between periods in the institution or mission. The people who experienced foster care were moved around, being sent back to the institution if the arrangement didn't work out, mostly not knowing why they were being moved from one place to another.

Research shows that it is not only separation from a child's family which may have detrimental effects, but that the moving of a child from one home to another is traumatic and disruptive. Bowlby's work again formed the basis for research which examined the harmful effects of temporary placements of children who have been taken from their families. Later work supported the need for children to have a continuous and stable relationship with an adult caregiver in order to develop adequately.[14] This research stated that the harms that may result from a series of temporary placements are as follows:

> First, each time a child is separated attachments may be broken generating insecurity and an inability to form future attachments. The inability to form attachments may permanently impair a child's ability to form love relationships. Second, subjecting children to multiple placements destroys continuities that are important to the child's development. For example, with each new placement a child must adjust to new adult expectations about appropriate behaviour, a new physical environment and perhaps a new 'sibling', peers, school etc. Third, a child left in foster care without a permanent home may be psychologically damaged by her uncertain status. This may retard her socialisation and cognitive development.[15]

It is argued that breaking of attachments and multiple placements causes long-term harms such as delinquent behaviour, inability to form relationships, and mental illness as well as

short-term trauma for the child.[16] The child is also likely to experience problems with developing its own identity.[17]

There have been some concerns expressed both in Australia and overseas that the notion of 'stable and continuous care' does not take sufficient consideration of child-rearing practices in indigenous communities where responsibility for bringing up the children may be shared. This has led to inappropriate removal of indigenous children from their families and communities because of the lack of cultural awareness by authorities.[18] However further work on the concept of 'maternal deprivation' has indicated that there need not be an exclusive relationship with one person (the mother) and that children can be successfully parented by a number of people if there is continuity in the relationships.[19] The difference in the fostering situation is that the child is cared for by a succession of substitute mothers which results in repeated attachments and separations to the mother/child relationship. It does not take long for a child to be not only unwilling, but in many cases unable, to make new attachments to the foster parents. This may in itself perpetuate the difficulties with foster placements and result in the placement breaking down.[20]

Children who have been removed and placed in institutions or foster families are affected not only by the trauma of being separated from their families but they also have had to adjust to an environment which was totally different to the one they previously knew. Upon being placed in an institution or a foster home each child had to start from scratch to learn to survive in an environment which was alien emotionally, socially and culturally. It is not surprising that the issue of identity is problematic for many Aborigines who were taken away.

(iii) Identity

Personal identity is a complex notion and consists of perceptions about oneself as an individual, and as a social being, i.e. in relation to the world. For a child to develop a positive self-image he or she needs the emotional and psychological well-being which will foster feelings of self-esteem and confidence. The trauma of separation from family and placement in an institution affects the capacity of a person to develop a sense of belonging

and of being wanted, which has a detrimental impact on their self-esteem and confidence and ultimately their sense of identity.[21]

In addition to the enormous barriers that institutionalisation and foster-care practices place in the way of developing a healthy identity, Aboriginal children placed in institutions or a series of institutions and non-Aboriginal foster homes also had to cope with the issue of their cultural and racial identity. A person's racial identity is integral to his or her personal identity.

Children who have been separated from their parents, regardless of whether they have been placed in an institution, fostered or adopted, experience heightened concern and anxiety over the issue of identity, particularly during adolescence.[22]

However children who have been adopted trans-racially experience additional anxiety and in some cases confusion over the issue of their racial or cultural identity. The literature is illuminating on the issues involved in the development of cultural or racial identity. While some researchers have found little empirical evidence to support the theory that trans-racial adoption leads to problems with racial or cultural identity, there is substantial evidence which suggests that children who are isolated from their original community and whose racial and cultural origins are not reinforced by their adoptive parents, school and community may have difficulties with their racial identity particularly in adolescence and early adulthood.[23]

A psychiatrist, Joseph Westermeyer, who studied the effects of placement of American Indian children in non-Indian homes, found a condition present in these children which he labelled 'the apple syndrome', red on the outside and white on the inside. In these cases he found the children's Indian identity weak or even absent. Children who identified as Indian, either through continued contact with the tribal group or through contact with other Indian children, even in the boarding school environment, did not develop the syndrome. Those children without that contact experienced severe identity confusion as adolescents; had higher suicidal tendencies; had trouble forming intimate relationships; had trouble with violence, theft, truancy, and substance abuse and developed a mistrust of other Indian people.[24]

There has been little research on the issue of trans-racial adoption or placement of Aboriginal children despite an increase in the adoption and fostering of Aboriginal children to white families during the 1950s and '60s. The appropriateness of trans-racial adoption of Aboriginal children has been questioned in respect of the likelihood that it will frustrate the development of their personality and confuse their identity.[25] It is argued that the research undertaken on the effects of placement of Aboriginal children fails to provide objective answers. The evidence from cross-cultural studies in other contexts suggests that adolescent Aborigines will experience confusion and maladjustment because they must choose between conflicting role models embodying different values, expectations and behaviour.[26] Anecdotal evidence from Aborigines who have experienced an identity crisis as a result of repeated fostering with white families or institutionalisation, supports the claim of the negative impact of trans-racial adopting.[27] The research and controversy on trans-racial adoption highlights the difficulties that Aboriginal people have experienced in developing their racial identity when placed in a non-Aboriginal environment, be it a white foster home, a mission or other institution.

Commissioner Johnston in the *National Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* discussed the connection between the issue of identity, self-esteem and the institutionalisation of Aboriginal children.

Commissioner Johnston was unable to say what the exact effect of the institutionalisation of Aboriginal children was and commented on the lack of specific research.[28] However the RCIADIC appeared to accept that the removal policies had a major disruptive effect on the transmission of culture, on Aboriginal processes of social control and on the relationships between persons and between generations and genders.[29] The RCIADIC also clearly accepted the detrimental impact of institutionalisation on the lives of individuals who died in custody. The *National Report* refers to Commissioner Wootten's *Report on the Inquiry into the Death of Glenn Clark* who was removed from his mother at the age of four:

> From that point on, Glenn's life follows the tragic and well worn path of many Aborigines brutally separated from their families and thrown into an alien environment, cut off from family warmth, maternal care and any sense of identity. Torn from his mother at the age of four, his behaviour became

> so disturbed that the staff at the receiving home threatened to resign if this small child was not removed.[30]

Many of the people who have provided their personal histories for this submission have struggled with the issue of their identity, expressing the view that they have been denied their Aboriginality and Aboriginal heritage:

> One striking feature of the mission days was that we were never taught anything about Aboriginal culture or Aboriginal language. It never arose that we were Aboriginal[31].

Aboriginal culture is far removed from non-Aboriginal culture and the values, knowledge and information that are contained in Aboriginal traditions are almost foreign to non-Aboriginal society. Children removed from their families and institutionalised were denied access to Aboriginal culture and everything it encompassed. They were denied the right to their culture and heritage. In the missions and institutions in which people were placed they were not provided with any information about their Aboriginality and were brought up in a strict non-Aboriginal institutional environment where none of the staff were Aboriginal, where visits from family members were discouraged or forbidden and where children were effectively told that being Aboriginal was bad.

During the inquiry of the RCIADIC into Tim Murray's death, one witness's evidence discussed the difficulty of any child brought up in white suburbia having pride and dignity about his or her Aboriginality:

> Unless pride in being Aboriginal is instilled into the child at an early age so as to counter the pressure brought to bear by the combined forces of white suburbia, an Aboriginal child will bow to instincts of survival and begin to deny his Aboriginality. As well as the pride of being Aboriginal it is vital that the child should be made aware of and be recognised as possessing qualities which are different to non-Aboriginal people, and not inferior. This is a process which really needs to be commenced in the informative years, ideally at pre-school. It is vital that the pride and dignity be encouraged both at home

> and at school. If the Aboriginal child begins to deny his Aboriginality a very troubled life lays ahead for him. This fact is most often seen in the lives of people who were taken away from their Aboriginal families when still young and brought up by non-Aboriginal people.[32]

The loss of cultural identity was the key concern of the United States Congress inquiry into the removal of Indian children from their families and tribes. Legislation which resulted established standards for the placement of Indian children which recognised and reflected the unique values of Indian culture.[33] During the congressional hearings evidence was given on the damaging effects of removal policies on the survival of the Indian tribes, with children unable to return to the Indian reservations to live in Indian society because they lacked the necessary skills to survive.[34] Indians who had been brought up in the boarding-school system also experienced severe problems with identity confusion which contributed to their problems in adult life.[35]

It has been stated that although institutionalised indigenous children suffer severe emotional deprivation, they at least have the support of the group which gives a sense of identity. Carolyn Attneave, Director of American Indian Studies and Professor of Psychology, University of Washington, Seattle, expressed the problem in this way:

> The foster child and the adopted child pose special problems, for they must forever try to integrate themselves into different racial and cultural milieus, as well as resolve their personal identity problems. The boarding-school-reared adult at least has group support for his identity, even though he may be short changed on life experiences.[36]

The Aboriginal person who is brought up with non-Aboriginal values and without any reinforcement or recognition of their Aboriginality may suffer an identity crisis when faced with non-Aboriginal attitudes in the outside world, where racist attitudes are prevalent. They may be spurned and rejected because they are Aboriginal yet have values and expectations which set them apart from Aboriginal people. Thus they feel like they don't belong anywhere.[37]

(iv) Problems of adjustment

> We were inculcated into a Christian religion and my Aboriginal culture or history was non-existent. That was completely irrelevant to our lifestyles at that stage. It was really an understatement to say that we were not taught anything about our Aboriginal culture or history. The fact is that our Aboriginality was never mentioned, it was never a consideration.
>
> ... One of the greatest travesties I think that Sister Kates has ever committed on children that have been there, including myself, is that they never prepared us for the fact that we had to one day leave the home and go into the outside world and deal with the fact that we were Aboriginal and how we would communicate with our own families and with the white community as Aboriginals. That is something that was very neglected by Sister Kates and they basically just ignored the fact that we were Aboriginal. We were being brought up as whites and to live in a white society.[38]

The Aborigines who provided their personal histories told of the difficulties experienced in trying to adjust to life outside the institution or mission. Most said they simply did not have the life skills to cope. On top of this many had no home to speak of, nowhere to go and no job. Some had so much trouble surviving outside the institution they ended up going back time and time again although they despised the place. At the same time they were dealing with the stresses of trying to live in society, without having any of that society's life skills. They were culturally adrift in a society that was endemically racist toward them.

Since Erving Goffman's study in 1961 on 'total' institutions there has been almost universal acceptance of the profound effects of institutionalisation on 'inmates.'[39] He defines a 'total' institution as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals are cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time and together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life. This includes prisons, mental hospitals, concentrations camps and institutions such as boarding schools, homes for orphaned or neglected children and missions.[40] Goffman's theory centres around the notion that the inmate is systematically mortified. This means that he or she is subjected to a series of humiliations, degradations and a severe regime in which discipline is an important element.[41] Because the institution requires a high degree of co-operation from inmates, usually

individuals will be punished until they become suitably humble and deferent. This involves a will-breaking exercise and results in a loss of identity.[42] The inmate may be further debased by acts which violate an individual's personal space. Examples of this are being required to eat unclean food; no privacy when doing one's ablutions; having to wear dirty clothing. The most extreme examples being subjected to sexual molestation or rape.[43] Basically a person loses any sense of control over his or her life which results in acute psychological stress.[44]

Goffman states that, to survive, the inmate must learn to adapt to the institutional life. Different people adapt in different ways but most take one of four approaches, or a combination of them. The first is to withdraw from the situation which means the individual ceases involvement, as far as possible, in interactive events.[45] The second approach is to adopt an intransigent line challenging the institution and refusing to cooperate. This is usually an initial and temporary phase. The third is being colonised so that the inmate gets maximum satisfaction out of institutional life and is not motivated to leave. The fourth is conversion in which the inmate takes on the official view of himself and tries to act out the perfect inmate.[46] It appears that inmates in prisons and other institutions such as mental hospitals who have been brought up in other institutions as children do not have to adapt much at all because they have perfected the adaptive techniques so much so that it may be difficult to survive outside the total institution.[47] In fact while most inmates look forward to leaving the total institution many experience considerable anxiety about being able to survive in the outside world. For some there is good reason for this as the whole process of institutionalisation involves stripping or denying the inmate of the skills for independent living and decision-making, essential for life in outside society but which are an anathema to life in an institution. Thus once free they find it very difficult to cope. They have not acquired skills for independent living and the privilege system which rules life in the institution is of no avail outside. This again can lead to a high level of stress and frustration.[48]

The effects of institutionalisation on those who contributed their stories, varied considerably. Some spoke of 'drifting' and not being able to form long-term relationships. Others experienced difficulties in fitting into their Aboriginal communities. For some it affected

their ability to stay in stable employment. Some people experienced particular difficulty dealing with people who were in positions of authority because of the reactions they had internalised over many years. Others got caught up in the criminal justice system spending periods of time in prison, an institution similar to those of their own experience.

One of the aims of the missions was to train Aboriginal children for life in white society and yet the very act of institutionalising the children denied them the life experiences necessary for successful functioning in that same society. Instead the missions and institutions produced people who had been socialised to survive in an institution and so were often maladjusted in their adult life.

(v) Mental health problems

The personal histories of those removed as children, in conjunction with research on mental health, reveal the extent of the mental trauma that those removed, their families and communities have had to struggle and cope with. This mental trauma can be directly related to the impact of taking Aboriginal children away from their families and communities. However, these mental health issues must be understood in the context of compounding historical and socio-economic factors, which interact on the individual and the communities. Aboriginal people have expressed considerable wariness and scepticism in Australia, as have indigenous people overseas, of the western psychiatric model with its emphasis on individual symptomology and its inability to understand health in a cultural and sociological framework where links between the mind, body and spirit are indivisible. It is with this framework in mind that mental health is discussed. The effects of the removal policies on individuals must be seen as inextricably connected to the effects on family and community.

Children who have the opportunity to make strong bonds of attachment to parents who provide consistent care and nurturing, are likely to develop into well adjusted adults. Children who are denied the opportunity to develop such attachments or who experience breaks in these attachments may suffer adverse effects on their psychological development. Although some people manage to survive such childhood traumas relatively unscathed, there are many studies which establish the continuing detrimental impact that these experiences

may have in adulthood. Adults who have had a childhood which involved removal from parents, separation from family, institutionalisation and multiple foster placements are much more likely to develop maladjusted personalities. Some of the potential long-term consequences include serious psychiatric disorders such as personality disorders and other conditions such as depression and anxiety.[49]

The evidence also suggests that the heavy toll on the mental health of individuals is only one effect of the removal of children policies - another is on the mental well-being of Aboriginal communities. In recent years there has been an increasing understanding and acknowledgment in Australia of the mental health implications of the removal policies. The reports of the RCIADIC[50] and the Mental Illness Inquiry of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission[51] discuss the extent of the damage caused by the forced removal of Aboriginal children. The Mental Illness Inquiry was told by many witnesses that the removal policies were a major factor in the mental distress experienced by Aboriginal people. One witness said:

> If you talk to Aboriginal people, the themes [that] will come up again and again are the kidnapping of children, dispossession, economic discrimination, political discrimination. I have no doubt that these factors together have eroded the well-being of most Aboriginal individuals....such that they are more vulnerable to a variety of stresses and that would probably lead to high psychiatric morbidity.[52]

The *New South Wales Aboriginal Mental Health Report* of 1991 found that the likelihood of a person experiencing a mental health problem and/or mental disorder was exacerbated by a childhood history of separation from parents, neglect or institutionalisation.[53] Similarly a study by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service found that 54% of all respondents had a psychiatric disorder and of these, over 50% had been separated from their parents and more than 25% had been brought up outside their communities in foster homes or institutions.[54]

The Mental Illness Inquiry also stressed the need to understand the mental health problems of Aboriginal people in the historical and social context and the effect of colonisation and the removal of children policies on the collective psyche of Aboriginal communities. Dr Ernest

Hunter, a psychiatrist with the Aboriginal Medical Service in NSW, referred to two dimensions of Aboriginal mental illness; those who have diagnosable mental disorders (recognised by the medical profession), and another very large group of people who are suffering from 'mental distress' reflected depressive symptoms, substance abuse and suicidal behaviour.[55]

Because so much of this mental distress is 'acted out' in the social context most of the underlying grief, poor self-image and psychological distress is not recognised nor treated. Both the Mental Illness Inquiry and the RCIADIC believed this 'acting out' resulted in anti-social and self-destructive behaviour. In addition they recognised that the link between the underlying mental distress and the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people is reflected by high levels of domestic violence, substance abuse, child neglect and other forms of anti-social and self-destructive behaviour. These behaviours have their roots in the powerlessness of Aboriginal communities and the high levels of stress within them.[56]

Both inquiries also acknowledged the connection between the removal policies and the effects on families, particularly in relation to children who were raised in institutions having to confront problems in parenting. This may cause a trans-generational pattern of family dysfunction and associated psychological and emotional problems. The RCIADIC in particular commented on the way in which family distress and family breakdown may be decisive in the initiation of self-destructive behaviour.[57] In many instances the results of such behaviour are 'treated' by the criminal justice system rather than through appropriate mental health care. It appears that an increasingly common outcome of such self-destructive behaviour is serious self-injury and suicide.

(vi) Self-injury and suicide

Several of the participants in this submission have given histories of being treated for psychiatric disorders including attempted suicide. Both the RCIADIC and the Mental Illness Inquiry were concerned about the increasing incidence of self-injury and suicide in Aboriginal communities.

Of the 99 deaths investigated by the RCIADIC, 43 had experienced separation from their families through intervention of the State or by mission organisations or other institutions.[58] In Western Australia, 19 of the 32 persons who died in custody had spent time as a child separated from their family in an institution, mission or fostered with white families.

The RCIADIC examined how situational factors, including family distress and conflict, may lead to an individual committing acts of self-violence in what was described as 'retroflective anger', anger turned inward. The RCIADIC explained how retroflective anger may occur in a cultural context in which it is considered wrong to vent negative feelings towards certain family members and kin.[59] It was also suggested that self-violence and domestic violence may be deflected anger that would otherwise be directed at persons in authority.[60] This takes on a particular significance in relation to deaths in custody, especially if the person had a childhood history of separation from family and institutionalisation.

The RCIADIC explained that traditionally suicide was not found in Aboriginal societies.[61] However the incidence of self-inflicted deaths has escalated dramatically since the 1980s.[62] This increase is paralleled by the increase in self-inflicted deaths documented for other minority indigenous groups in the Pacific and North America.[63]

A South Australian study *Taking Control*, which reported on self-destructive behaviour in indigenous communities, found similar patterns of family disorganisation, alcoholism, high unemployment rates, child neglect and abuse and abandonment of traditional way of life between Australian Aborigines and American Indians. In both societies the indigenous culture had been devalued and disregarded causing injury to the society and its relationship to the individual, "one consequence of which is the tendency to commit suicide and other forms of self-destructive behaviour".[64] It should be noted that the connection between removal of children and self-destructive behaviour is well established. William Byler's paper which was presented to the US Congressional inquiry into the removal of American Indian children from their families in the 1970s, noted the significant increase in the rate of Indian suicide compared to the rest of the nation. Among the social characteristics of an Indian person at risk of committing suicide was that "he has lived with a number of ineffective or inappropriate parental substitutes because of family disruption ... He has spent time in

boarding schools and has been moved from one to another". Byler concludes that in an effort to make Indian children white, they are destroyed.[65]

There has recently been considerable attention in Canada on the impact of the removal of indigenous children from their families as having major repercussions on the mental health of indigenous people, both individually and as a community. A report from the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, examining the increasing incidence of suicide among Aboriginal people, talked not only of the inner despair of individuals, which may lead to suicide, but of other forms of violence and self-destructive behaviour. These behaviours were found to be an expression of the "collective anguish - part grief, part anger - tearing at the minds and hearts of many people." It said that this anguish was the result of 300 years of colonial history in which lands were occupied, resources seized, beliefs and cultures ridiculed and of course the children being taken away.[66]

One speaker giving evidence to the Canadian Royal Commission described the impact of compulsory attendance of indigenous children at residential schools[67]:

> Two-thirds of that last generation to attend residential schools has not survived. It is of no coincidence that so many fell victim to violence, accidents, addictions and suicide. Today, the children and grandchildren of those who went to residential schools also live with the same legacy of broken families, broken culture and broken spirit.[68]

The Canadian Royal Commission also recognised the escalating impact of these factors from one generation to the next.[69] It said that the long-term consequences of the experiences of disruption of family life and enforced attendance at boarding schools are only beginning to be assessed but that research on suicide confirms that early separation from family, and emotional deprivation generally, are prime risk factors for self harm.[70]

The report listed the key risk factors in profiles of people (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) who suicide, including:

- early childhood separation from family members and significant others;

- disrupted or unstable primary relationships;
- conflict with authority;
- alcohol and drug abuse; and
- depression and other mental disorders.[71]

The Canadian Royal Commission divided these factors up into psycho-biological factors, life history or situational factors, socio-economic factors and culture stress.[72] It noted that while these risk factors were important for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike, the balance among these factors is different and that the high rates of suicide and self-harm can only be explained by looking at the historical and continuing power imbalance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people which has created lives characterised by risk.[73]

The psycho-biological factors included the mental disorders commonly found in non-Aboriginal people who attempt suicide, such as schizophrenia and anxiety. While Aboriginal health workers said that there are widespread problems relating to undiagnosed reactive depression and unresolved grief in Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal people attempting suicide have far fewer diagnosed mental disorders.[74] In Canada, as in Australia, many Aboriginal people are critical of the western medical approach to mental health problems and its focus on individual symptoms such as "depression." They argue there is good reason for people to be suffering such symptoms after generations of cultural domination, loss and pain and it is only through understanding the assaults on Aboriginal cultures and personal identities that the psycho-biological factors involved in suicidal and self-destructive behaviour can be understood.[75]

In looking at the socio-economic factors the Canadian Royal Commission recognised that generally suicide occurs more often among those who are poor, unemployed, and who live in places where poverty and unemployment rates are high.[76] The interactive effects of socio-economic conditions and the psychological states of individuals tend to compound feelings of depression, helplessness and hopelessness. Reactions of anger and despondency increase the likelihood of problems within families, with the law and with substance abuse.[77]

The impact of colonial and assimilationist policies on Aboriginal people in Canada has caused enormous cultural stress. The Canadian Royal Commission was of the view that the effect of Canada's assimilationist policies was best illustrated by the consequences of child welfare interventions that separated generations of Aboriginal children from their families and communities. It found that growing up in these institutions did extensive damage to:

- feelings of self-worth;
- family connectedness;
- the inter-generational transfer of skills and traditions; and
- the essential core of trust in and respect for others from which all people must draw in order to build loving relationships and healthy communities.[78]

Many findings of the Canadian Royal Commission have a remarkable similarity to the situation of Australian Aborigines. One of the most consistent issues arising from the personal histories, is the on-going effect of the removal policies on Aborigines lives. The Canadian Royal Commission said the most powerful message given to it by hundreds of witnesses was that:

> the insults and injustices of the past continue today. And the effects of the past oppression live on in the feelings of anger and inadequacy from which Aboriginal people are struggling to free themselves.[79]

This statement can be equally applied to the situation of Aborigines in Australia.

One aspect of the Canadian inquiry which should receive attention in the Australian context is the on-going impact of these past policies on the lives of Aboriginal young people today. It is worth remembering that the RCIADIC expressed the urgent need for Aboriginal people and the government to work together to address the needs of young people, particularly those separated from their families through government intervention.[80]

Social and Cultural Impact of Removal of Children

The social and cultural effects of the removal and institutionalisation of several generations of children cannot be seen in isolation from the psychological effects. They are closely connected and interact with each other. Many of the issues pertaining to the impact on Aboriginal society and culture have already been raised in the previous discussion dealing with the psychological effects. Social effects concern the issues which have had and continue to have a pronounced impact on Aborigines' interaction with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society. The impact on culture is naturally intertwined with the social effects because so much in Aboriginal culture centres around relationships with family and kin.

(i) Lack of education

> The authorities said I was removed from my parents so I could receive an education but the fact is the nuns never gave me that education. I didn't receive an education. I was very neglected.[81]

Many of the people who provided their histories discussed the inadequacy of the education that the missions and institutions provided. Some of the missions placed almost exclusive emphasis on religious education, whereas other institutions wanted to instil the work ethic so that children were required to work from the moment they got up until the time they went to bed, with little attention paid to their formal education or other activities. Most people said that the education they received did little to equip them for employment other than labouring (for the boys) or domestic work (for the girls). Another issue raised consistently was that they received no education about their Aboriginal culture or heritage.

Many Aboriginal children were placed in missions or institutions because government agencies alleged they were not attending school. Education was used as a reason to separate children from their families and institutionalise them. Education was one aspect of the policy to assimilate Aboriginal children to white ways. In a similar way residential boarding schools in the United States and Canada were used to assimilate their indigenous children to non-indigenous ways. One American Indian educator commenting on the extremely adverse

effects of the residential boarding schools said: "We were oriented away from everything Indian. Assimilation became the goal. There was a three-pronged approach. 'Civilise, Christianise, educate'...For too long we have allowed education to exact its toll".[82]

The concept of school or schooling was quite alien to Aboriginal people. In traditional Aboriginal society the education of the child was the responsibility of the family. Knowledge and information which was important to Aboriginal people was passed on to each generation through observation, word of mouth and practical experience.[83] In contrast to the western system of education, children did not acquire the body of knowledge valued by the society through any formal education process such as schooling.[84]

By placing Aboriginal children in missions and institutions the children were no longer able to receive information and knowledge which was important to Aboriginal people. In fact Aboriginal children were not allowed to speak their Aboriginal languages and had to learn 'proper English.' Other information and knowledge (such as stories, songs, dances, how to obtain bush tucker, components of their Aboriginal heritage) was denied to them as a matter of policy. Children were told to forget their Aboriginal ways and learn the white ways. The missions and their schools were used as a means to systematically breakdown Aboriginal traditions and practices.[85]

The level of education provided by the mission schools was, in most instances, very poor. Teachers were usually unqualified and untrained.[86] In addition the classroom structure was quite alien to Aboriginal people. More importantly the information being 'taught' to the children was often meaningless.[87]

There was little incentive for children to strive to achieve because the only jobs that were available to them involved manual or domestic labour.[88] It appears it was for those positions that they were being educated and trained, as many children were sent out to work for white farmers and pastoralists as soon as they were old enough. Not only were Aboriginal children being assimilated through the missions and schools to fit into white society but they were being educated to work in the most subordinate jobs available in the dominant society.[89]

(ii) Problems with identity and 'fitting in'

> When I left the mission at 14 years of age I went to live on the native reserve in Norseman. It was very difficult to live with other Aboriginal children because they had been brought up with their families around them in the Aboriginal ways whilst I had been brought up in a mission where Aboriginal culture was ignored. I found it very difficult to even associate with my own people. I believe this to be one of the most tragic effects from being removed to the mission.[90]

Many people who provided their histories explained how difficult the issue of their identity had been for them. They felt they were neither black nor white and there was no place for them in between. Similarly indigenous people in Canada and the United States brought up in residential schools or foster homes have experienced difficulties in fitting in. As one American author commented: "If they cannot return to life on the reservation and they cannot fit into the white world either they may float between white and Indian society and be part of neither".[91]

These issues have been discussed previously while looking at the psychological effects of the removal policies. The impact of removal and institutionalisation has affected people deeply at the psychological level. It has also affected the way they relate to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society on leaving the institutional environment to make a life for themselves. Some people were returned to their families and had to start again to learn about the family and culture they were cut off from. Others did not learn about their Aboriginal identity until many years later. For many the transition was a difficult and painful one, struggling to understand their Aboriginal identity and whether they could fit into the Aboriginal community:

> Mission life screwed me up. I am really confused about who I am. I am Aboriginal but I find it difficult to associate and live with Aboriginal people. I have a hard time being accepted by Aboriginals. But, I can't really associate with white people. I am caught in a cultural trap. It has lead me to attempt suicide. I cut my wrists and neck and tried to overdose.[92]

Aboriginal people also had to face the trauma of dealing with life in a racist society. While to some extent life at the mission and attendance at the local high school may have provided some preparation, many did not develop an appreciation of the level of the racism or acquire the skills to cope with it.[93]

(iii) Lack of access to culture and heritage

'Culture' has been variously described. It is a set of values and ideas which contains the distinctive way of life of a group of people and which tends to persist through time and is transmitted from generation to generation. A group's culture includes the group's thought activity, how it interprets the world and responds to its different meanings.[94] Another definition, similar but more specific, states:

> Culture is the whole complex of relationships, knowledge, languages, social institutions, beliefs, values and ethical rules that bind a people together and give the collective and its individual members a sense of who they are and where they belong. It is usually rooted in a particular place - a past or present homeland. It is introduced to the newly born within the family and subsequently reinforced and developed in the community. In a society that enjoys normal continuity of culture from one generation to another, its children absorb their culture with every breath they take. They learn what is expected of them and they develop a confidence that their words and actions will have meaning and predictable effects in the world around them. When individuals stray from the path of culturally accepted behaviour, their own inner voice, and the expectations of those around them, supply the pressure necessary to bring them back within the frame of what is acceptable.[95]

Cultural change is always going on, but change in one part will have repercussions on other parts, as all aspects are interrelated.[96] 'Culture stress' occurs when societies have undergone massive imposed or uncontrollable change. Where cultures are under stress it is very difficult for that society to operate smoothly and for individuals to make sense of life. Culturally transmitted norms which provided meaning become ineffectual and people lose confidence in what they know and their own values as human beings. People feel uncertain as to whether their lives have any meaning or purpose.[97]

'Socialisation' is the transmission of culture which begins at the time of birth and involves the individual's interaction with other people through which the individual acquires the knowledge, behaviour, attitudes and beliefs which enables them to become a member of a particular society, in a particular place at a particular time.[98] The way in which socialisation occurs is through the individual's interaction and identification with others. It involves not only the learning of skills and knowledge but also motives and feelings. This is what is known as 'internalisation' or getting society inside the person.[99] It includes the internalisation of societys' values and goals.[100] Generally speaking, socialisation includes child rearing, social orientation of the child, education, role learning, preparation for employment, preparation for marriage and parenting, adjustment to changing circumstances, social control and continuity.[101] Everybody is a product of their socialisation.

Language has a powerful role in socialisation, is critical to the transmission of culture,[102] and has a fundamental role in keeping alive a group's cultural identity.[103] An individual discovers his or her culture through the use of language.[104] It also is a means for an individual to express his or her individuality.[105]

These definitions are given in an attempt to explain why so many of the people who provided their histories say they were denied their Aboriginality and their heritage. With an understanding of what culture is and how socialisation occurs, the destructive effects that the removal and institutionalisation of Aboriginal children had on Aboriginal culture become clear. The ability for Aboriginal people to transmit their culture from one generation to the next was destroyed. In its place the missions and institutions attempted to impose the social and economic values of the non-Aboriginal culture by bringing the children 'up' to white ways. This left in its wake a high level of distress among Aboriginal people. The removal of children disrupted the continuity of Aboriginal socialisation (ie the way Aboriginal children are brought up to be Aboriginal and the way in which Aboriginality is maintained and supported as adults).[106] The transmission of Aboriginal culture relied upon oral traditions and social interactions. Prohibiting the use of Aboriginal languages and refusing children access to their families, communities and land, had an extremely destructive effect on the social fabric of Aboriginal societies.

In Aboriginal culture relationships with family and kin are highly valued. The relationship with the land is another concept that is fundamental. The two concepts of land and kin are interconnected and form the corner stone values of Aboriginal society.[107] By taking the children away, non-Aboriginal society attacked a fundamental part of Aboriginal society. In discussing the importance of family links, Richard Chisholm stated:

> This concept of [Aboriginal] identity tends to mean a complex set of links with relatives, places, customs and history rather than a generalised notion of Aboriginality. It would be inadequate to provide a child with general information about Aboriginal culture, as identification as an Aboriginal seems to be more a process of finding one's place in a very complex world of relationships with particular people and a particular community.[108]

By removing the children, not only were they denied access to information about their Aboriginal heritage, they were denied the opportunity to internalise the values of Aboriginal society. This assault on Aboriginal societies resulted in many people feeling a high level of anxiety and confusion about their Aboriginal identity. It has been a major contributing factor to the culture stress experienced by Aboriginal people.

The social and cultural impact of the removal policies on the indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States have also been recognised. In a congressional inquiry into the removal of children in the 1970s, it was found that the removal of Indian children had a severe effect on Indian tribes threatening the very existence of tribes as identifiable cultural entities.[109] Congress responded by passing the *Indian Child Welfare Act 1978* (US). A fundamental premise of the Act is that it is in the best interest of the Indian child to stay with his/her tribe.

The Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples discussed the effects of a residential school on one community:

> Like many who attended one of the network of residential schools across Canada, the Shuswap children who were sent to St. Joseph's learned to despise traditions and accomplishments of their people, to reject the values and spirituality which had given meaning to their lives, to distrust knowledge

> and life ways of their families and kin. By the time they were free to return to their villages, many had learnt to despise themselves. As adults, they survived by deadening explosive feelings with alcohol abuse and other additions. When feeling could not be suppressed, they were sometimes turned inward to self-destruction, sometimes turned outward to violence.[110]

Many Aboriginal people in Australia, Canada and the United States have expressed the view that the removal and institutionalisation of their children has had such a profound and destructive effect upon their culture and society that it amounts to cultural genocide.

(iv) Problems with parenting

In further discussion of the impact of residential schools the Canadian Royal Commission reported that no one living in the community is untouched by the negative effects of institutionalisation. It stated, "Survivors who went on to have children of their own had only a limited understanding of how to raise them with love and self-respect, having been loved and respected so little themselves in childhood."[111]

The removal policies affected not only the children and parents, but the ability of those removed to parent their own children.

Much of the literature discussing the long-term effects of being separated from one's family as a child includes the detrimental effect on parenting skills as an adult. (See earlier discussion on psychological effects). The psychological research suggests that children who do not develop attachment skills or who suffer breaks in the attachments they formed in early childhood (because of removal and institutionalisation or fostering) may not be able to form such attachments and become effective parents to their own children.[112]

Institutionalisation deprives children of parental role models and the experience of living in a family. As a result, on reaching adulthood with children of their own, these people often do not know how to care for a child, interpret a child's action in a non-hostile manner and deal with the stresses of family life.[113] American writer, Lewis Meridam, in 1928 wrote:

> Under normal conditions the experience of family life is of itself a preparation of the children for future parenthood. Without this experience of the parent-child relationship throughout the developmental period Indian young people must suffer under a serious disability in their relations with their own children. No kind of formal training can possibly make up for this lack, nor can the outing system [placement in white homes] when the child is half grown supplement what he missed in his own family and with his own race in earlier years.[114]

Discussing the impact of the Indian residential schools on several generations of Indian children, child psychiatric experts have acknowledged the destructive effects on family life, native culture, sense of identity and parenting abilities.[115]

Similarly Chisholm, in discussing the impact of the removal policies on the Aboriginal population, said that the taking of children constituted a constant threat and reminder that in non-Aboriginal eyes, Aboriginal people were unable to properly bring up their children. It is likely that as a result Aboriginal people have internalised the values of the dominant society. Chisholm queries the extent of the damage that these experiences must have had on the confidence and self image of Aboriginal people.[116]

(v) Involvement in the criminal justice system

This chapter has emphasised the interconnected nature of the effects of the removal policies. In the section dealing with mental health we noted that the level of 'mental distress' in Aboriginal communities was often acted out through anti-social, violent and self-destructive behaviour. In many instances instead of the 'mental distress' receiving treatment, the person was dealt with by the criminal justice system because of the results of the 'acting out' behaviour.

The RCIADIC was very mindful of the interactive effect of the child welfare policies on Aboriginal people:

> The contemporary experience of Aboriginality - and the extent to which, for some Aboriginal people, the issue of identity is closely related to the sense of

> self-esteem - is very much a product of non-Aboriginal institutional and individual efforts to deny Aboriginal culture and heritage to Aboriginal children. This is reflected in poor self-esteem which is in turn, reflected in emotional and behavioural factors that are linked to excessive drinking and offending. Throughout Australia the Child Welfare system was the most pervasive force in this regard.[117]

Research in the 1970s found that one-third of Aboriginal people who spent part of their childhood in a children's home or foster home were subsequently imprisoned either for juvenile or adult offences.[118] Similarly statistics collected by the Aboriginal Legal Services of New South Wales and Victoria on clients seeking assistance on criminal charges showed that 90-95% of clients had been in placement, either in foster homes, institutionalised or adopted, with the great majority having been in the care of white families or authorities. There is strong argument that fewer children would have ended up in the criminal justice system had they been brought up in the Aboriginal community.[119]

Other Effects

Some of the people who gave their histories told of the way in which they had suffered physical and sexual abuse while institutionalised or in foster homes. This abuse was suffered at the hands of the missionaries, institutional staff and their families (particularly the sons), other inmates, and foster parents and males encountered in the foster situation. While most who were abused still suffer the mental trauma resulting from the abuse, others who were physically abused have health problems resulting from the abuse which remain with them today. Today, some suffer from manic depression, others from high anxiety.

As previously indicated the psychological effects of the mental and emotional distress of removal resulted in many people taking refuge in alcohol and other substances. Some people developed addictions to these substances which they have struggled with for many years. For some, that substance abuse has led to chronic ill health and death.

There are many Aboriginal people in Western Australia who were taken away as children who have not participated in this project. It is possible that some people, who are particularly resilient, have managed to escape the experience relatively unscathed. On the other hand there are many for whom the experience was so damaging that it is not possible for them to come forward. This includes those who are in prison, in psychiatric hospitals or living in destitute circumstances. There are also those people who are still unaware of their Aboriginality.

Endnotes

1. Jenny, born 1956, 'taken away' aged 4 years 7 months.

2. See HC Coombs, MM Brandl, WE Snowden, *A Certain Heritage*, Australian National University, 1983, p45.

3. M Van Keppel and R Winkler, "The Effect on the Mother Relinquishing a Child for Adoption" *Proceedings of the Third Australian Conference on Adoption*, University of Adelaide, 1982. p175.

4. *ibid*, p175.

5. *ibid*, p179.

6. United States Congress, *United States Congress House Report NO 95-1386* 95th Congress 2d Sess, 1978.

7. *ibid*, p7532.

8. W Byler, "The Destruction of American Indian Families" in Unger, S (ed), *The Destruction of American Indian Families*, Association of American Indian Affairs, New York, 1977, p8.

9. J Westermeyer, "The Ravage of Indian Families in Crisis" in Unger, *ibid* p54.

10. E Blanchard, "The Question of Best Interest" in Unger, *ibid* p59-60.

11. J Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health,* World Health Organisation, 1951 and J Bowlby, *Child Health and the Growth of Love*, Penguin, 1965, p13.

12. Refer to Bowlby's works for full reference and discussions. Bowlby discusses the work of H Edelston; RA Spitz and KM Wolf; HL Rheingold; RJ Levy; W Goldfarb; F Powdermaker; HT Levis; G Touraine; LG Lowrey; L Bender and H Yarnell; D Burlingham; A Freud, and I Hellman, among others.

13. Some of the criticisms which have been directed at Bowlby's work are: that it oversimplified some of the issues involved in bonding and attachment; that bonding must be with one person (there may be multiple parents); differences between failing to make bonds and attachments and separation after bonds formed; issues involved in continuity and discontinuity of relationships; stealing or delinquency as an effect; the permanence or reversibility of effects. For a more detailed analysis of shortcomings of Bowlby's theory see M Rutter, *Maternal Deprivation Reassessed,* Penguin, 1972; MD Ainsworth, "Further Research into the Adverse Effects of Maternal Deprivation", in Bowlby, *op.cit.*, 1985, D McCotter, *Children in Limbo,* WA Department for Community Welfare, 1981, pp46-54; I Harvey, *Australian*

Parents for Vietnamese Children, NSW Dept of Youth and Community Services, 1981, pp67-73.

14. J Goldstein, A Freud and A Solnit, *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child,* Free Press, 1973.

15. Summary of the arguments of Goldstein et al in M Wald "State Intervention on Behalf of 'Neglected' Children: Standards for Removal of Children from their Homes, Monitoring the Status of Children in Foster Care, and Termination of Parental Rights", *Stanford Law Review,* Vol. 28, 1976, p623 at pp667-668.

16. *ibid,* p669.

17. See discussion of E Sommerlad, "Aboriginal Children Belong in the Aboriginal Community; Changing Practices in Adoption", *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 1977, Vol. 12, No. 3, p167., and *US Congress House Report No. 95-1386,* 95th Congress, 2d Sess, 1978, on the effects on American Indian children.

18. *ibid.*

19. See M Rutter, *Maternal Deprivation Reassessed,* Penguin, 1972, pp26-27; MD Ainsworth, "Further Research into the Adverse Effects of Maternal Deprivation" in J Bowlby, *op.cit,* 1965.

20. See I Harvey, *op.cit.* discussing work of Clarke and Clarke at pp70-71.

21. See Bowlby, Rutter, Wald, Goldstein.

22. For summary of literature see I Harvey, *op.cit,* 1981.

23. J Laurence, "Should White Families Adopt Black Children?", *New Society,* June, 1983, p499; RJ Simon and H Altstein, *Trans-Racial Adoption,* John Wiley and Sons, 1977; D Fanshel, *Far From the Reservation: The Trans-Racial Adoption of American Indian Children,* Scarecrow Press, 1972; RG McRoy, LA Zurcher, ML Laudrale, RE Anderson, "The Identity of Trans-Racial Adoptees" *Social Case Work: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work,* Jan, 1984; p34, PR Johnson, JF Shirman, KW Watson, "Trans-racial Adoption and the Development of Black Identity at Age Eight", *Child Welfare,* Vol. 66, No 1, 1987, p45; Harvey, *op.cit.*

24. LK Uthe, "The Best Interests of Indian Children in Minnesota", *American Indian Law Review,* Vol. 17, 1992, p237 at p254, where she discusses J Westermeyer, "The Apple Syndrome in Minnesota: A Complication of Racial Ethnic Discontinuity", *Journal of Operational Psychology,* Vol. 10, 1979, p134.

25. E Sommerlad, "Aboriginal Children Belong in the Aboriginal Community, Changing Practices in Adoption", *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* Vol. 12 No. 3, 1977, p167.

26. *ibid,* cites E Sommerlad, *Kormilda: The Way to Tomorrow?,* Australian National University Press, 1976, p173.

27. *ibid*, p173; see also R Chisholm, "Aboriginal Children, Adoption and Permanency Planning; A Sceptical View" in R Oxenberry (ed), *Proceedings of the Third Australian Conference on Adoption*, Department of Continuing Education, 1982; and *Commission on Folklore and Legal Pluralism*, "Black Children; White Welfare, Aborigines and the Child Welfare System in New South Wales", *Papers of the Symposia on Folklore and Legal Pluralism XI International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences*, International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Vancouver, 1983, pp678-79.

28. Commissioner E Johnston, *National Report of Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, Vol. 2, AGPS, Canberra, 1991, pp72-73.

29. *ibid*, p75.

30. *ibid*, p76.

31. Anne, born 1947, 'taken away' aged 7.

32. E Johnston, *op.cit*, p137-138. Quoting from a paper submitted by Millie Ingrim in NSW during the RCIADIC inquiry by Commissioner Wootten into the death of Tim Murray, 1991.

33. *The Indian Child Welfare Act* 1978 (USA).

34. M Howard, "Trans-racial Adoption: Analysis of the Best Interests Standard", *Notre Dame Law Review* 59, Vol. 54, 1984, p503 at p544.

35. Byler, in Unger *op.cit*, 1977.

36. "The Wasted Strengths of Indian Families" in Unger, *ibid*, p32; see also E Johnston in *op.cit*, p67.

37. See R Chisholm, *op.cit*, p678.

38. Malcolm, born 1954, 'taken away' aged eight and a half months.

39. E Goffman, *Asylums*, Penguin, 1961.

40. *ibid.*

41. *ibid, pp24-28.*

42. *ibid*

43. *ibid*, pp33-39.

44. *ibid*, pp41-51

45. *ibid*, p61.

46. *ibid*, pp61-62.

47. *ibid*, p65.

48. *ibid*, pp69-71.

49. For references see earlier section of chapter dealing with maternal deprivation.

50. E Johnston, *op.cit*, 1991, pp66-76, 111-123, 131-138.

51. Human Rights and Equal Opportunityi Commission, *Human Rights and Mental Illness: Report of the National Inquiry into the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness*, AGPS, 1993, pp692-704.

52. *ibid*, p696, quoting Prof Refer Dept of Psychology, James Cook University, oral evidence, Townsville 13.8.91, p1279.

53. *ibid*, p696, citing report of the Victorian Aboriginal Medical Service Cooperative Ltd, May 1991.

54. *ibid*, citing evidence of Dr Jane McKendrick, Koori Mental Health Network, Melbourne, 9.4.91, p249.

55. *ibid*, p695.

56. E Johnston, *op.cit*, pp111-117; HREOC, *op.cit*, pp695-698.

57. E Johnston, *op.cit*, p114-115.

58. *ibid*, p66.

59. *ibid*, p113-114.

60. *ibid*, p114.

61. *ibid*, p115.

62. *ibid*, p116.

63. *ibid*, p117.

64. *ibid*, p130 discussing AJ Radford, *Taking Control*, Flinders University, 1990, pp29-30, 74-75; see also J Westermeyer, "Ethnic Identity Problems Among Ten Indian Psychiatric Patients", Vol. 25, International Journal of Social Psychiatry 188 (1979) cited in Uthe LK, "The Best Interests of Indian Children in Minnesota", *American Indian Law Review*, Vol. 17, p237 at p254, which examined effects of placement of American Indian children in non-Indian homes. He found that as adolescents they had higher suicide tendencies than other high risk children.

65. W Byler, "The Destruction of Indian Families" in Unger (ed.), *op.cit*, p9.

66. Royal Commission On Aboriginal People, *Choosing Life: Special Report on Suicide Among Aboriginal People*, Canada Communications Ways 1995, p *x*.

67. Residential schools are the schools at which many Aboriginal children were required to board for much of their childhood to be educated in non-Aboriginal ways. The schools were usually located at great distances from the communities and the children saw their families very infrequently.

68. Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, *op.cit*, p22, quoting Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes, Uchucklesaht First Nation, Port Alberni, British Columbia, May 1992.

69. *ibid*, p22.

70. *ibid*, p23.

71. *ibid*, p20, referring to Kirmayer, J Laurence, "Suicide in Canadian Aboriginal Populations: Emerging Trends in Research and Intervention", *Draft research study* prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Ottawa 1993.

72. *ibid*, p20.

73. *ibid*, p21.

74. This may simply reflect discriminatory service provision to Aboriginal people.

75. Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, *op.cit*, p21.

76. *ibid*, p24.

77. *ibid*, p25.

78. *ibid*, p25.

79. *ibid*, p25.

80. Johnston, *op.cit*, 1991 Recommendation 62.

81. Elizabeth, born 1933, 'taken away' aged 13.

82. HV Whiteman, "Encircling our Forgotten; An Indian Woman Educators Perspective", *Conference Proceedings from Encircling our Forgotten: A Conference on Mental Health Issues for the Emotionally and Disturbed North American Indian Child in Adolescence,* Okalahoma, 1988.

83. H Neill, "*Mission Blacks: Girlhood Education*, in O Taylor and B Henley (eds), *Battlers and Blue Stockings, Women's Place in Australia Education* , Australia College of Education, 1988, p66.

84. *ibid*; see also HC Coombs, et al, *op.cit.*

85. *ibid*, Coombs et al, *op.cit*, see also N Holm, 'Federal Education Policies for American Indians and Australian Aborigines: Assimilation and Cultural Adaptation in Historial Perspective', *Journal of Inter-Cultural Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 3, 1981, p 24 at p30.

86. A Haebich, 'On the Inside: Moore River Native Settlement in the 1930s' in M Gammage, *All That Dirt*, Australian National University, 1982, p53; Similarly teachers in mission and residential schools in Canada and the United States were unqualified and untrained. See KJ Crowe, *A History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada*, Arctic Institute of North America, 1974, pp166-168; E Palmer Patterson II, *The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500*, Collier Macmillan, 1972, p134; J Barman, Y Hebert and D McCaskill, *Indian Education in Canada: The Legacy*, University at British Columbia Press, 1986, pp9-13.

87. Neill, *op.cit*, Coombs et al, *op.cit*,, see also HC Coombs, *Aboriginal Autonomy*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p188-189.

88. Haebich, *op.cit*, p56.

89. Coombs et al, *op.cit*.

90. Phillip, born 1962, 'taken away' aged under 12 months.

91. M Howard, *op.cit*, p544. See also comments in J Barman, Y Herbert and D McCaskill, *op.cit*, pp10-13.

92. Alex, born 1965, 'taken away' aged one and a half years. Also refer to Pauline McLeod telling her story in, C Edwards and P Read, *The Lost Children*, Doubleday, 1989, pp20-21.

93. For further discussion see E Sommerlad, "*Homes for Blacks;* Aboriginal Community and Adoption", *Proceedings of First Australian Conference in Adoption*, Sydney, 1976, p164; Sommerlad, *op.cit*, 1977, p174.

94. W Bostock, *Alternatives of Ethnicity*, Corvus Publishers Melbourne 1981 pp8-9.

95. Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, *op.cit*, p25.

96. Bostock, *op.cit*, p9.

97. Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, *op.cit*, p25.

98. HC Coombs, et al, *op.cit*,, p127.

99. *ibid*, 128.

100. *ibid*, 128.

101. *ibid*, 129.

102. *ibid*, p144 and Bostock, *op.cit*,, pp3-4.

103. Bostock, *op.cit*,pp3-4.

104. *ibid*, p6.

105. *ibid*.

106. Coombs, et at, *op.cit*, p69.

107. *ibid*, p36-42.

108. R Chisholm, *op.cit*, p69.

109. See *US Congress House Report*, *op.cit*, M Howard, *op.cit*, F Guerrero, "Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978: A Response to the Threat to Indian Culture Caused by Foster and Adoptive Placements of Indian Children, *"American Indian Law Review"*, Vol. 7, 1979, p51 at pp51-53.

110. Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, *op.cit*, p57.

111. *ibid*, p58.

112. MK Bennett, "Native American Children: Caught in the Web of the Indian Child Welfare Act" *16 Hamline Law Review 1992,* p653 at p698, citing A Stroufe, "The Role of Infant Caregiver Attachment in Development" in Belsky and Nezworski (eds) *Clinical Implications of Attachment* 1988.

113. M Howard, *op.cit.*

114. L Meriam, "The Effects of Boarding Schools on Indian Family Life" (1928) in Unger, *op.cit*, p17.

115. C Mindell and A Gurwitt, "The Placement of American Indian Children - the Need for Change", in Unger (ed.), *op.cit*, p62.

116. R Chisholm, *op.cit*, p678 and p683.

117. Johnston *op.cit*, pp72-73.

118. T Austin "New Directions in Aboriginal (N'Unga) In South Australia" *Australian Child and Family Welfare*, Vol. 3, 1978, p34 at p35 citing Fay Gale *Urban Aborigines* Australian National University Press, p162.

119. See comments of R Chisholm *op.cit,* 1983, pp676-677.

CHAPTER FOUR

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY CASE STUDIES

> The most enduring memory that still causes so much pain for me is the time I saw my mum once while I was in the orphanage and I wanted to go out and see her but one of the nuns was holding me back. I wanted to go with my mother. I wanted to be with my mum. My mum was crying and I was being held back by the nun. The image on my mothers face sticks vividly in my mind and it is very upsetting - it still causes me much grief and sorrow. When I think about it I still cry a lot.[1]

Introduction

In this chapter the histories of four families, plus seven other individuals are told to complement the discussion on the treatment of Aboriginal children who were removed from their families and the effects of these removals. Their histories are not told completely but parts of each individual's history is reported to reflect the past policies and practices of removing Aboriginal children from their families and culture. Extracts from the people's Native Welfare files provide evidence of the policies and practices of removal as discussed in previous chapters.

The focus on the histories is on treatment and feelings while in an institutional and/or foster care and the transition into the 'outside' society and enduring effects of institutional and/or foster care.

The criteria used to select the interviewees were:

- that they had been removed from both or either parent or grandparent in their childhood (0-16 years of age) or they are the parents of children removed;
- that they had spent time in a mission, orphanage, other institution and/or in foster

care during childhood, or their children had been removed;

- their Native Welfare files were able to be obtained in time for this submission;
- they provide a cross-section of how people were treated at missions, orphanages, other institutions and/or foster care; and
- they provide a cross-section of the effects of the policy and practices of removal and assimilation on individuals and their relationships with their families.

It was decided to accept whatever information was offered by the interviewees. The histories have not been altered, although they have been edited. Information from the Native Welfare files has also been incorporated into the stories.

There are minor variations in the structure of the stories dealing with families interviewed compared to individuals interviewed. The individual histories are divided into sections dealing with the removal, institutional and/or foster case life and after institution and/or foster care life. Family histories also deal with these aspects, but are not divided into these separate categories. Except for the Jack family, the families histories deal separately with the individual family members. Due to the information received from the Jack family, it was decided that their histories should be reported without a structured separation of individual family members as their individual histories and feelings are very similar. It should be noted that for logistical reasons not all members of each family were interviewed. Family members were interviewed separately.

The Case Studies

(i) Isobel

Date of Birth: 1 February, 1930 (exact date of birth unknown)

Place of Birth: Mogumber mission

Family Details: Isobel is the oldest child out of five children. She was married in 1951 and separated in 1969. She is not divorced. Isobel and her husband have six children.

(a) The removal

It appears that Isobel's parents did not live together or have a relationship after the children were born. Before Isobel was two years of age (1932) she was sent to the Parkerville Orphanage Home run by Anglican nuns.

(b) Life at Parkerville Orphanage

Isobel is ambivalent about her stay at the Parkerville Orphanage. She did not know anything better and she never thought she had a family while she was there. Most of the other children at the home did not have families.

At the Parkerville Home she had a number of domestic duties to perform such as washing clothes, ironing, and sweeping. She went to school and attended Anglican religious education. Isobel went to church nearly every day during her residency at the Parkerville Orphanage.

When Isobel was about 14 years of age a dark skinned woman visited her at the Parkerville Orphanage. She did not know who this woman was. The staff at the Parkerville Orphanage told Isobel that it was her mother. Isobel was confused. She could not recall ever seeing an Aboriginal person before[2]. She felt embarrassed when the staff told her it was her mother. Isobel rejected the claim and ran away from the dark skinned woman.

(c) Life after Parkerville Orphanage

Isobel, who has very fair skin, did not know she was Aboriginal until adulthood when she was made aware of her Aboriginality by friends. Initially, she was very confused by this realisation. Now, she has come to terms with being Aboriginal but she feels that her Aboriginal culture has been taken away from her.

Only after a brother, who Isobel did not know she had, contacted her subsequent to her mother's death, did Isobel become aware that the dark skinned woman who visited her at the

Parkerville Orphanage was her mother. Upon this realisation, Isobel broke down. She felt that her identity had been robbed from her as she was never given the chance to know her mother or Aboriginal culture.

Today, Isobel still has a lost feeling inside her. She feels something is missing. Isobel also feels very guilty for running away from her mother. She cannot erase the memory and guilt surrounding her rejection of her mother.

Isobel believes that her life has forever been ruined. She does not believe she will ever overcome the empty and guilty feelings she constantly has.

Isobel feels that her lack of contact with her mother and the Aboriginal culture has significantly affected her ability to impart Aboriginal culture onto her own children. She has no real linkage to their Aboriginal culture.

Isobel states "what happened to me has had a long lasting effect on me and as I tell this story I find that I get quite upset. The main factor is just not getting to know my mother which should have been a natural occurrence."

(ii) Wilson Family

Family Details: Neville and Joanne, had 13 children between 1950 and 1968. Three of those children are deceased. Nine of the children were removed from their parents to mission and/or foster care. The parents and eight of the nine children removed have been interviewed by the ALS. The other child removed is deceased.

(a) Neville's and Joanne's stories

Neville born 27th June 1933, Hyden

Joanne 27th September 1932, Hyden

Neville and Joanne formed a relationship when Neville was 15 and Joanne was 16. Early in their relationship Joanne fell pregnant. Neville and Joanne wanted to marry immediately but the NWD refused permission. Joanne had a son, which they named Peter.

When Peter was one month old, Joanne was sent away to Mogumber mission. To this day she does not know the reason why she was removed from her baby and sent to Mogumber mission. Her mother cared for Peter while Joanne was at Mogumber mission.

Joanne was taken from Hyden to Perth by a policeman who was also the Native Protector of the town. She spent a night in the Roe Street jail in Perth with a lot of 'old drunks.' She was very frightened. The next day she travelled in an open truck to Mogumber mission.

When Joanne arrived at Mogumber mission she felt very frightened. She was in a dormitory with girls that appeared to be 'outlaws.' For some reason she had a blood test and shortly after she was transferred to another dormitory. Whilst at Mogumber mission she worked in the hospital.

After three weeks at Mogumber mission Joanne returned to her home town. Neville and Joanne were married in August 1950. In October 1950, Peter, then aged approximately six months was suffering from pneumonia. While Neville and Joanne were taking him to the hospital in a taxi, Peter died in Joanne's arms.

Neville and Joanne lived on Joanne's mother's block. They lived in a shack and humpy like other Aboriginal people. At times they also lived in Neville's parents house. Neville engaged in shearing work, rabbit trapping and malli bark stripping.

Between 1952 and 1968 Neville and Joanne had another 12 children.

(b) Suzie's story

Date of Birth:	25 September 1957
Place of Birth:	Narrogin
Family Details:	Suzie is the eighth oldest child in the Wilson family. She has been married twice, one divorce, the second husband is deceased. She currently lives in a defacto relationship and has three children.

Suzie was born on the 25 September 1957, and on 13 March 1958, was committed to the

care of the CWD until she turned 18. On 18 March, 1958 Suzie was fostered out to a white family in the Perth metropolitan region.

When Suzie was committed to the care of CWD she was in Beverley Hospital with diarrhoea. She had been in hospital for three days. Neville and Joanne continually telephoned the hospital to see how Suzie was and the hospital replied that she was not quite ready to come home. Then when the weekend came Neville and Joanne went to the hospital to see Suzie and hopefully take her home. When they arrived at the hospital a nurse told them that Suzie had gone. Neville and Joanne were devastated and Joanne thought that Suzie was dead. All the nurse would say is that they could find out where she went by ringing up the NWD in Perth.

The CWD Inspector on the 13 March 1958 reported:

> I have to advise that the Matron of the Narrogin hospital phoned me on the 12th inst. to the effect that a baby named Suzie born 25-9-57 had been admitted to the hospital on the 12-2-58 suffering from malnutrition and lack of proper care ... The baby was now ready for discharge. She knew the parents were living in filthy conditions and she considered it would be dangerous to return the baby to such a home. She said the family had some coloured blood but she did not know to what extent.
>
> I telephoned the local police officer and he told me that as far as he knew, although he was not certain, the family did not come within the meaning of the Native Welfare Act.
>
> In view of the urgency of the case I came to Brookton where with Const. Smith I went to Narrogin where I inspected the Wilson's home. This home consisted of a tin humpy of one room with a partition constructed of galvanised iron, unlined with a dirt floor. There was practically no furniture and the sleeping arrangements consisted of one double bed and one single bed. The bedding was dirty and the premises generally was not clean.
>
> Mrs Wilson told me that she came under the Native Welfare Act. This fact was later confirmed when I spoke to Mr Younger the D/O for Native Welfare Dept who said that the children were 5/16 caste. Mr Younger said that he could not get to Narrogin for a week or so. In view of this fact I considered it would be detrimental and in fact dangerous to the child's welfare to allow it to be returned to such filthy conditions so I decided to make application to the court to have it made a ward of the State. This application was successful in the Narrogin Children's Court this date.

> In view of the fact that the children come within the tenue [sic] of the Native Welfare I decided to leave the remaining five children with their parents until the matter can be looked into by that Department. This subject was discussed on the phone with Mr Younger.
>
> The baby is being escorted to Perth this date by Miss Aero, a nurse from the Narrogin Hospital. ... I was successful in getting a Maintenance Order against the father.

In August 1958 responsibility for Suzie was transferred to the NWD.

When Neville and Joanne contacted the NWD they were told that they were not allowed to know where Suzie lived but arrangements could be made in order for the parents to see Suzie. When Suzie was approximately one year old Neville and Joanne were able to visit her in a park in Victoria Park. Up until Suzie reached the age of four, Neville and Joanne would on a number of occasions visit her at different parks.

A letter from the Patrol Officer to the District Officer dated the 14 July 1959 states:

> During the course of the recent Inspectional Visit to Narrogin I talked to, and later visited the home of, Neville and Joanne, parents of the above child Suzie.
>
> Both Neville and Joanne and Miss Pye of the Narrogin Mission Church made strong representations to me to assist in having this child returned to them from its foster home with Mrs L J Marron of Lathlain.
>
> During the last few months the social behaviour of Neville and Joanne has undergone a most welcome improvement and this young couple do seem to have pulled themselves together and started life anew. Whether the change is a permanent one, of course, remains to be seen. Both attend chapel very regularly, and have not touched alcohol in weeks. They appear pleasant and well mannered, and Const. Kemp of Narrogin reports favourably on them.
>
> Neville has a permanent job with Mr Zelores and occupies an asbestos cottage which is clean and tidy, and adequately furnished. A good meal was in the process of cooking when I called, and the six other children look healthy and well nourished. There are three bedrooms and a kitchen, plus verandah, for their use and, as the case was due to be reviewed at the expiration of the committal order, on 13/3/59, I would, with your approval, recommend that Suzie be returned to the Wilson's with the proviso that this Department check

her living conditions from time to time.

A subsequent letter from the District Officer to Commissioner of Native Welfare dated 10 September 1959 states:

> On the 14th July last I wrote to you in response to your memorandum of the 25th May, 1959, recommending the release of the abovenamed infant to its parents, Neville and Joanne of Narrogin. Up to date, nothing has transpired and I have been receiving enquiries from the parents from Miss Pye of Narrogin which I am unable to answer, as I am unaware of the reason why the child has not been returned even after the good report provided by this office.
>
> I feel very strongly that this is a case in which the infant should be returned to its parents, and request that the matter be taken up with the Child Welfare Department for early finalisation.
>
> Kindly advise what transpires, as the mother called at my office today and I promised to let her know the position. She appeared most anxious and upset of the lack of decision in this matter.

Suzie was not returned to her parents. The parents have never been given a reason why she was not returned to them.

When Suzie was about four years of age Neville and Joanne managed to obtain from the NWD the address of where Suzie was staying. It appears that they were able to obtain the address from a recently appointed employee of the NWD who had apparently not been informed by the Department that that address should not be disclosed to the Wilsons.

A CWD report dated 28 May 1965 states that Suzie "seems at times preoccupied with the fact that she is part-native and seems to get satisfaction from being blonde and very light skinned." Another CWD report on the 21 May 1968 states that Suzie "likes dressing up. Doesn't associate with Aboriginals on TV ...."

A CWD Social Worker's file summary dated 22 March 1958 records:

> Placement would appear to be satisfactory. It would appear now to be long term owing to the fact that eight other children of the family were recommitted 1 December 1961 to the care of the Child Welfare Department until eighteen years of age. These children are all placed in Sister Kates. The three youngest are not wards ...

Neville and Joanne did occasionally visit the house that Suzie grew up in. Neville and Joanne were grateful for these visits but were always heartbroken when they had to leave. Neville and Joanne still feel deeply hurt due to Suzie being taken away. They believe that the removal of Suzie from them amounted to kidnapping. They were never informed why Suzie was removed from their care and were not notified before it occurred.

Neville and Joanne believe that their relationship with Suzie has forever been dramatically affected. There appears to be some permanent barrier between Suzie and her parents. They perceive that Suzie does not believe they were capable of being good parents. Neville and Joanne constantly cry over losing their 'little Suzie.'

Whilst Suzie was growing up she believed that her foster parents were her parents. Her foster mum was dark and Spanish and her foster dad was Irish. Suzie has no recollection of Neville's and Joanne's visits to the parks and to home prior to reaching 14 years of age. After the age of 14, Suzie remembers Neville and Joanne visiting her home, sometimes with relatives and feeling embarrassed because they were Aboriginal.

A note from a Family Welfare Officer to an Assistant Supervisor of the CWD, on the 13 November 1972 records:

> Recently this girl Carol phoned me requesting to make contact with her sister Suzie, who has been successfully boarded out in the area since the age of 6 months.
>
> The two girls have not, to my knowledge, ever met and Mrs Dan (Suzie's foster mother) is resistant to outside contact after such a long period.

> Whilst not wishing to do anything to cause any upsets, I am wondering whether perhaps, it could be suggested that Carol writes to Suzie and in this way they may get to know each other. If Carol has a photograph, it would further help, if she included this with her letter to her sister. If Carol is truly genuine in her desire to meet Suzie, I think she will be along with this suggestion.
>
> I do not know Carol and am at a loss to know from where she learned that Suzie was in this area, so please ask your advice as to the desirability of the two girls meeting ...
>
> Your advice on this matter would be appreciated.

Suzie did not know she was Aboriginal until she was 14 when it suddenly dawned on her that Neville and Joanne were Aboriginal. When she realised this she locked herself in her room and cried. She rejected Neville and Joanne as her parents. Suzie did not consciously acknowledge that she was Aboriginal until she was 21 when she started asking herself questions about who she was and where she came from. Even though Suzie acknowledged her Aboriginality she was not happy about it. She had been brought up as a 'white' and felt 'white.' The Aboriginal culture was foreign to her.

At aged 18, Suzie joined the army for three years. She then married a non-Aboriginal in Sydney and returned to Perth. When she was about 24 or 25 years old Neville and Joanne visited her home. Her husband was very tense about this visit and did not welcome them. Suzie was aged 34 before she met her parents again.

It was only when Suzie was about 30 years of age and was enrolled in some Aboriginal courses at university level that she started accepting her Aboriginality. Around this time her foster mother died. This furthered her desire to search out her biological parents, brothers and sisters.

Suzie finds it very difficult to express how she feels about her life and her removal from Neville and Joanne. Suzie believes that she has lost her family and her identity. She doesn't understand her family ways or the Nyoongah way. Suzie accepts her Aboriginality and lives in a defacto relationship with a Nyoongah male but inside her she still feels white. She feels

she is a white person in an Aboriginal body.

Suzie believes she has failed to impart the Aboriginal culture on to her children. She feels it has been impossible for her to give her children a sense of being Aboriginal as she is 'all mixed up' about her own identity. It saddens her deeply that her children are missing out on the ways of their grandparents.

(c) Background on other children

Paul, David, Samantha, Ian, Carol, Josie, Tamara and Greg were all made wards of the State on 4 December, 1961. Paul died in 1970 and Ian died in 1977. Three other children of Neville and Joanne who were born between 1966 and 1968 were not taken away from them. The children who were removed by CWD had been 'deemed to be destitute or neglected children' by CWD officers.

Neville and Joanne reject vehemently that they had neglected their children. They maintain that they loved and cared for their children and although their living conditions may not have been up to the standard considered, 'acceptable by the white authorities', the children were cared for. They do not deny that they may have had a drinking problem and some marital complications but they question whether in similar circumstances a white family would have had their children removed from them.

It would appear that one of the major reasons why Neville and Joanne's children were considered neglected and taken away is the judgment made by CWD that the living conditions were unsatisfactory. A file note from the District Officer dated 11 January 1968 states:

> I went with Miss Farmer of the Dept of Native Welfare to inspect the home, and see the children. Miss Farmer had already ascertained that Neville was away at Katanning, where he had gone with some motor vehicle parts to fix up a motor car which he owns which is now out of order. A thorough examination was not made as the father was not present. From what I saw however, I am satisfied that these children are 'neglected', if for no other reason than the shack they live in.

(d) David's story

Date of Birth: 21 September 1952

Place of Birth: Narrogin

Family Details: David is the third oldest child in the Wilson family. He has been married for 10 years and has two children.

David was around nine years of age when he was removed with his siblings to SKCH. He spent a few years at SKCH in Queens Park before he, his older brother Paul and his sister Samantha were transferred to SKCH in Byford, which was named 'Burnbrae.'

During David's stay at SKCH in Byford, he was placed for a short time with foster parents. An undated file note states "she (foster mother) is quite willing for his relatives to visit him provided they speak to him within earshot of the house".

David became quite unsettled at Byford and longed to be with his parents. He was very angry that he was taken away from his parents and his siblings who were left at Sister Kates in Queens Park and he always wondered why this was done to him and his family. On a number of occasions he left Byford to return to Neville and Joanne. In a report dated 13 October 1967 a Family Welfare Officer states:

> David and his sister Samantha were recently taken out by their father, who then decided not to return them. He was eventually only persuaded to do so with difficulty, leaving some ill feeling between him and the Welfare Officer. Two days before my visit, David again ran away to the Reserve at Narrogin, where he stayed with his grandmother and his cousins - his father and mother were away near Katanning shearing. He was returned to Burnbrae by the Narrogin police.
>
> ... Several factors are affecting David strongly at the moment
>
> (a) direct encouragement from his cousins who were at the Reserve and who are going shearing. Also it is believed that an elder brother of David's, Paul, formerly a ward, has also returned home.
>
> (b) belief of the parents, leading to feelings of resentment, that David and Samantha were committed to the Department's care only because they were not attending school. David and Samantha both say this is so.

(c) The father's absence away from Narrogin. David says he will not decide anything about the employment without consulting father.

(d) Father had apparently promised both children that they will be home by Christmas.

... It would seem that David finds himself being pulled both ways at this moment, and until this conflict is resolved he is not likely to make a very efficient and whole hearted employee. I do not think it likely that David will be able to co-operate in any plan for his own future until he feels that his father has been brought into it and has contributed his views to the discussion, and I think Mr Wilson should be approached by the Department in this matter. It might have little effect but on the other hand it might enlist some power for support.

... Samantha has thought it almost certain that she would be going home at Christmas. She was upset to find that no such removal has been contemplated by the Department.

A file note by the Superintendent of SKCH in Queens Park dated 17 November 1967 states:

David has defied advice helping his future. He has boasted he will stay in any job found for him by authorities for a fortnight only, then will go home. David is very attached to his F.[Neville] and this is affection.

... I agree that only harm could be done by "dragging" David away from home and attempting to force the issues of his future "for his own good" as we see it.

... F. should be given written advice in terms of Section 127 [*Child Welfare Act*]. The whole section should be quoted to Mr Wilson, who is said to be pretty knowledgeable, and perhaps "bush lawyer" type. Mr Sykes [the Superintendent of SKCH, Queens Park] asks that this be done and that F. be told to keep away from the entire properties comprising Str Kate's Children's Homes, Q. Park and Str Kate's Children's Home "Burnbrae" Byford...

Father has not been near Str Kates for about one year, until last upset recently and except for one occasion six weeks ago, when, at 6.00 a.m. he came to Sister Kates Q. Pk seeking Ian twelve years. Neville drove in, with others in car abusive and demanding his son. He was refused and did not see Ian - eventually went off (Ian was aware of F's. visit and was upset in not being allowed to see him - attempts were made by Supt etc to explain position to him. I can well appreciate the lads distress, for here we have a parent who apparently expresses some interest in his children).

> On 1.12.57, I phoned Str Kate's, Byford, from Armadale, to ensure that Farm Manager, Mr Michael would be there. Learned he and wife were somewhere in Armadale and I searched and located them. Learned a rather different story, or attitude, from them, re the David events. They "played down" the incident of 12.11.67., and felt that their decision to let lad go with his F. was only reasonable one, in all the circumstances. Neville was not objectionable or violent and the Michaels felt that the principal ingredient in all the affair is a genuine affection and love of the parents for their children, and they for parents. They felt that Mr Wilson was rightly to be remembered as the boy's father, who at least showed a lot of interest in his children. We agreed that lots of parents show a renewed interest when children can earn. Confusion was introduced when the "Burnbrae" Michaels were not agreed that Mr Wilson should be completely banned from "Burnbrae", Byford, in the manner sought by Mr Michael, Superintendent, Sister Kate's Q. Pk. They favoured the father being told of the provisions of our legislation, etc., but, instead of a complete ban from Byford, (his dtr, Samantha, still remains in "Burnbrae" care) he be told he must give prior, clear notice of his wish to visit his daughter.

David was around 15 or 16 when the CWD/NWD decided that no more attempts would be made to return him to Byford.

David feels that being removed from his parents and other siblings robbed him of the opportunity to grow up in a family environment. He feels that this 'lost opportunity' can never be 'bought back'. It has gone forever.

David has attempted to rebuild his relationship with his parents by moving back to their home town. This has resulted in a reasonable relationship being formed but something is missing. He cannot actually identify what is missing but there is a 'gap' between him and his parents.

David says that he is still trying to fill in the spaces in his life that were created by his removal. He does not know if the spaces will ever be filled up. He feels the hurt and pain will always remain. David believes the governments practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families was so cruel, that there could be no justification for it.

(e) Samantha's story

Date of Birth: 25 May 1954

Place of Birth: Narrogin

Family Details: Samantha is the fourth oldest child in the Wilson family. She was married in 1983, separated in 1986 and divorced in 1987. Since then she has been living in a defacto relationship. Samantha has six children.

Samantha was about eight years of age when she was removed from her parents and placed with her siblings in SKCH, Queens Park. After a few years she moved to SKCH, Byford with Paul and David. She was very upset and concerned about the welfare of her younger siblings who remained at SKCH, Queens Park.

Samantha was unsettled and concerned with the pressure placed on David to stay at SKCH rather than return home to his parents. Samantha also was upset at not being able to return to her parents for festive seasons like Christmas.

Samantha left SKCH, Byford, in 1969 when she was about 15 years of age. She was directed to live with her aunty in Perth. She stayed with her aunty for six months before her parents had realised that she had left SKCH. Her father came to Perth to take her back home.

Samantha found it very difficult to live with her parents. She found it hard to associate with her parents and to feel any affinity with them. She did not really know who she was or whether she belonged to the Aboriginal community or the 'white community.'

At the end of 1969, aged 16, she married.

For a long period of time Samantha hated her parents and blamed them for her removal to SKCH. As she became older she became more aware of the circumstances surrounding her removal and the government policies of the time. She states that "the authorities must realise that it was the worst thing that possibly could be done to a child or a parent."

Samantha does not blame her parents any more but still finds it difficult to associate with them.

Samantha believes that being taken away from her parents and not being able to form a 'normal' family relationship with them, has affected her ability to bring up her children, and been detrimental to the relationship she has with them. The hurt, confusion and hopelessness emanating from her removal has been traumatic for her. She does not know how to deal with it or who she can turn to.

The past is something that Samantha cannot cope with. She often cries when she thinks about the past and the loss of a close family relationship.

(f) Carol's story

Date of Birth:	5 October 1956
Date of Birth:	Narrogin
Family Details:	Carol is the sixth oldest child in the Wilson family. She has been married once, and divorced. She now lives in a defacto relationship which has borne three children. Two children resulted from her marriage.

Carol was about five years of age when she was taken away with her siblings from her parents and placed in SKCH, Queens Park. She remembers a woman who she believed worked for the NWD or CWD coming to her house and saying that she and her siblings were going for a ride and would return home soon. Instead she and her siblings were taken to SKCH.

Carol recalls her time at SKCH as being a horrible nightmare. She cried for her mother and father. Often, when she cried she would be hit. She felt unloved.

Carol saw her parents infrequently; she would be lucky if she saw them two or three times a year. She recalls crying when her parents left after visiting and desperately wanting to go with them.

Carol was not able to interact with her siblings whilst at SKCH. This interaction was discouraged and she sometimes was hit on the legs, arms and hands if she was caught associating with her siblings. Carol always felt that the staff at SKCH were determined that she was not to mix with her siblings as it might create some bonding which was not to be encouraged.

Carol remembers a strict and non-loving environment at SKCH. Her most vivid recollections are incidents of sexual abuse. She was subjected to sexual abuse by the sons of cottage parents at SKCH. The abuse commenced shortly after she arrived at four or five years of age and continued until she was aged eight years. She remembers having to sit on the laps of cottage boys from where they would 'finger' her 'private parts' and also penetrate her with their penis. She was very confused and did not know or understand what was happening.

Today, Carol is still deeply traumatised by the incident of sexual abuse. She feels confused and used. She has very low self-esteem and hates life.

Carol spent short periods of time in foster care and she thinks it was mainly during holiday periods away from SKCH. She was fostered out for a very short period with the foster parents who were looking after her youngest brother, Greg. Although she enjoyed being with her brother she did not like her foster parents and asked to return to SKCH. She did not like SKCH, but wanted to return there as she could see her other siblings and be away from the foster parents she severely disliked.

On the 11 March 1969, Carol absconded from SKCH and went to stay with her parents. She attended the local primary school. A NWD note in April 1969 considered it pointless to insist on her return to SKCH "as she would most likely to abscond again".

Even though Carol was not forced to go back to SKCH she was fostered out to a family in the metropolitan region. She stayed with this foster family, whom she enjoyed, until she was married in 1973.

Carol is divorced from her first husband with whom she has two children. Although she won custody of her two children, her ex-husband absconded with them to Melbourne when they were very young. To this day she has only been able to make contact with one of her children and this has only deepened the hurt she suffers from her own removal from her parents. The hurt, pain and confusion she felt from her forced removal from her parents has been aggravated by the 'loss' of her own children.

Carol has remarried and has three children from that marriage.

The removal from her parents and the sexual abuse to which Carol was subjected to at SKCH still seriously affects her. Carol is very anxious and often wonders what more can go wrong. She feels that life is awful and unfair. She cannot understand why her life has been full of hurt and hardship.

Carol now lives in the same town as her parents. She made this move in an endeavour to re-establish a relationship with her parents, which has proved very difficult. She is jealous of Josie's very good relationship with her parents. Carol feels that she has a right to have a part of her parents to herself. She believes this is her right as she was forced to grow up without them. She realises that her siblings also deserve a little part of her parents. But Carol believes Josie receives too much attention and love from her parents.

On many mornings Carol does not want to get out of bed and does not want to live. She suffers constantly from depression which at times makes her suicidal. On a number of occasions she has attempted to kill herself and as recently as September/October 1994 she admitted herself to hospital because she felt very depressed. It was only her need to be around for her children that prevented her from killing herself in September/October 1994.

Every day Carol cries about the pain and suffering of her childhood. She cannot understand why it happened. Carol cannot understand why she was removed from her parents, why she was sexually abused and why she has lost contact with her children.

(g) Josie's story

Date of Birth: 18 December 1958

Place of Birth: Narrogin

Family Details: Josie is the eighth oldest child of the Wilson family. She has lived in a defacto relationship for about 20 years and has five children.

Josie was just over two years old when she was removed with her siblings to SKCH, Queens Park. She remembers spending time at SKCH and in a number of foster homes. She remembers white people coming to the children's home and inspecting her and other children and deciding which one they wanted to take home for the weekend or holidays. She was lined up along with the other children and nice clothes were put on. They were told to smile and to be good.

Apart from the visits she received from her parents, the most vivid recollection Josie has of SKCH is the sexual abuse she was subjected to. She remembers two sons of a cottage parent sexually abusing her. The boys would lock her in their room to 'play games.' They would tell her to shut her eyes and open her mouth and they would give her a lolly. Instead they would take it in turns to place their penis in her mouth. They used to tell her not to tell anyone but Josie did tell some of her friends. The sexual abuse was a regular occurrence.

Josie was also subjected to sexual abuse by foster (male) parents. She remembers one man sticking his fingers inside her vagina.

Josie recoils when she thinks and talks about the sexual abuse she experienced in childhood. The memories are still vivid in her mind, as is the hurt and confusion.

Josie preferred to be in SKCH rather than with foster parents because there were more people of her own age at SKCH. However, she was not happy at SKCH. Josie really wanted to be with her parents. A memorandum from a Family Welfare Officer of the CWD to the District Officer of the CWD dated 1972 (month unknown) commenting on Josie's stay with her parents during the summer holidays in 1970, states:

> Josie, who lives in Sister Kates by her own choice, [vis a vis foster parents] is less well settled and would, if given the choice wish to remain with parents. She should not be given the choice.
>
> It would therefore be appreciated if you could visit this family when passing through Narrogin and also ascertain that these three girls [Carol, Josie, Tamara] return to Perth for the 1971 school year.

Josie had absconded twice within a fortnight in the early part of 1971 and refused to return back to SKCH. As a result she was fostered out to her aunty. Her relationship with her aunty was strained and broke down in September 1971. She was then placed with another foster family. Josie then absconded from her new foster parent and then on 21 September, 1971, was moved to a Child Welfare Reception Home, from where she was again fostered out.

On the 11 November 1971 a memorandum by the Family Welfare Officer reported to the District Officer of the CWD:

> While at the reception home, Josie was seen by psychologists, Dr Daw who found the girl to be functioning at a normal intellectual level. She had a potential intellectually which she is not utilising. Josie is an extremely insecure child of little or no confidence in her ability. It is when she feels threatened and insecure that she acts tough, or feigns indifference, but under this facade is a very frightened and emotional spontaneous girl who badly needs support and reassurance.

During one of the periods when Josie had absconded from foster care she was raped by two non-Aboriginal boys at Beaufort Park. At this time she was in her early teens and 'living on the streets.'

During Josie's early teenage years, she spent 12 months at Longmore Detention Centre because it was decided there was nowhere else she could be placed. She had been charged with 'being a drunk.' She also spent another 12 months at Nyandi Girls' Juvenile Detention Centre when she was around 14 years of age. She was placed on antibuse tablets to help alleviate her 'drinking problem.'

Josie found solace in alcohol. She was hurting badly because of her removal from her parents and limited contact with her siblings. The sexual abuse she suffered made her feel violated, confused and insecure.

Prior to reaching 15 years of age, Josie was living with her current defacto and gave birth to her first child when she turned 16 years of age. She was overjoyed in having a baby that she could give affection to; something she missed out on during her stay at SKCH. But Josie was frightened, she did not now how to be a parent. No one at SKCH had been a parent to her.

Josie finds it very difficult to mix with non-Aboriginal people. She is frightened of them, especially non-Aboriginal men, because she believes that for most of her life they have hurt her. Josie does not trust non-Aboriginal men. She believes they will hurt her or her family. She does not understand why non-Aboriginal men have hurt her in the past.

Josie believes that having re-established a good relationship with her parents has assisted in the upbringing of her own children. Her good relationship with her parents has given her more confidence as a parent and made it easier for her children to visit their grandparents.

It is very important for Josie that her children have a good relationship with their grandparents. Josie wants her parents to have the chance to interact with her children while they are in their childhood; an opportunity her parents did not have with their own children. Josie also wants her parents to help in the teaching of the 'Aboriginal ways' to her children.

The good relationship that Josie and her children have with her parents has created tensions with some of Josie's siblings. Some of the siblings feel that Josie is the 'centre of attention' and it has reduced the time available for their relationships with their parents.

Josie's health has suffered due to the long term effect of binge drinking and heavy smoking. She has suffered ulcers and other stomach related complaints.

Initially, after Josie had left institutional life, she found it difficult to reform a good relationship with her parents. The pain of the past proved a great obstacle to her relationship with her parents. It was as if "someone had put up a brick wall with only a small hole in which to climb through to reach the other side." Somehow, over time the relationship with her parents has improved, to the point where Josie is very comfortable with them. She does not understand or know how the good relationship has been achieved.

(h) Tamara's story

Date of Birth:	30 March 1960
Place of Birth:	Narrogin
Family Details:	Tamara is the ninth oldest child and second youngest of the Wilson children to be removed from her parents. She was married 11 years ago and has four children.

Tamara was just aged one year when she was committed along with her siblings, as wards of the State. She was placed at SKCH for a short period before moving into several private foster homes.

Tamara only remembers one foster family with any degree of happiness. That family wanted to take her to Queensland but the NWD said that because Tamara was a State ward she could not leave Western Australia. This upset her very much. Tamara went back to SKCH. Tamara hated her stay at SKCH. She felt very lonely and unloved. She resented being prevented from returning home with her parents after their visits to SKCH. Her parents visits were the only thing that she looked forward to while at SKCH. She loved to hold her parents hands and listen to their stories. It made her feel good.

Prior to reaching her teens, Tamara had very little awareness of her siblings who were also at SKCH. She cannot recall her siblings being with her when she was visited by her parents. She believes that the staff of SKCH made sure she did not see her parents at the same time as her siblings did. Tamara believes that SKCH did not want her to mix with her siblings as it would be easier for her to forget her family and grow up the 'white way.'

Tamara remembers leaving SKCH in her late teens and slowly making her way back to her parents's town. However, a few years passed before she reached her parents' home town. She was very unsettled moving around Perth and other country towns. Tamara did not really know where she belonged. There was this pull towards her parents but she was afraid. She was afraid of what she may find there and if she would be able to live with her parents. Tamara longed to be wanted and secure but rather she felt unloved and alienated. She felt as if she was drifting from one place to another, without belonging anywhere.

When Tamara was 15 years of age she formed a relationship with a man five years older. The relationship gave her some sense of security, something to cling on to. When she was aged 16 she had a baby who died within three months. She was devastated. She could not understand why her life seemed to be full of sadness and hurt.

After the death of her child she hesitantly arrived at her parents home town. She did not really know what to expect. Tamara was happy to finally be back with her parents but she found it difficult to talk to them for any length of time.

For a long time Tamara blamed her parents for her removal from them. Now, she believes it was the governments fault. However, this change in her thinking has not brought her closer to her parents. For Tamara, there is an immovable barrier between her and her parents. She believes that her confusion about her identity and her lack of knowledge and experience of the Aboriginal culture, has made it very difficult to establish a good relationship with her parents.

Tamara has internalised most of her feelings. She does not communicate to others the pain and suffering she experienced as a child and continues to experience. She longs to be loved by her parents. She wants nothing more than to feel at ease, to feel close to her parents. Tamara desperately wants to have a relationship with her parents that Josie has with them.

(i) Greg's story

Date of Birth:	12 March 1961
Place of Birth:	Narrogin
Family Details:	Greg is the tenth oldest child of the Wilson family and youngest one removed from his parents. He has never married but did live in a defacto relationship with the mother of his four children.

Greg was about six months old when he was taken away from his parents along with his other siblings. He was at SKCH until he was about eight years of age and then for some reason unknown to him he was fostered out. Greg stayed with his foster parents until he was about 15 years old.

A memorandum dated 21 February 1972 from a Social Worker to the Supervisor of the CWD, states that Greg's foster mum:

> was informed of Neville and Joanne's request to see Greg and also that at the moment it did not seem a return to them of Greg was possible. She [foster mum] was not happy at the news that Neville and Joanne were still wanting his return...

A CWD report on the 8 June 1972 states:

> The foster parents would describe themselves as upper middle class [English] and may later find it difficult to accept that Greg will want to seek out the company of other part Aboriginals. Their brief contacts with Greg's siblings have convinced them that he is better off without them. This may be so but I feel these aspirations for Greg are too high and that he may drop out.

Greg remembers little about his time at SKCH. The only event he can recall is a visit from his parents. He was happy to see them and cried for a long time after they left. He still remembers the sorrow in the faces of his parents as they waved goodbye.

From the time he left SKCH at about eight years of age until he was 14 years old he cannot recall seeing any of his family except for a brief visit by one or two siblings. He also

remembers an incident at Subiaco Oval when he was playing in the Little League during half time of a State of Origin game. He was running around the boundary line of the oval when his elder sister Josie called out and he saw her as they ran past.

Greg never associated with Aborigines or knew anything about Aboriginal culture whilst he was with his foster parents. He realised he was Aboriginal but he did not feel Aboriginal. He was confused about who he was or where he should be.

When Greg was approximately 14 years of age his father and sister, Josie, came to his school. His father stayed in the car while Josie sought him out in the playground. She asked him if he wanted to return to his parents home. At first, Greg was confused. It was a shock to suddenly see his sister and then for her to ask him if he wanted to return to his parents.

He did not know what to do. He was not happy at school but he was unsure about going with his sister to his parents home. He was scared about agreeing to go and scared about not going with Josie. To this day, he still cannot explain why he decided to go with Josie.

He felt very shy and embarrassed when he met his father in the car. He felt very uncomfortable on the journey back to his parents home in the Wheatbelt region. Greg did not speak to his father on the journey. His father attempted some small talk with him. Greg was happy that Josie was in the car as she spoke to both Greg and their father which helped to ease the tense atmosphere.

Back with his parents, Greg worked as a farm hand. He worked as a farm hand with his father until he was 17 years old. Even though he lived with his parents during that time he could not get very close to them. He felt there was a vital link missing between him and his parents.

When he reached his early 20s he thought more about his removal and blamed his parents. This made the relationship with his parents even more difficult. However as he became older he realised that it was not his parents fault. He believes that the government's object of assimilation is responsible for what happened to him.

Greg finds it difficult to verbalise the effects that being separated from his parents and siblings have had on him. He thinks that it has affected him subconsciously as he finds it difficult to form close relationships.

Greg believes that his removal from his parents and subsequent institutionalisation has denied him necessary parenting skills. He feels very guilty that he lives apart from his children. He believes that he has failed as a parent; he should be in close contact with them. He is concerned that his children will grow up with the same anxieties he has, anxieties he puts down to being away from his parents.

(iii) Sharon

Date of Birth:	22 October, 1940
Place of Birth:	Mogumber
Family Details:	Sharon is the third youngest out of seven children. She is married with eight children.

(a) The removal

When Sharon was about five years of age (around 1945) she and her sister were placed in the New Norcia mission by their parents, presumably to receive educational training.

(b) Life at New Norcia mission

Sharon and her sister were very unhappy at the New Norcia mission. They told their parents they wanted to leave the mission. Sharon's parents wanted their children back and they were concerned about their children's education at the mission as they appeared to emphasise religious education over general school subjects.

Within four years of being removed to the New Norcia mission, Sharon's mother informed the monk/priest who was deputising for the Abbot, of her children's desire to leave the Mission. The monk/priest said that he did not mind them leaving but they needed the permission of the Sister Superior of the Mission. The Sister refused but Sharon's mother nevertheless removed the two children. Another sibling remained at the mission.

Sharon and her sister stayed with her parents at Caversham. The parents were living in a camp on a winery where Sharon's father was employed.

Sharon and her sister played truant whilst at the school in Caversham. However, as confirmed in a file note, dated 1949 (month unknown) by the NAD Inspector for the Murchison District Sharon's parents dropped off their children at the Caversham school each day and as far as they were aware their children were at school.

The Acting Sister Superior at New Norcia mission sent a letter dated 1949 (month unknown) to the CWD requesting that Sharon and her sister be returned to the Mission which the Acting Superior considered to be their home.

A warrant to remove Sharon and her sister from Caversham back to the New Norcia mission was issued in late 1949 when Sharon was ten years of age. Sharon and her sister were returned to the Mission where Sharon stayed until she was 16 years old.

Sharon recounts her days at the New Norcia mission as being terrible. She remembers suffering from severe stone bruises on her feet due to walking bare foot on the gravel. One of her feet was infected for seven months. She did not receive any medical treatment. Sharon also had a cross left eye which needed to be operated on to assist her sight. Appointments were made by the NAD for Sharon to attend a doctor at Royal Perth Hospital, but the appointment was never kept. Sharon said that the Reverend Mother of the Mission commented to her that she was beautiful enough and that the mission would not pay for her operation. Apparently it would make her more attractive and, as she would only be on the streets when she left the mission she would live in sin.

A report dated 1949 (month unknown) from the NAD Inspector for the Murchison District to the Commissioner for Native Affairs states that Sharon had a very bad cross eye "which indicates to me that New Norcia was not attending to her medical requirements such as glasses ..."

Sharon received a number of floggings with a double horse strap as a form of punishment for back chatting the nuns, not completing some school work or talking whilst in the queue waiting for meals. Sharon has a scar on her right cheek as a result of a beating with a strap.

During her 11 years at New Norcia mission the diet she received was very poor. She finds this difficult to understand because the mission was situated in a rich farming land where everyone had good food except the children at the mission. Often she had to eat sheep head broth for breakfast. The evening meal would consist of left over meat such as shanks or scrap meat that was cooked in two large pots with water and salt to taste. Sharon recounts that a lot of the food was unfit for human consumption.

The culture in the New Norcia mission was Spanish and Catholic. Sharon was never encouraged to pursue her Aboriginal culture or to seek out her Aboriginal history. In a letter dated 1949 (month unknown), to the Commissioner of Native Affairs the NAD Inspector for the Murchison District states that Sharon and her sister should not be placed back in the Mission as "this is interfering with one of the four freedoms which Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt used to speak so strongly about, that is, freedom of religion".

Aged 16, Sharon left New Norcia mission to work at the New Norcia Hotel. She stayed there for about one year before she went to work on a station for a short period of time and then returned to the Mission. It was not until she moved to Perth at 18 years of age that she was able to sever the control that the Mission had over her.

(c) Life after New Norcia mission

Sharon recounts that on some occasions when she visited her two younger sisters who were still at the New Norcia mission she would take her own children with her. On these visits, the nuns would enquire about keeping her children at the Mission. This created great panic and anxiety for Sharon. The traumatic experiences she suffered while at the Mission flooded back to her. Sharon had a fear that her children would be taken away from her as she was from her parents. She became very protective of her children and now her grandchildren.

Sharon believes that she was robbed of a happy childhood. She constantly thinks about the past which upsets her deeply. She has nightmares about the punishments she received at the New Norcia mission. Often Sharon will cry openly when she thinks abut her childhood. She is also very upset that she was denied her Aboriginal culture and "forced" to leave Western Australia.

(iv) Charles

Date of Birth:	6 June, 1940
Place of Birth:	Carrolup Mission
Family Details:	Charles is the youngest of three children. He was married in 1963 and divorced in 1982. He has fathered four children.

(a) The removal

Charles's mother was removed to Carrolup Native Settlement in 1940, along with her three children which included Charles. The warrant dated 1940 (month unknown) for the removal of Charles' mother and her three children states inter alia:

> Charles' mother has now had three children by three different white men. For this reason it has been decided to remove her to Carrolup Settlement, and I shall be pleased, therefore, if you will arrange for the warrant to be executed.
>
> By removing this woman to the settlement we shall be able to assure ourselves that she will have no further intercourse with white men.

Shortly after being placed at Carrolup Native Settlement, Charles was taken from his mother and removed to SKCH.

(b) Life at Sister Kate's Children's Home

Charles has bad memories of SKCH. He remembers being belted many times for the slightest little mishap and being punished by being denied outings and depravation of meals. Whilst at SKCH he was told by the staff there that he did not have a mother or father as they were killed in car accidents. It was not until he went back to a reunion at SKCH as an adult

and was put in contact with the adoption centre in Perth that he was informed that he still had a living mother, father, brother and two sisters.

At SKCH, Charles felt very lonely and unwanted. He craved love and to meet some family. He wondered if he had any family. He was confused as to where he came from, where he belonged.

Whilst at SKCH, Charles did not realise he was Aboriginal. He never received any education in Aboriginal culture or history. The only contact he had with Aboriginal people was with the Aboriginal children he mixed with at SKCH.

(c) Life after Sister Kate's Children's Home

Charles spent 23½ years in the armed services. He believes he joined the army because he was looking for a regimented environment like SKCH.

He believes that being removed from his family has affected him in many ways. It has affected his relationship with his sister who was removed to SKCH with him. However, while at SKCH, he did not know she was his sister. His marriage broke up when his wife found out that he was Aboriginal and also it has affected his relationship with his mother. His mother blames him and his sister for not trying to search her out as soon as they were released from SKCH. His father would not admit that Charles is his son.

Charles has had great difficulty in coming to terms with his Aboriginality. He feels very ignorant of the Aboriginal culture but he is uncomfortable with the 'white' culture. He believes that his children have also missed out on their Aboriginal heritage and this is very painful for him. He feels he has failed as a parent, because he cannot teach his children about the 'Aboriginal ways.'

Charles believes that the 'white authorities' have much to answer for and the government is responsible for denying him his natural right to an upbringing with his family and his cultural. Charles believes his removal robbed him of his extended Aboriginal family,

Aboriginal culture and has confused his identity.

(v) Cummings Family

(a) Leigh's story

Date of Birth: 9 August, 1934

Place of Birth: Brunswick

Family Details: Leigh was born in 1934 and had one sister who died in 1983. She was removed in 1948. She was married in 1952. Her husband is now deceased. Leigh mothered eleven children, of which two are deceased. The eldest, Kay, was taken away when a teenager from her mother. Kay has three children. Kay has twice married. She was first married in 1971 and divorced in approximately 1977. She married again in 1985, separating in 1989.

In 1948, when Leigh was 14 years of age, the police came to the Gnowangerup Native Reserve (she was living there with her father and his family) and without explanation took her to the police station and then transferred her to Carrolup Native Reserve. The police never told her why she had to go. Leigh was distraught in not being able to say goodbye to her father, who, at the time was working away from the Gnowangerup Native Reserve.

A letter dated 21 May 1948 from the Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs to the Protector of Natives in Katanning, states:

> the Honourable Minister for Native Affairs has approved of the issue of warrants for the removal of a number of native women from the Katanning district to Carrolup Native Settlement because of their general unsatisfactory conduct and lack of industry. The necessary documents have been forwarded to the Commissioner of Police, therefore you may expect to receive them within the next few days.
>
> I was unable to present the cases of the girl named Leigh as this department has no record of her parentage, therefore I am unable to determine her exact caste.

A subsequent letter dated the 23 June 1947 from the Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs to the Honourable Acting Minister for Native Affairs states:

> it is now revealed that Leigh is a half-caste approximately 14 years of age, and as she is not in employment, or under the control of her parents, I recommend that you approve of the issue of a warrant for her removal from the Katanning District to Carrolup Native Settlement. I deem this action necessary as you will notice that Constable Haslie has reported that these native women have been responsible for a number of male natives leaving their place of employment.
>
> Employment for natives is plentiful these days, and those who show a lack of industry must be disciplined firmly by a period of detention at a departmental settlement, as I consider it is my duty to eradicate the existing lack of a sense of responsibility which is apparent in many male and female natives these days.

Leigh stayed at the Carrolup Native Settlement for about five months. She described the settlement as being run by 'nasty white people' and remembers doing a lot of domestic duties. While at the Carrolup Native Settlement she did not attend school.

A friend of Leigh's father wrote to the Commissioner of Native Affairs asking that Leigh be returned to her father. The Commissioner of Native Affairs was not agreeable to this request and stated that Leigh was to be transferred from Carrolup Native Settlement to East Perth Girls Home in order to receive training as a domestic. However because East Perth Girls Home was not in operation at the time due to renovations taking place, Leigh was transferred to Boyup Brook to work as a domestic for a non-Aboriginal family.

Leigh felt very lonely and unloved while at Boyup Brook. She felt as if she was a slave - just there to work, not to be considered a human being with feelings. She went back to Collie for a holiday and stayed. She did not want to leave her mother again.

A little later, Leigh travelled to Perth to see her sister who was hospitalised in Princess Margaret Hospital. During that time Leigh was staying in Fremantle with her mother. Leigh was at the beach near Fremantle when a police officer on horse back picked her up and removed her to a cell at the Fremantle Police Station. She had no idea why she was incarcerated. She stayed at the Fremantle Police Station for a day or so and then was

transferred to Bennett House. (Bennett House was a house located in Bennett Street, East Perth, where Aboriginal girls and young women were sent to prepare them for work as domestic servants in the houses of white people. Young women also stayed in Bennett House when they were in between jobs). From Bennett House she was transferred to Mogumber mission.

Leigh remembers Mogumber mission as being no different from her stay at Carrolup Native Settlement or working as a domestic at Boyup Brook. She received no love or nurturing and her only role was to do domestic chores. She received very little education during her stay at Mogumber mission.

At school at Mogumber mission, Leigh remembers the teachers saying things like you don't need to be here, or it doesn't matter if you don't learn. This further lowered her low self-esteem.

Leigh stayed at Mogumber mission for about a year and then she was allowed to return to Collie to stay with her mother. While in Collie she formed a close relationship with a male named Jerry. They left Collie and moved around the south-west of the State.

In Bridgetown they were both charged with stealing a bicycle (for which Leigh has always maintained her innocence) and Leigh was defined as a 'neglected child.' Leigh was transferred to Bennett House and then onto a station in Meekatharra where she worked as a domestic.

Whilst in Meekatharra she found out that she was pregnant with her eldest child, Kay. Jerry was the father. Leigh had lost contact with Jerry.

Leigh ran away from the station in Meekatharra and for two or three days travelled on foot heading south. She would walk at night time and eat what she could find on the side of the road. She finally managed to obtain a lift to Perth and then she made her way down to Collie.

A letter dated 18 April 1951 from the District Police Officer of the Southern Districts to the Commissioner of Native Affairs states:

> Leigh is living with her mother ... near Collie. ... the girl attains the age of 18 years on the 1 August next i.e. 3½ months from now. This will coincide with the end of her pregnancy. It seems hardly worthwhile that the girl should be sent to an institution for the remaining period; I think she would be better off with her mother who could look after her during the later months of her pregnancy. According to Sergeant Charles the girl has been doing casual housework around Collie.

Leigh gave birth to her eldest daughter, Kay in Collie on 11 July 1951.

Leigh is badly affected by her removal from both parents and family. She only has bad memories of the time spent at the Carrolup Native Settlement, Boyup Brook, Mogumber mission and the Meekatharra Station. She often cries when she thinks about her childhood away from her family. Leigh believes that she has been psychologically damaged. She often becomes very depressed and extremely anxious about the past. She is also very embarrassed about the period away from her family. She believes that people will think she is worthless.

Leigh's oldest daughter, Kay was removed from her (see below). This only made Leigh more confused. She could not understand why her life had been so painful. She wonders why she had been punished, firstly by being removed from her parents and then having her daughter removed from her.

(b) Kay's story

Date of Birth:	11 July 1951
Place of Birth:	Bunbury
Family Details:	Kay has been married twice. She married in 1971 and divorced in approximately 1977. She remarried in 1985, separating in 1989. She has three children.

When Kay was 14 or 15 years of age the police came to her home and took her and her

mother to the Bunbury hospital. They wanted to conduct an examination to see if she had lost her virginity. The examination was part of an investigation against her boyfriend for carnal knowledge. Kay was devastated by the intentions of the authorities and she sat in trepidation on the hospital bed as the doctor came into the room with a Native Welfare Officer. She was very distressed and protested about the examination. The doctor leaned over her and told her that if she didn't have the examination at the hospital, it would be done at the police station. The examination proved that Kay was still a virgin.

However, Kay's boyfriend was still charged with carnal knowledge but due to lack of evidence was not convicted. He was then drafted to the Vietnam War. Kay is very upset about being tested for her virginity and her boyfriend being charged for carnal knowledge. Kay believes to this day that if it was not for that incident she would have married her boyfriend. Kay is very saddened that she never married her boyfriend, because her subsequent marriages have been failures. She maintains occasional contact with her ex-boyfriend.

Very shortly after the 'virginity examination incident' Kay appeared in the Bunbury Children's Court charged with being 'an uncontrollable child.' She was committed to the care of the CWD until the age of 18 years of age. A few months previously Kay had been charged as 'an uncontrollable child' and placed on probation for a year. CWD officers had decided Kay had broken the terms of the probation by not returning home every night. Kay believes that she was treated harshly. Although she did spend some nights away from home she never committed any criminal offence.

After being charged 'uncontrollable', Kay was sent to Roelands Mission.

Whilst at Roelands Mission Kay cried and pined for her family. On a number of occasions she ran away back to her home in Bunbury. Each time she was picked up by the police and returned back to Roelands Mission.

Kay has bad memories of her stay at Roelands Mission. She was only at the mission a few months but she remembers being subjected to physical punishment every time she ran away.

To deter her from running away she was made to stay in her pyjamas during the day.

After being at Roelands Mission for a couple of months Kay was transferred to Longmore Detention Centre. Kay had never committed a crime so she is unsure why she was sent to Longmore. After two or three weeks at Longmore she was allowed to go and stay with her aunty in Narrogin.

Whilst at Narrogin, Kay continued to pine for her parents and family. One night she left Narrogin and started walking towards Williams. When she finally reached Williams she obtained a lift to Bunbury. When she arrived at Bunbury she saw her mother and father and her little baby sister sitting in a park. She went over to them but her mother was afraid that the police would pick her up and place her in jail. Her mother told her that she had better leave. Kay spent the night sleeping in another park.

Leigh felt very guilty in telling her daughter to leave. She felt she was a failure as a parent; she was unable to protect her daughter. Kay was deeply hurt that her mother told her to leave. She realised that her mother was trying to protect her from the police, but Kay felt so lost and rejected.

The day after she saw her family, Kay was picked up by the police and sent to Longmore again. After a couple of weeks at Longmore she was transferred to Karingal hostel in Melville. She continued to miss enormously parents and family. She started pining again.

After only a few weeks or months, Kay ran away from the Karingal hostel. She slept the night in a car that was parked on a side street. It was cold and raining outside. The police picked her up and placed her at Longmore Detention Centre from where she was sent to work in a hospital as a nurses' aide. She felt very lost at the hospital. She knew no-one there. She left the hospital after a couple of weeks and was once again picked up by the police and returned to Longmore. She was then transferred to the Home of the Good Shepherd in Leederville.

She was at the Home of the Good Shepherd for about ten months. Her time there was very horrific. She was herded around and made to feel as though she was part of a mob of cattle, and a source of cheap labour.

In mid 1967, aged 16 years she was discharged from the Home of the Good Shepherd at Leederville and allowed to return to Bunbury.

Kay is still affected by the traumatic experiences between the ages of 14 and 18. She still cries inside when she thinks about that period. Kay finds it particularly painful to recall the suffering her mother endured when she was removed from her mother. Kay believes her mothers' pain about her own removal was aggravated when, she, as her daughter was removed to Roelands Mission.

Kay dearly hopes that one day her mother and herself can wipe away the pain of the past. However, she feels this will never be possible.

(vi) Russell

Date of Birth:	11 October 1944
Place of Birth:	Kellerberrin
Family Details:	Russell was the fifth oldest out of ten children. He has nine children. The two oldest were born to his wife, the marriage being of four years duration. The other children were born to his defacto. He is divorced.

(a) The removal

Russell lived in Doodlakine with his parents on a native settlement.

In 1956, Russell along with three of his other siblings were committed to the care of the State. They were committed to the New Norcia mission until they reached the age of 15 which was later amended to the age of 14. The reason for their committal was 'negligence towards school attendance.'

At the time of his committal, Russell was 13 years of age.

Russell agrees that he did miss some days at school but they were only few in number. Other non-Aboriginal children played truant without being taken away from their parents. The school absence did not affect his school performance, as he was top or near top of the class.

Russell remembers clearly the day he was removed from his parents. With his three siblings and father he was taken into the court room in Kellerberrin. Before two Justices of the Peace, his father was asked questions about his truancy. Russell felt very sorry for this father, having to endure the ordeal of being examined by two Justices of the Peace about whether he was a fit parent.

(b) Life at New Norica Mission

Russell went to the New Norcia mission either in late 1956 or early 1957 and stayed until 1960. He was doing very well in school and a NWD report dated 13 April 1958 states "this boy shows great scholastic promise. Doing excellently in first year junior".

Even though Russell was doing very well at the New Norcia mission school, he was very unhappy there. He was heartbroken with the separation from his parents. He was very upset with being belted with a strap for minor misdemeanours. He never received any love or affection from the monks at the Mission.

Every day during his stay at New Norcia mission, Russell longed for his parents. Only occasionally did he see them. His parents departure after a visit from them would make him very upset. He felt part of his heart being torn apart. He felt so much despair when his parents would leave. He wondered when he would see them again.

Even though Russell was at the New Norcia mission with three other siblings, he rarely conversed with them. The priests and nuns at the Mission discouraged conversation among family members. If he attempted to talk to his siblings, a monk or nun would quickly

remove him and send him away to do a chore.

Russell's natural curiosity and willingness to learn was inhibited at the New Norcia mission. He was never allowed to speak his mind. If he attempted to give his opinion he would be hit with a strap. On one occasion when he sought to disagree with the opinion of his teacher he was punched in the face. Because Russell had to suppress his views for fear of being punished he became very agitated and depressed, which led to his high anxiety condition.

Russell left New Norcia when he was 16 years old. He returned to live with his parents.

(c) Life after New Norica Mission

Russell has attempted to put his time at New Norcia mission behind him. Unfortunately, this has proved unsuccessful. He has been unable to forget the bad memories of the past or overcome his high anxiety. Russell is on medication in an endeavour to control his condition.

Russell is very angry and bitter about what happened to him. He is frustrated and upset about what he believes could have been if he wasn't removed from his parents. He believes that he could have successfully completed higher education if he didn't feel so inhibited, depressed and anxious due to his time at the New Norcia mission. His high anxiety state which he strongly believes is a product of his time at the mission has prevented him from being employed in positions where he must deal with the public. For a short period he was employed as a shop assistant but due to his high anxiety he found it very difficult to speak and serve customers.

(vii) Smart Family

Family Details: Mr. and Mrs. Smart were legally married at Geraldton on 3 February 1927. They had ten children, of which four are deceased. Three of the eight children removed have been interviewed by the ALS. They are the youngest members of the Smart family.

(a) Amber's story

Date of Birth: 24 August 1939

Place of Birth: Geraldton

Family Details: Amber was married in 1959. She has been separated for 32 years from her husband. Amber has eight children. She was one of the eight children who were removed from the parents and made wards of the state.

In 1943 when Amber was just under four years of age she was removed with her siblings from her parents to SKCH.

Amber has very unhappy memories about her stay at SKCH. She recalls a litany of punishment which including being branded with a hot iron from a cottage mother. Amber was branded because the cottage mother accused her of making the cottage mothers' daughter cry.

Whilst at SKCH, Amber only saw her mother infrequently and never saw her father. Her mother stopped coming to see her at SKCH because the staff of SKCH told her mother that her visits were upsetting her children and reminding them of their past.

When Amber was 16 she was discharged from SKCH to the care of her elder sister, Felicity. When she was 18 she met her father. Not long after their meeting he died. Amber is very upset that she never was able to spend much time with him, to get to know him.

Amber feels a loss of her identity. She believes her identity has been confused because whilst at SKCH she was pushed into a white culture and removed from her Aboriginal culture. This has made life difficult for her. She is not comfortable with the 'white ways' but she feels strange in the 'Aboriginal environment.'

Amber has a good relationship with her surviving siblings, especially Bianca and Jewel but her relationship with her mother is very poor. Her attempt to strengthen the relationship with her mother is handicapped by the period of separation. Amber is deeply hurt by the strained relationship with her mother. She feels that a part of her life is missing, that her life is disjointed. She desperately wants to have a close relationship with her mother. She doubts that she will ever be close to her mother. Amber believes that when she was removed, her connection with her mother and her culture were forever severed.

(b) Bianca's story

Date of Birth:	16 January 1941
Place of Birth:	Mt. Margaret
Family Details:	Bianca was married in 1968. Her husband is deceased. She has two children.

Bianca was two years of age when she was removed with her siblings to SKCH. She was identified as a 'spastic paraplegia.' She had difficulty with walking. She could walk with a gross limp and often she would move around by crawling.

Bianca had a bed wetting problem and as a result was treated cruelly by the staff at SKCH. When she wet the beg she was hit and forced to take cold showers in the middle of the night. She had to sit in a corner after wetting the bed and endure the wet bed sheets being placed over her face.

Bianca was separated from her other siblings and rarely had contact with them.

While at SKCH, Bianca never thought she had parents. She never saw her father while at SKCH and does not recall visits from her mum before she was 16 years of age.

When Bianca was aged 16 her mother collected her and her younger sister Jewel from SKCH. She never returned them to SKCH. Her mother was determined that they would stay with her and not be returned to SKCH.

A hand written memorandum from a NWD officer dated June 1958 states that the officer called to the home of Bianca's mother and reports that Bianca was weeping and clinging to her mother. Another hand written memorandum dated 19 August 1958 states:

> late on Friday evening Mr Dean of Sister Kate's Home rang stating that Mrs Smart had arrived at the home at approximately 4.30 pm and said that she was taking Bianca and Jewel away from the home. I informed Mr Dean that we would not agree to Mrs Smart having the children at the present as no information was available regarding her condition.
>
> In spite of this Mrs Smart took the children and Mr Dean informed the police. Mr Dean later contacted Mr Younger [Senior Officer of the NWD] at his home address stating that the girls were with Mrs Smart at 77 East Street, East Perth. I believe that Mr Younger agreed to the girls remaining with their mother for the weekend only.
>
> On Monday morning Mrs Smart called at the dept with the two girls stating that she wished to keep them and went on with quite a number of complaints regarding the treatment of her daughters at Sister Kates. I endeavoured to impress upon Mrs Smart the necessity of the dept being satisfied regarding home conditions before any release could be considered but Mrs Smart became very dogmatic, said that this officer were placing obstacles in her way with regard to the girls returning to home. She said that she would not take the girls back to the home.
>
> It was then arranged for Mrs Smart to call again at this office at 2 o'clock the same day to discuss the situation with you. However Mrs Smart has failed to call and the girls have not been returned to Sister Kate's Home.
>
> Mr Dean also called at the office yesterday and he is of the opinion that because of this upset, he does not think that he will be able to do very much with Bianca and Jewel now, until they be returned. Incidentally he is holding approximately £68.00 in trust on Bianca's behalf ...

Bianca was 14 when her father died. She has no recollection of him. However she remembers one of the cottage mothers at SKCH telling her that because her father never looked after her, she and her siblings were not allowed to go to his funeral.

Bianca was aged 26 or 27 when her mother died. She becomes upset when she thinks about her mother and her failure to have a loving relationship with her mother. She becomes very emotional when she recalls her childhood. Her childhood years were very bleak years and

she believes she was robbed of a happy childhood by being removed from her parents.

(c) Jewel's story

Date of Birth: 4 December 1943

Place of Birth: Geraldton

Family Details: Jewel was married in 1960. She has four children.

Jewel was about three years of age when she was removed to SKCH.

Like her sisters Amber and Bianca, Jewel does not have fond memories of SKCH. She recalls being punished by one of the male supervisors at SKCH. She, along with other girls, were ordered into his office and told to take their underpants down where he would hit them with his slipper across the backside. It did not matter if any girl was menstruating.

During her stay at SKCH, Jewel believes she was constantly being brain washed into believing it was shameful to be Aboriginal and that she should behave like a white person. This has resulted in her being confused with her identity. She does not feel comfortable in the Aboriginal community or the non-Aboriginal community.

Jewel has suffered a nervous breakdown and still has severe bouts of depression. She believes that the cause of this is her removal from her parents, and what she considers to be the infliction of white culture on her and her siblings. Jewel also believes that her removal from her parents was a major factor in her becoming an alcoholic. She would drink to 'wash' away the pain of her childhood.

Jewel still lives in constant fear that her own children could some day be taken away from her. Because of the hurt she went through being removed this fear is at time unbearable to endure. This fear is made worse by the lack of confidence in her ability to bring up her children. Jewel believes that her removal from her parents and the lack of parental role mothers at SKCH is the cause for her fears and insecurities as a mother.

(viii) Malcolm

Date of Birth:	10th December 1954
Place of Birth:	Moora
Family Details:	Malcolm is the oldest child of seven children. The third oldest child is deceased. Malcolm is divorced with three children who live with their mother.

(a) The removal

Malcolm was separated from his parents when he was eight and a half months and admitted to SKCH. At the time he was living with his parents, they were transient, travelling from one town to the next in search of seasoning labouring work.

(b) Life at Sister Kate's Children's Home

Malcolm stayed at SKCH until he was about 12 ½ years old. Malcolm never saw his parents again until he was nearly ten years old. He used to wonder why other children were receiving visits from his parents and he wasn't and it became a major pre-occupation of his life during his stay at SKCH.

After Malcolm left SKCH, he asked his parents why they hadn't visited him at SKCH. His father (step-father) said that he had tried to come to SKCH but the authorities at SKCH had discouraged him from visiting and told him that it would be detrimental to his personal development. Further it was difficult for his parents to come to see him because they engaged in seasonal work hundred of miles from Perth and they had very little money with which to travel up to Perth.

Malcolm would often ask the staff at SKCH why he was not visited by his family or parents. They told him that he did not have family and that he was an orphan. Malcolm used to get into trouble for incessantly asking questions about his family and on occasions he was punished by having to bend over and being hit on the backside with a leather thong by the superintendent. Malcolm was very confused and could not understand what was wrong with asking about his family. He knew that in his mind he belonged to someone.

While at SKCH Malcolm had a number of chores to perform, like chopping wood, cleaning the church, collecting meals from the kitchen and when he was older (nine years plus) he was given more responsible chores which included milking cows. He also had to dig the pits for the rubbish to be deposited in.

Malcolm had to attend church everyday, except Sunday. He attended a Methodist or Presbyterian Church. He was forced to learn the Christian religion, his Aboriginal culture was neglected.

While at SKSH, Malcolm attended Queens Park Primary School and Cannington High. He enjoyed his education at these schools and was happy that there was a reasonably large number of Aboriginal students at both schools.

When Malcolm was aged nine years, and still at SKCH, he was sexually assaulted by three boys aged between 14-15 years.

On 26 March 1964, Malcolm (aged nearly ten years) was visited at SKCH by his parents. (The native welfare records only a visit by his mother when he was nearly ten years old, see below). He describes this as the happiest and saddest day of his life. It was the happiest day of his life because it vindicated what he had always believed, that is he belonged to someone. He knew that he belonged to someone despite being told by SKCH authorities that he didn't. Seeing his parents was final proof that he did belong. He also found out that he had brothers and sisters that he never knew he had. Malcolm still has a present that his father gave him the day they met at SKCH. It was eleven pence half penny and Malcolm has kept this coin as a symbolic token of his belonging. The day was also sad because of the trauma of being punished for asking questions of who he belonged to and the fact that he did belong to someone and was punished for trying to find that out. It was also sad because the reunion with his parents brought to him the realisation that part of his life had been robbed from him by being placed in SKCH rather than being with his parents.

Malcolm was so happy to see his parents and at the same time, he was upset that the "authorities" at SKCH had tried to eliminate his family from his conscience. Malcolm

wanted to go with this parents. Over two years after seeing his parents he was able to return to their care. Malcolm left SKCH on 10 June 1967.

A letter from the Superintendent, Central Division, DNW to the Commissioner of Native Welfare dated 19 August, 1965 states:

> Malcolm has been virtually an institutional orphan. Late in 1956 the whole matter of Departmental subsidy of native children at Sister Kate's was reviewed and it was agreed that native children then in the institution who were not being supported by their parents would be subsidised by this department. In his case Departmental subsidy at standard rates commence as from 1.1.57.
>
> So far as I am aware his mother has made no attempt to contact him until just recently and this probably has motivated the Superintendent of Sister Kate's to seek the prevention of his removal by his mother.
>
> Mrs Evans' [Malcolm's mother] present domestic circumstances are adequate, but not affluent. Her husband has shown himself to be unreliable and unstable in the past, however, and it is hard to say what sort of a stepfather he would make....
>
> If it is considered that he Malcolm should remain at Sister Kate's, legal control by committal would be necessary.

A subsequent letter from the Superintendent, Central Division, DNW to the Commissioner of Native Welfare dated 6 October 1965 states:

> The Superintendent of Sister Kate's Home advised me today that Mrs Evans had again been in contact with him about Malcolm. He stated that her previous visit to the child resulted in Malcolm wetting the bed, which is possibly caused by emotional disturbance. He said he had advised Mrs Evans that she could best serve Malcolm's interests by keeping away from him.
>
> It is quite possible that Mrs Evans will approach me for assistance in gaining custody of him, or gaining access to him and I should like to know the Child Welfare Department's intention before advising her.

Correspondence between the Superintendent of SKCH and the Director of the CWD dated 8 February, 1966 reports:

> With reference to your letter of the 2nd inst. (1235/55) I have to advise you that Mrs Evans called to see us on Sunday....
>
> We gather that she would like to take Malcolm away ....
>
> She had promised Malcolm a wrist watch and a camera, a promise obviously without means of fulfilment and equally obviously made with the motive of purchasing his favours.
>
> Malcolm was admitted to this Home on 3rd August, 1955 at the age of 8½ months and was nearly 10 years old before he saw his mother again. As a matter of fact, I myself have been here 10 years and did not meet her until last Sunday, although I understand that she did call in 1964 and Malcolm was quite seriously disturbed for some months afterwards.
>
> It would not appear, therefore, that her present interest in Malcolm is motivated by any degree of affection of sense of responsibility. The only reason I can see for wishing to take Malcolm is that she may have to pay for his maintenance which is obviously impossible.
>
> I am unable to see any possible way in which his prospects in life can be helped under the care of his mother and step-father, in fact the result could be disastrous to his welfare. I would urge therefore that committal action be proceeded with as soon as possible in order to give him the protection of your Department.

On Malcolm's Native Welfare file, a hand note dated 3 May, 1966 (signature undecipherable) states:

> Mrs Evans called 3/5/66 and told me that she and her husband were quite prepared to have Malcolm home.
>
> They have, according to Mrs Evans, been told by Mr Brennan [from the DNW] to visit Malcolm in order to re-establish a relationship and take him home.
>
> They have been doing this but have been discouraged in their desire to take Malcolm home by Mr and Mrs Smith's [the Superintendent and Administrators of SKCH].

I feel that an inspection of the home should be made and, if anywhere near reasonable, Malcolm should go home. He has been in Sister Kates for nearly 10 years representing most of his life.

I can see no reason for making him a Ward.

An inspection did take place of Mr and Mrs Evans' home. A welfare officer, in a note dated 20 June 1966 reports:

On 13/6/66 I called on Mrs Evans at 65 Crown Street, East Perth, regarding her son Malcolm.

2. Mr and Mrs Evans reside at the above address with their six children ....

3. There are two bedrooms in the house, and a spare room, which could be converted into a third bedroom for Charlie [Malcolm's oldest brother] and Malcolm. However Mrs Evans is short of beds and bedding. If Malcolm's release home is approved, could the Department help with two beds, blankets and sheets for the family.

4. At the time of the visit the house was clean and tidy. By native standards the condition of the house was remarkable. Mrs Evans and the three younger children were all neatly dressed.

5. Mrs Evans said she would like to have Malcolm home, and that her husband keeps on asking about having the boy to live with them.

6. In view of the general atmosphere and conditions in this home I recommend Malcolm's release to the care of his mother.

A letter from the Director of the DNW to the Commissioner of Native Welfare dated 4 July 1966 it is states:

On the 8th February, 1966 the Superintendent of Sister Kate's Children Home wrote to the Department regarding the abovenamed child [Malcolm] ...

Mrs Evans has subsequently made representation to the Department to have Malcolm returned to her care. Mrs Evans has been visited by a Welfare Officer of this Department who has reported on the home circumstances [refers to note of 20 June 1966] ...

> It would appear at present there are no grounds to have this child committed to the care of this Department, nor has the Department any grounds for refusing Mrs Evans custody of her child.
>
> As this child is believed to be a Native in law the matter is forwarded for your consideration.

A letter from the assistant Superintendent of the CWD in Perth to the Superintendent of Native Welfare Central Division Perth dated 13 July, 1966 states:

> The Child Welfare Officer's report and recommendation of 20.6.66 is supported and it is recommended that the child Malcolm Evans be discharged from Sister Kate's Home to the care of his mother Mrs Josie Evans, of 65 Crown Street, East Perth.
>
> Mr Smith of Sister Kate's home has raised some doubt about Mrs Evans' sincerity. It can be pointed out, however, that her attempt to bribe her son with gifts could be her way of coping with a difficult situation: she has been separated from him for a long time and she probably feels that promises such as these will help her gain his affection. Mrs Evans, herself, claims that she did not visit Malcolm as often as she might have done because, on leaving him at Sister Kate's Home, when he was less than 12 months old, she was under the impression that she had renounced her claim on him. As the mother of an illegitimate child she underwent a period of hardship ... She was not clear of her legal position.
>
> ... The Evans' have become quite stable over the past 18 months. There have been no further domestic disputes. After an inspection of their home at 65 Crown Street, East Perth, in July 1965 the conditions were assessed as being quite fair by European standards. There has been no deterioration since. Ben Evans [Malcolm's step-father] is employed as a lay-welder and has held the same position for about 18 months - a very real improvement from an itinerate farm-worker.
>
> The child, Malcolm, will no doubt find it hard to adjust to life outside Sister Kate's home. This is something he must face sooner or later. At this stage there are no grounds to recommend committal action.

(c) Life after Sister Kate's Children's Home

Malcolm left SKCH on 10 June 1957 at approximately 12½ years of age. He went to live with his parents in East Perth which at the time was a lower socio-economic area and

generally considered as the "slums" of Perth.

Malcolm had some difficulties relating to members of his family, especially one of his brothers would call him "willy white onion" and said that he didn't like being with the family. Malcolm felt alienated from members of his family and found it very difficult to make the transition from the institutional life at SKCH to a smaller family situation.

Whilst living in East Perth, Malcolm attended Perth Modern High School.

Towards the end of 1967 his parents separated. His mother went her own way and his father took the other siblings, down to Pingelly to stay with his grandmother on the native reserve. Malcolm went to live with an uncle in North Dandalup where he worked as a farmhand and then moved onto Bunbury.

During second year high school, Malcolm attended high school at Pinjarra and Bunbury. He had a fall out with his uncle and moved back to stay with his mother who was living in Armadale where he attended Armadale High School. His mother's live-in partner was violent towards his mother and on one occasion when trying to protect her from her partner, Malcolm had his ribs and nose broken and received two black eyes. After this altercation Malcolm left and moved in with his grandmother and brothers and sisters on the Pingelly Reserve. He dropped out of school for a while and then returned to finish his leaving at Pingelly High School.

Malcolm was a very angry and confused teenager. He was still trying to come to terms with his separation from his parents and also being subjected to racial abuse by "white" boys.

After completing his leaving certificate, Malcolm obtained an apprenticeship with Western Australian Government Railways and then had a position with the Crown Law Department followed by a three year stint in the Army. He then commenced a university degree in psychology and subsequently gained a responsible managerial position.

While Malcolm has achieved success in education and a management career, he is still tormented by the effects of his separation from this parents and placement in SKCH.

The incident whereby he was sexually assaulted by three boys at SKCH has had a severe effect on his relationship with a number people including his ex-wife. At times he becomes very angry with people and himself. He has received counselling in relation to the effects of the sexual assault on him. He has been diagnosed as being depressive and suffering from anxiety. Malcolm referred himself to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre which is helping him work through all the various feelings associated with the sexual assault incident.

In addition to the sexual assault, the most enduring affect of being separated from his parents is the effect it had on his relationship with his family. There appears to be some barrier that cannot be broken down between Malcolm and the rest of his family and which somehow separates him from the closeness of his family and inhibits his awareness of the family network and who his relations are.

(xi) Jenny

Date of Birth: 29th August, 1956

Place of Birth: Geraldton region

Family Details: Jenny is the third oldest in a family of six children. She is a divorced mother of three children. Their ages range from 18 to 25 years old.

(a) The removal

Jenny was approximately four years and seven months of age when she was removed from her mother and step-father by the CWD in 1962. It was alleged that her parents had neglected her. He two younger sisters and younger brother were also removed by the CWD on or around the same time. Two older brothers were not removed.

She and her other siblings were taken to the Mt. Lawley Receiving Home. At the Mt. Lawley Receiving Home she constantly cried and felt that she was an animal to be looked at and maybe approved of.

(b) Foster-care

After a couple of months at the Mt. Lawley Receiving Home Jenny was taken to a foster home in the metropolitan area. She remembers it being a horrific experience. She had bed wetting problems for which she received beltings from the foster mother. Complaints were made to the CWD by neighbours who heard the beltings and Jenny screaming. The CWD interviewed the foster mother and Jenny but were satisfied with the foster mother's treatment of Jenny. It is not clear whether the CWD interviewed the neighbours who made the complaints.

After four months Jenny went back to the Mt. Lawley Receiving Home for a short period and then to another foster home. She stayed at her second foster home for about four to six months. She enjoyed her stay there but the foster parents decided that they did not want to keep her as they were moving to Sydney. Jenny went for a weekend to another family with whom she was apparently very happy. However, that family wanted to adopt a child other than Jenny. She is not sure why they didn't want her. This upset Jenny very much and for a long period she thought she was not good enough.

Shortly after Jenny had been taken away from her family, her mother and step-father wrote to the NWD enquiring about Jenny and asking them to forward a letter to Jenny and the other children. Jenny states that she never received any letters from her mother or her step-father.

Approximately one year after Jenny had been taken away, an application was made by her parents for her return and also the return of her other siblings.

In late 1962 preparations were being made by the NWD for the return of the children to their parents. In a letter dated 2 November 1962 from the Commissioner of NWD to the Director of CWD it was stated that the parents had cared for one of the siblings very well since she had been returned and that there was no hesitation in recommending that the three other children (including Jenny) be returned as soon as possible. The step-father had deposited with the NWD Officer £20.00 to pay for the fares of the children should their return be granted.

Late in December 1962 Jenny had a fourth foster placement.

In early 1963 Jenny and her brother and sister were returned to their mother. However, on the same day Jenny returned to Perth with a District Welfare Officer. The District Welfare Officer made the assessment which is reported in a CWD file note dated 17 February 1963 that Jenny had 'completely grown away from her family through being brought up in a different environment, besides being without noticeable trace of any Aboriginal features.'

Jenny was then fostered out to a placement in which she stayed until she turned 16 years of age. Jenny was very unhappy with this placement. Her foster mother showed no affection towards her. Later, during her teens Jenny developed behavioural problems, ending up for a short period in Longmore Detention Centre on breaking and entering convictions.

In late 1963, Jenny's mother had inquired whether Jenny could be returned to her for Christmas 1963. A CWD memorandum dated October 1963 reports that the application was rejected as it was "felt that to allow her to go for a holiday would only have a further unsettling affect on the child."

Jenny's mother continued to write to the CWD and the NWD requesting that Jenny be able to be returned to her. The request was never granted even though the CWD in an assessment dated 1964 (month unknown) reports that the parents living conditions and behaviour were 'acceptable.'

A CWD file note dated March 1967 comments that 'Jenny is not aware that she is part Aboriginal. It does not seem necessary that she be told as it is not noticeable from her appearance and she has no contact with family.'

In early 1971 the CWD told her that they would allow her to be reunited with her mother for Christmas. However, her mother died in July 1971. Jenny did not find out about her mother's death until December, when a girlfriend's mother told her. Jenny was expecting to return to her mother in a few weeks. Jenny was devastated with the news. Jenny's foster mother had known beforehand but did not tell her and in fact continued to say to Jenny that

she would see her mother at Christmas.

Aged 17 years, Jenny fell pregnant. The father did not offer any support. Her foster mother and the CWD attempted to persuade her to give up the child but Jenny refused.

(c) Life after foster-care

In 1974 Jenny, aged 18 years, married a man 16 years older. The main reason for the marriage was to get away from her foster mother. She hated her foster mother.

Her marriage lasted for nine and a half years. It was not a happy marriage and a custody battle ensured when Jenny spilt from her husband. Jenny received custody of her eldest child with her ex-husband being granted custody of the two young ones.

A few years after her divorce, her ex-husband was charged with sexual abuse against Jenny's eldest daughter (he was not Jenny's daughter's biological father). When her ex-husband was convicted but not sent to jail, Jenny had a nervous breakdown. She was admitted to the psychiatric ward of Royal Perth Hospital. This resulted in her eldest daughter being placed in foster care. The two other children were also eventually placed in institutional and foster care.

Jenny suffers from severe depression and on at least three occasions has attempted suicide. She has undergone and continues to receive psychiatric counselling.

Jenny feels great pain and sadness by the separation from her mother. She feels much hurt and sorrow about her mother's unsuccessful attempt to get her back. Jenny feels that her life is a vacuum, and that her culture and childhood has been robbed from her. Jenny is unsure about her position in the Aboriginal society and non-Aboriginal society. She is unsure where she fits in society. She is unsure if she can survive; suicide is often on her mind.

(x) Jack Family

Family Details: The Jacks had 11 children between 1952 and 1962. Ten were removed from the parents, seven of which were interviewed by the ALS. They are:

Chris: born 5 April 1952, Merredin, the third oldest child. Prior to marrying in 1990, he lives in a defacto relationship for 16 years. He has eight children.

Spencer: born 4 September 1954, Merredin, the fourth oldest child. He is married with three children.

Pearl: born 20 September 1956, Kellerberrin, the fifth oldest child. She is married with four children.

Winston: born 12 February 1953, Kellerberrin, the sixth oldest child. He is divorced and has three children.

Claire: born 16 January 1960, Kellerberrin, the eighth oldest child. She is not married and has three children.

Noelene: born 21 April 1961, Kellerberrin, the third youngest child. She is not married and has four children.

Andy: born 5 July 1962, Merredin, the second youngest child. He is married with three children.

(a) Background to removal

Alan, Wendy, Chris, Spencer, Pearl, Winston, Claire, Noelene, Andy and Georgia were committed to the care of the State at the Children's Court, in Merredin on 24 February, 1965. All except Georgia were placed at Kurrawang Mission near Kalgoorlie. Georgia was placed in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Thelma, who lived on a native reserve in the Wheatbelt region.

At the time of committal Alan was 14 or 15, Wendy was 13, Chris was 11, Spencer was ten, Pearl was nine, Winston was eight, Claire was five, Noelene was three, Andy was two and Georgia was about six to eight months old.

A CWD report dated 20 February 1965, states the reasons for committal of the Jack children was that their parents were inadequate, showed poor interests in their children, were poor supervisors, were a bad social influence on the children, and provided negative emotional influence for the children. However, it was stated that the locality of the home the parents and the children lived in was 'generally good for native standards.'

Only Chris, Spencer and Pearl remember their home life prior to being taken away to Karrawang mission. They recall their parents moving around the Wheatbelt region in search of work. Much of that time they lived on native reserves. They remember life being happy and playful on the native reserves. Then they moved into Merredin where their father gained employment. Their parents started to drink and fight. They recall their mother attempting to commit suicide.

(b) The removal

The day after their mother had tried to commit suicide by drinking paint, a police officer transported the children, except Georgia to Northam. Georgia had already left to be looked after by Mr. and Mrs. Thelma on a native reserve. They were transported from their home to Northam in a police paddy wagon. After they made contact with the Native Welfare Officer in Northam they were transported to Kurrawang mission in Kalgoorlie. The children were not informed of their mother's condition. Alan, Wendy, Chris, Spencer, Pearl, Winston and Claire remember crying and sobbing for their parents. Noelene and Andy do not remember the removal from their parents.

When they arrived at the Kurrawang mission it was realised that the children at the mission were in Esperance on holiday. The Native Welfare Officer transported the Jack children to Esperance.

When they arrived at the Esperance holiday home it was unattended. They were left at the holiday home on their own. They played with some toys left at the home. Later on, they heard noises emanating from outside. When they looked through the window they saw children on the truck and a number of white adults. One female adult saw them and shouted

for them to come outside. Alan, Wendy, Chris, Spencer, Pearl, Winston, Claire, Noelene and Andy huddled together in a corner near the toy box and started to cry. They were very scared and did not understand where they were.

(c) Life at Kurrawang mission

When they returned to Kurrawang mission they were separated with Alan, Chris, Spencer, Winston and Andy going into one dormitory and Wendy, Pearl, Claire and Noelene into another. They were very upset to be separated from each other. Every night, for at least six weeks, they cried for their parents. Even after this time they still frequently cried for their parents.

They all stayed at the Kurrawang mission until they had reached 18 years of age.

They all had great difficulty coming to terms with being at Kurrawang. They were Nyoongahs. They could not understand why they were in a mission populated by Wongi children. They were very upset to be separated from each other and also from their parents and they just could not understand why they were not with other Nyoongah children. They were never able to talk in their language or to learn about the Nyoongah culture. They were being educated and brought up to be 'white.'

The Jack children were always under the impression while at Kurrawang mission that the aim of the missionaries was to 'brainwash' them into thinking 'white' and to forget their Aboriginal culture. They were even to forget their parents.

At Kurrawang mission they had a number of domestic chores to perform, which included washing, cleaning, ironing and washing. However, their main recollection of their stay at the mission was the pain they felt from being away from their parents and culture.

A psychologist report to the Department of Labor and National Service dated the 21 August 1968 reports:

> Chris received vocational guidance at Kalgoorlie on the 6.6.68.
> ... Test performance indicates that Chris has the capacity for work and training at a moderately school level - practical.
>
> ... During the interview he expressed the desire to return to a station and was not interested in trades or further training. He appeared to really want the station life as a shearer or a cattle hand because he wants the open spaces. Chris would be suitable for further training in basic clerical skills but he lacks interest and motivation rather than ability.
>
> It would appear that in Chris's case, as in so many others, of this environmental background, that the need for motivation seems paramount.

A report dated 12 June 1969 from the Superintendent, Eastern Division to Superintendent, NWD, Central Division states:

> Mr Shere, Kurrawang mission, now advises Chris left his employment recently. Apparently he was left in charge of the farm for 3 weeks but failed to accept the responsibility and on the return of Mr Shere, gave notice.
>
> Mr Shere is particularly interested in the welfare of this lad and considers he has good possibilities provided he is not overcome by undesirable influences.

While at Kurrawang Mission, Pearl caught an infection, which left her partly deaf in one ear. A NWD report on Pearl dated the 23 February 1971 states:

> Remarks by Mission Manager: "Pearl should make good progress. This girl is a delight to have in the home. The only drawback to this girl's success in life are her relatives."

While the Jack children were at Kurrawang mission they never saw their mother. They only remember seeing their father on one occasion for a very brief period.

(d) Life after Kurrawang mission

The Jack family members interviewed state that the saddest thing about being removed to the Kurrawang mission was that they never got to know their mother or father or their eldest brother who died not long after they left the mission. Only some of the family members made contact with their parents after they left the mission.

Spencer relays the story of his reunion with this parents after he left Kurrawang mission at 18 years of age. He went to see his father who was in an old people's home. His father had a stroke and was partly paralysed on one side. He was introduced to his father by Chris who had seen his father a couple of times since leaving the mission. His father said to Chris "who is this Chris?"
Chris said "this is Spencer."
Spencer's father replied "beautiful."

Then Spencer went to East Perth to see if he could find his mother in one of the parks. He found her on the hill up from Gloucester Park Trotting Track. She was camped on the oval near the cemetery. When he met her she said "you are not Chris or Alan then you must be Spencer." Spencer started to cry as he was overcome by delight in seeing his mother who he thought he would never see again. He spent half a day with her and then he left. He eventually made his way back to Kalgoorlie. He never saw his mother again.

The Jack family members interviewed remain very upset and angry about what happened to them. They are angry and upset that their culture was taken away from them and they were made to grow up in an alienated white culture and with children not from their Nyoongah culture. They are very sad that they were never able to reform an intimate relationship with their parents. It upset them that they have failed to adequately impart the Nyoongah culture onto their children. They all feel their childhood was taken away from them.

(xi) Ned

Date of Birth:	15th July, 1965
Place of Birth:	Geraldton region
Family Details:	Ned is second youngest out of five children. The second eldest and youngest are deceased. Ned is single.

(a) The removal

Approximately 17 to 18 months after birth (in 1967) Ned was committed to the CWD until he was 18 years of age on the basis of 'alleged negligence' on the part of his parents. In early 1967 Ned was removed from N-Gala to Mogumber mission. Ned also had a brother at Mogumber mission.

(b) Life at Mogumber mission and Nollamara hostel

Ned recalls Mogumber mission being like a concentration camp. It was a very strict existence with regular physical punishment. Ned remembers being subjected to touching of the genitals by the head master of the school he attended while at Mogumber mission.

Within three years of Ned being committed to the CWD his parents sent a letter, dated November 1969 to the CWD regarding the possibility of Ned being released to them for the summer school holidays. If that was not possible his parents inquired whether they would be able to visit him. The parents also wanted to know where Ned was as they had never been informed on his whereabouts by the Department.

About three to four months after the request was made the parents received a reply from the CWD. It was decided that the children, Ned and his brother James, were too young to make the long journey back to their parents. In a letter to Ned's parents dated 1 May 1979, the CWD Family Welfare Officer states:

> although we realise you must be anxious to see your Ned and James [brother of Ned] we do not generally allow children of pre-school age to leave the mission for visits unless there is some possibility the children will be returning home soon after. A small child may not understand why he is being shifted from mission to home, and then back again, and a short visit this time may upset him a great deal.

Ned was referred to a psychologist whilst at Mogumber. The psychologist's report dated 4 September 1972 states:

> if Ned can spend the rest of his childhood and adolescence under the care of suitable warm, consistent parent figures, his emotional state should improve. If Ned is to be removed from Mogumber, it is important that the next place be permanent. If he is to be fostered, He wouls [sic] have more chance of succeeding if placed with a family with other young children of the level of functionally similar to his age.

Ned moved from Mogumber mission to a hostel in Nollamara around the mid 1970's. He found no real improvement at the hostel. Whilst the regime was not as strict as Mogumber mission, there was still an absence of love and nurturing. Ned felt very unloved and unwanted.

In 1977 Ned's father died in a car accident and in 1979 his mother passed away. On both occasions Ned was not informed of his parents' death until much later, so he missed out attending their funerals. This made him more depressed and alienated. He felt he had no 'roots', no stability to control or guide his life.

(c) Life after institutionalisation

Around 1980 he went to live with his sister. He at last felt some warmth from her but he still suffered from severe depression. He could not put behind him the pain of the past - it continued to stay with him.

In 1982 Ned commenced an apprentice jockey course at Belmont.

In 1983 Ned was discharged from the care of the CWD.

Three and a half years into his four year apprenticeship Ned terminated his apprenticeship. He states that he was demoralised because he was unable to obtain rides. He believes this was because of his Aboriginality.

After leaving his apprenticeship, Ned began drinking heavily. Ned found he did not have any stable roots and he would just wander around trying to find a place to stay for the night, whether it was at someone's home or in the park or the streets.

When he was around 25 years of age Ned had suicidal thoughts. He could not associate or live with Aboriginal people and he could not associate with white people. He was caught in a cultural trap. He cut his wrists and neck and tried to overdose on sleeping pills. He was admitted to Graylands Hospital where he was an in-patient for one month.

Ned still suffers from the pains of his childhood. He has never experienced any love towards him. He cries often when he thinks about the past and not being able to attend his parents funerals. He feels cheated.

Comment

This chapter has provided examples of how the removal policies and practices were implemented and the impact of them on the intended victims. The evidence contained within the cases studies raises a number of legal issues which are discussed in chapter six. The next chapter provides a more in depth illustration and analysis of the impact of the removal policies and practices on one family.

Endnotes

1. Edith, born 1941, 'taken away' aged four.

2. The Supervisor of Parkerville Children's Home in a letter to the Chief Protector of Natives dated 28 April 1932, states that Isobel's mother did visit Isobel at Parkerville Home prior to Isobel's second birthday.

CHAPTER FIVE

ONE FAMILY'S STORY

> Feeling empty. Did not know what future is, what past is. There was nothing out there for me, nothing to look forward to. At the mission it was bad. No mother and father ... no family.[1]

Introduction

This chapter reports on the investigation on the impact of removal and institutionalisation on members of the Smith family who come from the Wheatbelt area of the South-west of Western Australia. The purpose of the investigation was:

- to assess the impact of the removal of children from the family on the individual members of one family and on that family as a whole;

- to record the reflections of the individual family members about their experiences of being removed as children or of having their children removed.

- to assess how the family members have integrated this experience in the context of their present lives - in their family of origin and orientation; and

- to assist the family members to deal with difficult matters which may have arisen during this project and to make appropriate referrals to other agencies or professionals for counselling and support if necessary.

The Smith family agreed to participate in this investigation after individual family members had contributed their histories to the ALS. The Smith family comprises Mary Smith (67) and her children, Joy Jones (50), Barry Smith (47), Wayne Smith (45) and Sam Smith (43). The father of Mary Smith's children, Jack Smith, is deceased and Mary now lives with her de facto husband in a wheatbelt town of Kellerberrin.

Members of the Smith family agreed to be interviewed at their homes and for the interviews to be recorded on audio tape. The interviewees were assured that they could ask for the tape to be stopped at any time and this was done on a number of occasions when they raised sensitive or confidential material or matters which were emotionally disturbing.

Prior to interviewing family members, the interviewer, had access to the following material:

- the statements which various members of the family had made to the ALS; and
- DCD files on the family members which included material from the predecessors of the DCD, that is, DCW, the NWD and the CWD.

This chapter is an analysis of the impact of separation from the family and institutional life on family members. It includes the personal history of each family member which, collectively, have informed this study. The analysis draws extensively on quotes from the interviewees who allowed their voices to be heard.

Impact of Removal on Individual Family Members

(i) Loss of childhood and Aboriginal identity

As previously stated the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families by the State has created a serious dislocation and disorientation for generations of Aboriginal people. Most Aboriginal families have suffered the consequences of the removal and assimilation policy and practices, if not in their immediate families, then in their extended families over a number of generations. Changes in the children's environment are often brought about by

forcible removal or by domestic violence, the effects of alcoholism or the impact of grinding poverty which compel the children to fend for themselves. Among the most serious effects of the removal and institutionalisation of children are loss of childhood and loss of Aboriginal identity. Children who have been forced out of the family environment or who have lost this environment and have been institutionalised at a young age often suffer a loss of childhood because they are obliged to bear the responsibilities of caring for and protecting themselves, their siblings and other children. At another level, children who have had a disrupted childhood and who have not had the opportunity to mature through the stages of psychological and social development within a natural family environment, can experience deep psychological and social problems including personality disorders and emotional immaturity as adults.

There are signs of severe psychological impacts on members of the Smith family. All the family members who were interviewed indicated that they were forced to grow up and assume adult responsibilities when their family of origin broke up. Mary Smith was sent to Carrolup Native Settlement at the age of ten after living with her parents and ten siblings in a stable family environment. The lives of Mary's children were disrupted when Mary left the family as a result of domestic violence and they were sent to St. Francis Xavier Mission at Wandering. Mary, the eldest of three siblings of school-age who were sent to Carrolup supposedly for their education, assumed responsibility for her younger siblings. During their institutionalisation at Carrolup she comforted them and tried to help them deal with the pain of being separated from their parents. Joy, Mary's daughter and eldest child, assumed the role of 'mother' not only to her own brothers, but later also to a three year-old girl who was put in her charge at Wandering. Wayne and Barry, Mary's sons, were also forced to grow up prematurely. They became 'fighters' who actively resisted the constraints of institutional life while they assumed the responsibility of protecting and caring for each other and their younger brother, Sam. Because he was still an infant when the Smith family broke up, Sam appears to have been the most deeply affected. While other family members have been able to talk about their disrupted lives and the impact of institutionalisation in the interviews, and to begin to deal with the pain inherent in this process, Sam avoided the process as he felt he was not ready or able to deal with the issues the interviews may have touched in him. Each of the stories included graphically tells of the emotional and psychological deprivation

suffered by the members of the Smith family and of the ways in which each person attempted to deal with the pain.

For the Smith children, the effects of emotional deprivation and loss of the intimacy of loving relationships were exacerbated by their feeling of rejection from their extended family with whom they lived for about two years before being transferred to Wandering. Two generations of Smith family children who were removed from their families and institutionalised expressed their awareness as adults of the huge chasm between their life before and after the removal. As adults they portrayed their life before removal as the idyllic childhood which they had forever lost. All four who were interviewed referred to the sense of freedom they experienced leading their itinerant lifestyle moving around the wheatbelt as an intact family. They appreciated the Nyoongah culture and lifestyle which gave them this freedom even though they were confined to the outskirts of towns and to reserves, out of sight of europeans. These memories often sustained and reinforced their sense of their Aboriginality in later life. The older the children when they experienced the disruption of their family life, the stronger their sense of themselves as their 'own person' and of their Aboriginality. Sam, who was a baby when their family life was disrupted and who was barely two years old when he was sent to Wandering Mission, continues to have severe difficulty in dealing with the impacts these events have had on his life.

Each member of the family showed a great attachment to the bush. Each felt spiritually and emotionally nourished through contact with nature, and this helped to sustain them in difficult times. Joy and Wayne in particular developed a strong attachment to the bush which symbolised for them the freedom of Nyoongah life. For Joy the bush was her playground "I left everyone to go amongst the trees. And I was happy. ... I still love the gums. I still love the land; that's why I still live so far out of town." Wayne's longing for peace and contentment is bound up with his sense of identity which has been shaped by his love of the land and the bush, "I want to be back in the bush. ... You know this feeling, you got to be home, happy and live at home ... in your own country. ... If it's not there you're going to look for it."

The strict regimentation and institutionalisation of the mission and the imposition of european values on the children led to a crisis of identity when the young people left the mission. The highly-structured mission life, discouraged them from making decisions for themselves and forced them to follow a strict routine. When they were discharged into the wider community they had to fend for themselves and found it difficult to cope. The Smith children were also deeply affected by the traits of the German missionaries, whom they experienced as physically menacing, strict and intrusive people whom Joy in particular linked with their role as the 'enemy' in World War II. The 'white' way was internalised enough to create confusion in the Nyoongah children. Wayne Smith described this confusion which, for him, led to a strong bonding with other young people who had also shared the experiences of mission life"

> The thirteen years I was in the mission, I was institutionalised, I did not know what anything was ... And when I left the mission I was lost. I did not know where to go, where to turn. I had no friends down here. I used to roam the streets of Perth drinking. I was just lost, completely lost. ...
>
> When I got kicked out [of Rossmoyne] I didn't know whether I belonged to the white side or the dark side. So I mixed with other boys who were with me and whose life was the same thing. We used to all go on the grog ... we did have our bad and sad moments but we used to love to talk about it, 'cos it was ... something we shared together.

For Joy, Barry and Wayne, their memories of the freedom of the Nyoongah lifestyle, which they experienced in the reserve and camps where they spent the formative years of their lives, appears to have sustained them emotionally and to have given them the link with their natural environment which helped them to cope in difficult and stressful times. This does not deny the fact that institutional life led to a loss of childhood, disruption in their psycho-social development, severe confusion of identity and a loss of many aspects of their Aboriginality for which they now grieve.

(ii) Loss of role-model of positive family life

A second serious impact of institutionalisation on the lives of the individual family members has been the loss of a positive model of family life. The disruptions in family life and the

absence of a safe environment in which family members could experience the intimacy of loving family relationships deprived the members of the Smith family of a positive family environment. The reality of the deprivation in the lives of the family members has been almost too difficult for the Smith children to deal with even as adults. Although the physical conditions were often harsh, and even though they experienced severe discrimination from europeans as children, Mary Smith and her children all spoke of their memories of the loving environment of their intact nuclear family and the happy times they spent with their extended family in the bush and camps. These memories idealised and romanticised their family situation even though, by all accounts, there was prolonged domestic violence in both generations of the Smith family. The oral accounts of the family members as well as the DCD records (which incorporate the records of the NWD and the DCW) refer to problems within Mary Smith's family of origin and her family of orientation, that is, her husband and children. Joy had great difficulty in remembering significant events in her childhood and admitted that this may have been a way of blocking the memories of the trauma and pain she may have experienced:

> To me mum and dad were loving people. I remember I adored mum .... But being a child I couldn't understand violence ... all I can remember of my father is being this nice man. And it's heartbreaking when mum [says] he's not. And sometimes I saw her with bruises, but I never associated it with my dad.

Barry, the oldest of the boys, remembers the physical and emotional violence at home when their mother and father were living together and the emotional deprivation which was exacerbated when the children were sent to live with members of extended family and which continued right through the period of their institutionalisation. The idealisation of their childhood has been another defense mechanism which has helped the Smith's to cope with the trauma in their lives. This idealisation further functioned to provide an unrealistic image of the family to which each of them aspired and which probably set them up for failure. The Smith children longed for the happy family they did not have. Joy described this longing "And I'd see other families, you know, and they were together, they grow up together, they'd be happy, they'd be sharing things. And I'd be sitting somewhere ... watching. So the

family unit is the main thing I think we lost."

While the image of 'the ideal family' had a powerful influence on the hopes and dreams of the members of the Smith family, the dysfunctional family or the absence of family life provided the real models for their adult lives. In the case of Mary Smith, the institutional life at Carrolup, which displaced her life in a large intact family, deprived Mary of the opportunity to be socialised in the family environment and to develop the ability to have intimate loving relationships. When Mary left Carrolup as a teenager she was employed as a servant. She had consecutive jobs with two families in country towns. When she was working in the second household she met the father of her children, Jack Smith. At that time she was about 16 years old and inexperienced in relationships with members of the opposite sex. Mary's relationship with Jack Smith was violent and ended when Mary left the family because she feared for her life. Although Mary's memories and experience of her own nuclear family were positive, her institutionalisation at Carrolup left her emotionally inadequate in dealing with her relationship with Jack.

The experience of Mary's children was deeply influenced by their childhood in a violent household. They later suffered the effects of severe emotional deprivation when they were transferred to Wandering Mission. To the Smith children, life at Wandering, bereft of the intimacies of family life, was far worse than the violent family situation from which they came, where at least they had contact with their parents and extended family. In turn the Smith children, as adults, developed relationships which were emotionally unsatisfying. Both Barry and Wayne admitted to experiencing severe difficulty in maintaining a relationship with their spouses (*de facto* or *de jure*). Both had had at least three serious relationships, each of a few years' duration, as well as innumerable casual relationships, a pattern which both men attributed to their search for love and intimacy. Now that they were in their 40's, both men indicated that they felt ready for a change from their self-destructive lifestyle which had, up to recently, been dominated by unemployment, alcohol consumption, trouble with the law and periods of imprisonment. Another aspect of their lives was their strong desire to be good parents and the acute sense of failure that they had not achieved this goal because they had been absent to their children for much of their children's lives, just as their father had been absent to them.

(iii) Sense of rejection and abandonment

All members of the Smith family who were interviewed expressed their deep sense of rejection which is a direct result of their institutionalisation and loss of family. This was accompanied by a bewilderment and confusion in the face of the perceived and actual rejection. As children they could not understand why they had been abandoned by their parents. They spent the initial months of their stay in the institution grieving the loss of family and trying to make sense of the rejection. This grief at the loss of family and the anger and disappointment at being rejected remained with them for the rest of their lives. Mary expressed her experience of this situation:

> Mum and dad had to leave [Carrolup] and that was heartbreaking. That was absolutely heartbreaking. I've never ever felt so alone, so depressed. And I cried and cried for months and months after and so did my sister and brother. And we used to be huddled in the corner wondering what the world was coming to, why we were in there and mum and dad wasn't with us. They couldn't stay, they had to go.

Mary's children also described their sense of grief at being abandoned by their mother and later their father, and then being badly treated by their extended family with whom they had to live. Joy, Wayne and Barry expressed the deep sense of rejection they experienced through the actions of members of their extended family who were not able to adequately feed or clothe them and whom they felt resented their presence. They felt unwanted, unloved and alone, having only each other for comfort. In effect these children felt totally abandoned by the adults around them. This sense of abandonment became even more pronounced when they were transferred to Wandering Mission and left there with little contact with their father, mother and extended family. Wayne articulated what it was like to feel rejected and abandoned by family:

> The worst part about it is being without your family, being without your family life. The love and care you get from family life. When I used to see other kids, how their family used to treat them, I used to get really jealous. I used to say, "I wish I got a family." But I was not welcomed; I could not get back to mum and dad, there was no life there. They both were alcoholics

> ... There was a lot of bad blood from my family, dad's family. We was stuck between, we was the meat between them. ... I used to hate some of my family ... [I wondered] why we were left on the street. Why everyone else had their own people. Us given leftovers. While they were feeding their kids, we'd be sitting outside waiting for the leftovers. It is very heartbreaking.... All we had was one piece of bread. ... I would make it last as long as I can. Cos that's all we'd get to eat. All day.

Life at Wandering exacerbated the sense of abandonment and rejection experienced by the children, especially when they waited to see who would visit them on weekends and holidays. The emotional pain was so great that the young Smith children eventually withdrew into themselves and tried to blot out the painful memories. Joy described the sadness of the long and futile waits for visits from her parents and family:

> Here we are standing waiting to see who'd turn up and really you'd linger to the last. And then you'd look back and see these kids with their mothers and fathers. It was heartbreaking. ... [I would] go away and stand in the corner and cry because my mum and dad, well nobody, turned up. ... You felt that you were really abandoned. That no one cared and it was an unhappy time. And then a lot of times you don't remember anything because it was so regimented, so strict.

(v) Loneliness

The sense of abandonment led to a feeling of loneliness which each of the Smith family members described. This 'aloneness', the separation from others, feeling different from the other children at the Mission because they had little contact with their own family members intensified during the time they were institutionalised. Joy, Barry and Wayne all identified themselves as 'loners' and recognised that this was their method of coping with the pain of separation and abandonment. It was also a way to create a private space for themselves within the highly structured institution which regimented practically every minute of their waking lives. It was thus one of the means through which the children dealt with the structural abuse of the institution which insisted on the separation of family members. Joy, who was sent to Wandering when she was nine or ten years old, has vivid memories of being kept apart from her brothers at the mission. Being given a three year old girl to care for did

not alleviate the distress and the pain caused by this separation from family:

> I knew I had brothers there and saw them at meal times and everything. Never saw them to play with, never had any decent contact with them, but I knew they were there, sometimes, like at church meetings and things. But we was segregated between the girls and the boys. No contact. No real [offer of contact], "This is your brother, you must be with him for a while", or something like that.
>
> The loneliness, oh, the loneliness. In the family being abandoned. It would have been OK if they had let me have a bit more contact with my brothers. But like I said, they lived half a mile across the other side of the paddock and I had hardly any contact whatsoever.

One of the effects of the loneliness and sense of abandonment on the emotional life of the abandoned is the disruption of the person's ability to form and maintain intimate relationships and the development of low self-esteem, a feeling of unworthiness. While there is a yearning for intimacy, the closeness to another person becomes difficult to sustain. Wayne articulated the effects of the loneliness and abandonment on his emotional life and his inability to maintain an intimate relationship:

> It is really hard to describe this loneliness and heartache. ... I used to mess around before but these days I can't seem to live with anybody. I live by myself and I feel good. I feel that I am by myself , my own person. ... [In relationships] you think that there is something missing and you ... can't bring it back. ... It is something you've lost forever.

In their youth both Barry and Wayne soon slipped into a disruptive lifestyle of substance abuse and alcoholism in their attempt to ease the emotional and psychological pain of rejection and loneliness. This behaviour is also another symptom of low self-esteem.

(v) Anger and guilt

A major effect of rejection and abuse is anger in the recipient of the abuse. A healthy adult who has been abused or is under threat reacts by fight or flight. In children this reaction is

complicated by the fact that the abuser is often an adult who has greater power than the child and whom the child often is unable to challenge. The abusing adult also has a powerful psychological impact on the child who is often coerced to secrecy. Abused children begin to believe that the abusive relationships are natural and normal. Mary Smith experienced the trauma of being removed from a loving family environment and living in the harsh institutional environment at Carrolup Settlement as a consequence of the implementation of the policy of assimilation. This institutionalisation contributed to problems in her own psychological and emotional development which later had consequences in the lives of her children. The Smith children experienced physical, emotional and psychological abuse at the hands of the adults in their own family and from the adults in the institution. They also experienced the abuse which was the result of the institutional structure and processes which dehumanised the young children who were in care.

The Smith children have only recently been able to articulate their anger relating to their mother's leaving them and their institutionalisation. For a long time, and right into their adulthood, all four of Mary's children found it difficult to accept their mother's leaving them. They blamed her for the break-up of their family, and their eventual transfer to Wandering. As far as they were concerned, Mary was the cause of their unhappiness. Unfortunately, the children had neither the opportunity nor the means to express their feelings of disappointment and anger about their mother's departure. They kept these feelings to themselves until their adulthood when, through their mother's and their own efforts at reconciliation, they have begun to have an easier relationship with her. The Smith children did not have the opportunity to express their anger and hurt at the harsh treatment they experienced when they were in the care of their extended family. They harboured this resentment and anger up to the time they were interviewed for this project when they began to articulate this resentment of their extended family for the first time.

The harsh structures and processes of institutional life at Wandering and the violent treatment they received at the hands of the missionaries who cared for them has engendered deep anger in each of the Smith children. It was perhaps a little easier for them to articulate this anger and to blame the external 'enemy' who had caused them such pain. However, the anger and rage which has been expressed and the acting out of such behaviour in which the boys

engaged, were probably prompted by and contained the anger engendered by their total life situation, including the unresolved anger they felt towards their own family. By the time Barry and Wayne were taken to Wandering Mission as young boys, both had learned to physically fight for their own survival and they continued to fight for the rest of their lives, even though this eventually brought them into conflict with the law. The Smith boys were openly resistant to the mission structure and processes as they actively tried to avoid being transferred to the mission and once there, they continued to challenge the authority of the German missionaries. Joy has found it more difficult to express her anger because she considered anger to be a negative emotion. Although she has experienced more abuse, hurt and rejection in her adult life, she has tended to internalise her anger and rage. This has had a detrimental effect on her health to the point where she now suffers from a chronic illness. At the time of my interview with her, Joy was undergoing counselling to deal with her anger which is only now surfacing and with which she now feels she can deal.

Associated with deep anger is the feeling of guilt for all that a person identifies as 'things not done', actions taken and angry or negative feelings towards others. The feeling of guilt is stronger when it is associated with feelings towards significant others, including parents or family members. The Smith children were not in a position to take any direct action to prevent the domestic violence in the household, or their parents separation, or their institutionalisation. Feelings of guilt associated with all they may or may not have done during their childhood have been carried into their adulthood, particularly as they become more aware of the dysfunctional patterns of relating. And this awareness has been stressful for Barry, Wayne and Joy who are only now beginning to deal with the effects of their previously dysfunctional relationships. However, it represents a new point of transition and growth for each of them.

(vi) Alcoholism and substance abuse

Each of the family members who was interviewed, except Joy, had developed a serious dependency on alcohol. They first took to alcohol to alleviate the sense of hopelessness and the emotional pain in their lives and were socialised into drinking among their Nyoongah peers. Although she had not drunk alcohol when she was caring for her children in the

country, Mary began drinking after she left her husband and family and was alone in Perth trying to make a life for herself. She then abandoned herself to alcohol in an attempt to deal with her loneliness and separation from her family. Mary's mental and physical health have suffered because of her prolonged and heavy drinking. Although she still drinks, she has greater control over her alcohol consumption.

Wayne's alcohol problem was precipitated by his expulsion from the Pallottine Centre at Rossmoyne in his late adolescence when he experienced an identity crisis, unsure as to whether he belonged to "the white side or the dark side". He 'hit the streets' because he had nowhere else to go and had no job. He lived on the streets until he met his wife and decided to look for work in the country. Later, when he returned to Perth with his young family and could not find work after having held responsible jobs in his trade, he began drinking heavily again through boredom, the need to gain a sense of self worth and the need to socialise with friends and family. He then drank in public places with relations and friends - Russell Square, Beaufort Park, Aberdeen Street, Miller's Cave, the Bull Paddock. He slept under bridges and in parks including Bunbury Bridge, Supreme Court Gardens. He frequented nightclubs trying to find happiness:

> But when you walk the streets at night when you have nothing, when you have no grog, used to have that lonely feeling, the loneliest feeling inside, such a very lonely feeling. I used to really sit in the park ... in the middle of the night time, ... by yourself, on the park bench. You have no home to go to and you sitting there thinking, "Ah, what I am going to do?", at last you feel like killing yourself.

Wayne's alcoholism has severely affected his family relationships and his health. Now he suffers from a chronic condition which has been precipitated by the years of prolonged and heavy drinking. Because of the pain of his condition, Wayne became dependent on pain-reducing medication including morphine and pethidine. The severity of his illness has led him to reconsider his life situation and to make a change. Barry has restricted his drinking; he has moved into his own unit and has begun to care for himself.

Although Barry's drinking followed a similar pattern, his life had a more troubled start as he left the Pallottine Centre at Rossmoyne after second year of High School and soon got into trouble with the law. His life was aimless, 'Just living life from day to day. Didn't worry about the future, didn't worry about anything. Just carried on I suppose. ... I didn't seem to be able to settle down after I left the mission. Did not belong anywhere.' It was at this time that he started to drink and, like his brother, Barry soon found that he was alcohol dependent. For the next 25 years the only time he was sober was when he was in prison for alcohol-related offences. He drank with his brother and mother in the city and in country towns, with friends and strangers. He had numerous unsatisfactory relationships which produced children who have grown up without a father. Barry now realises there is a blank in his life which is the consequence of alcohol abuse. When I interviewed Barry, he was completing an alcohol rehabilitation programme through which he had gained new insights about his life and his need for emotional and psychological healing.

(vii) Depression

The enormous emotional pain which members of the Smith family experienced over a prolonged period of time and the low self esteem which was the result of the abuse they suffered have led to depression, a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. For Mary Smith, the mother, her own loss of family and childhood as a result of her being institutionalised in Carrolup Native Settlement and the resulting feelings of low self-worth kept her in an abusive relationship for a number of years. When she did make the decision to leave, realising that her life was in danger, she experienced deep grieving for her children. Eventually this led to a self-abusing lifestyle and deep depression. Both these reactions are consistent with the long-term abusive situation and the separation from children. Mary grieved for her children whom she could not have with her. She grieved deeply when she learned that they had been sent to Wandering and that it would be extremely difficult for her to gain custody of the children. Her life became empty; she experienced a deep sense of helplessness and hopelessness which contributed to her mental instability. She became severly depressed. She had a 'nervous breakdown' and attempted suicide. Mary recalled her feelings at that point in her life:

> It's heartbreaking. All the time you can picture their faces. You can see them and you can't reach 'em. I don't know what they was going through. I could feel it myself though. ... It affected me badly and has affected my children worse because they don't seem to understand what I've been through. It wasn't my fault that they were put in the mission and I can't get through to them to tell them it wasn't me to blame. ... And how it affected me being away from them, I don't think they'd ever understand.

Mary's children also suffered severe depression which led to self-destructive and suicidal behaviour. Although Barry and Wayne were fighters who tended to 'act out' their aggression, their unhappiness and loneliness never left them. The combination of chronic alcoholism, unemployment and low self-esteem led to each attempting to take their own lives. The self-destructive behaviour manifested itself in constant drinking, in neglect of themselves and their families, and eventually in a breakdown in their mental and physical health. Joy married an alcoholic and was the victim of violence in her home, just like her mother. She too suffered severe bouts of depression over the years and at the time of the interview was receiving counselling in her home town.

Impact of Removal on Family Relationships

(i) Transgenerational patterns

An analysis of the experience of two generations of the Smith family clearly highlights the transgenerational impact of the disruption of family life through the removal of children from the family situation into an institutional environment. Mary Smith and her siblings were transferred to Carrolup Native Settlement because, according to the records of the NWD, the Department judged her parents to be incapable of adequately caring for their children. However, the records also show that Mary's father had requested that his children be placed in a Native Institution so that they could benefit from some education. In 1933 he was prepared to pay for the support of his children at the Moore River Native Settlement so that he would have the right to take them away at any time but this plan did not eventuate. Instead, in 1941, after a period of eight years, Mary's mother and her seven dependent children were transferred to Carrolup. The reason given for their removal was that Mary's

father was 'creating trouble with other natives' by securing liquor and using bad language. Further, he purportedly failed to adequately provide for his family evidenced by the lack of food at their camp when the police constable visited. The constable considered that the children would be better provided for at Carrolup.

Mary's removal to the harsh institutional setting at a young age deprived her of the opportunity to grow up within a family situation and this deeply affected her emotional and psychological development. Even though Mary learned many of the skills necessary to live as a 'white person', including child care and domestic duties which prepared her for work as a servant in European households, this learning did not socialise her into the Nyoongah way of life. Mary married young. Her marriage was abusive and violent. She had to escape in order to survive. The cost of her physical survival was the loss of her children, first to her husband, and then to Wandering Mission. Although Mary always held on to her desire to be reunited with her children and tried to focus her life in that direction, the events of her life overwhelmed her and eventually made it impossible for her to take responsibility for her own children. Mary's husband, Jack, died young from the effects of alcohol abuse.

The pattern apparent in the previous two generations is also evident in the lives of Mary's children, Joy, Barry and Wayne. The early part of Joy's life mirrors many aspects of that of her mother. She married early and was physically, emotionally and psychologically abused in her first marriage. She too had to escape this violent domestic situation, the cost of which was to lose the care of the three children of this relationship to her husband's family. Her first husband died young from the effects of long-term alcohol abuse. Fortunately, Joy later did find a partner who treated her with utmost respect and care and with whom she had a second family. The experiences of Barry and Wayne appear to reflect those of previous male members of the family, their father and grandfather. They had difficulty in maintaining intimate and respectful relationships with their spouses. Both admitted to multiple relationships and alcohol-induced violence in their relationships. Both had disrupted relations with their children due to their absences from their families because of binge drinking which lasted for weeks or months of imprisonment. However, both Wayne and Barry recently gained insight into aspects of their troubled lives and were attempting to deal with their emotional and physical well-being.

One of the most traumatising effects of institutionalisation was the forced separation from family and the loss of intimate family relationships. Each family member who was interviewed was able to express the depth of this emotional deprivation. Skilled and sound counselling is required to assist family members who have experienced the transgenerational effects of family dysfunction and deep trauma apparent in the Smith family. Each family member interviewed showed the fortitude and willingness of spirit, insight and commitment to deal with their own lives and to attempt to reach a reconciliation with their mother and their respective families.

(ii) Effects of domestic violence and alcoholism

In each generation of the Smith family, domestic violence and alcoholism has been a significant factor in the disruption of family life. All those who were interviewed indicated that they were aware of the serious negative influence of alcohol in their lives and they commented on its impact on the whole Aboriginal community. Alcohol abuse can be related to the attempt to alleviate the emotional and psychological pain of living as an Aboriginal in a foreign 'white' dominated society. It can also be related to the loss of dignity through dispossession of their land. Members of the Smith family at different times articulated a range of reasons for their acute distress at being the victims of european dominance in their own country. The reasons range from being teased and abused as school children, to being forced to live on the reserve and in humpies on the outskirts of town, to being institutionalised and forced to assimilate into 'white' society and to being unable to find work. This total environment of rejection and discrimination creates a chronic and extremely stressful situation in which to live. Hence, alcohol consumption is one way to find release from the stress.

The consumption of alcohol has been a social activity, but unfortunately one which has contributed to the break-down of the family unit through absence, poverty and violence. Alcohol abuse has thus resulted in detrimental effects in the lives of individuals and in the wider Aboriginal society. In the Smith family, alcohol consumption became the means through which family members bonded in their trauma and distress. It dulled the emotional pain and distress instead of removing it, and eventually contributed to the alienation of family

members because of its effects such as domestic violence, imprisonment, poverty and ill health.

(iii) Loss of contact and intimacy

Another serious and lasting effect of the institutionalisation of children is the loss of intimacy and modelling of loving relationships within the family. In the Smith family, the children who were removed from their Nyoongah family environment and forced to be assimilated into 'white' society through their placement in an institution, became alienated from their own parents and members of their extended family whom they believed had abandoned them. Mary Smith had become alienated from her parents after she had been sent to Carrollup Native Settlement and later lost contact with them after she became Jack Smith's wife. Although her parents initially helped her when she was physically abused by her husband, she had to live with her husband's family and eventually lost her own children to them.

Mary's children also experienced this alienation from family. Their sense of abandonment, loss of contact and loss of intimacy deeply affected their own ability to establish strong, lasting and satisfying relationships. Their relationships with their spouses and children were deeply affected because the problems precipitated by their institutionalisation, that is emotional and psychological instability, alcoholism, and unemployment, created instability in the family relationships and affected the development of intimate and supportive relationships between parents and children.

The trauma of institutionalisation, however, did strengthen the bonding between the siblings who were forced into the institutions. Mary Smith and her younger brother and sister were forced to cling together for support in a totally alien environment. They were the only comforting figures each of these children had in the institution and thus the emotional bonding between the children became a source of strength for them. Joy, Wayne and Barry also experienced a similar experience. After their nuclear family broke up, they found themselves in emotionally alienating situations in their extended family and later in Wandering, and it is through these experiences that the siblings found comfort in caring and protecting each other. They experienced deep distress when they were placed in Wandering

where they were prevented from keeping in contact with each other. This situation was particularly painful for Joy who was separated from her three brothers. The strong bonds between the young Smith children have continued right into their adulthood as they give each other practical and emotional support. Each member of the family commented on the strength of their relationship with his or her siblings. These relationships which were deeply valued and which had survived and been enriched over time, had contributed to some stability in their lives.

(iv) Need for understanding and healing

The deep trauma of loss of family and alienation through institutionalisation requires time, insight and understanding in order that healing can be achieved. In the Smith family, the healing of the deep hurts and damaged lives which have resulted, has been initiated in a number of ways. Mary Smith who still experiences deep guilt because she left her children when they were young, has made every attempt to keep in contact with each of her four children and to indicate to them her need to be reconciled with them. She suffers deeply because she feels that her children do not understand why she had to leave them. Mary longs to be reconciled with all her children. Mary Smith's children also have indicated that they have gained significant insight into the events of their lives. They have all re-established positive contact with their mother. Joy is a source of support to her mother whom she visits regularly as they live in country towns relatively close to each other. Wayne and Barry have also re-established contact with their mother and they visit her regularly. Sam, the youngest son, is still unable to speak openly about his experiences with the other members of his family. He very rarely visits his mother and then for a short time only.

Another significant indicator of healing and growth is the fact that Joy, Wayne and Barry have all reached a stage in their lives in which they have decided to make a change and to try to improve the quality of their lives. Joy has started to seek counselling for the deep hurts she has experienced. Wayne has undergone an alcohol rehabilitation programme. He felt much healthier and happier and indicated that he wanted to maintain an alcohol-free lifestyle. Barry who had experienced severe and chronic ill health as a consequence of alcoholism, had also gained strong insight through his illness and was determined to change his lifestyle and

to try to improve his relationships with his family. All these are signs of healing towards which each of the Smith family have moved over a long period of time and at great emotional cost. They have reached this stage with no recognition or assistance from the institutions which contributed to their problems and have shown great fortitude and determination in their fight for survival in the face of enormous physical, emotional and psychological obstacles.

The journey of the members of the Smith family mirrors that of innumerable other Aboriginal people who have experienced similar situations of having been removed from their family environment and institutionalised. There are many, like the Smiths, who have survived the ordeal of institutionalisation and separation from their family and who are now living stable and contented lives. Others, however, have died prematurely, often violently, of the effects of alcoholism, a harsh and violent lifestyle, through substance abuse and other self-destructive behaviour. Many continue to experience chronic health and social problems in dysfunctional families. The healing of their emotional and psychological hurts could be facilitated through the public recognition of the emotional, psychological and physical trauma and damage to the individual of the experience of separation from family and institutionalisation which was an integral part of the government policy. The provision of counselling services by culturally sensitive specialist counsellors, or better still, well-trained Aboriginal counsellors should be an integral part of the service to survivors of the harsh government assimilationist policies. There is a need to acknowledge the human cost of the Aboriginal affairs policies which have created deep emotional and psychological distress, mental and physical illness, poverty and hardship, family dysfunction and death among Aboriginal people in all parts of Australia.

A very important aspect of the healing process is the recognition that the process will take time and commitment from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in this country, in order to ensure the necessary positive outcomes.

The Experience of the Smith Family

(i) First generation: Mary Smith

(a) Early life and impact of family break up

Mary Smith's parents, John and Mabel Bennett, lived in the wheatbelt area in the south-west. John Bennett worked hard as a shearer and farm labourer and provided for his family although he had received no formal education. Mabel cared for her 11 children, following her husband around as he obtained seasonal work in the wheatbelt. Whenever they could, she and the children would go wool picking or mallee root picking to supplement the family's income. Mary remembers her youth as being a happy one as the family camped with their relatives in the reserve outside Narrogin. They lived in tents and had great freedom playing in the bush and having good times with other family members. This camp on the reserve was the one stable place to which the family always returned between jobs and when they needed to be with their extended family.

Although life was hard, especially when John Bennett was unemployed and they had to stay in tents or humpies in the winter, the family was happy because they remained united. Mary remembers that her father always tried to make his family comfortable but it was not easy to look after 11 children. This is Mary's story of how she was removed to Carrolup Native Settlement:

> When I was in Narrogin, they [the school] wouldn't take us Aboriginal children. They wouldn't allow Aboriginal children in the school. But not until I was about 10 when we shifted to [another town] where dad got on well with the white people there, one of the ladies there said she could get us into school ... I entered Grade 1 as a big girl.
>
> We really enjoyed it there until the Aboriginal Welfare come and pick us up from the school for no reason. I don't know why. But dad met them on the road. They had us in a truck like sheep; was taking us away to the mission, the welfare people. And dad just stood in the middle of the road and he told them he was going to be trouble. He wasn't going to move off that road. I believe he had a gun and he said he would blow that man's brains right out if he took us away because he had no reason to. He said, "You better take these children back to school". He [the welfare man] took us back to school. My parents came and picked us up after from school and he [my father] explained to us, and we were crying, and we didn't know what was happening to us. See there was no warning, there was nothing.

Right along before that, they picked my sister up, Millie. She was working at the time, working for Mrs Brown in [the same town]. And she had just knocked off work and she was walking up the road when they picked her up and put her in the truck. And they took her to the mission and no one told dad or anybody. I remember dad found out after she was taken to the mission. They was wondering what happened, she was late gettin home from work. She was only about 15, ... very young when they took her away.

They took other children too, from the district. There was no reason.

It always hurts me to think, "Why did they take us when dad was supporting us". And there's a lot of things been said about dad which are very very untrue. But even the police in [the town], even the nigger hater, he didn't like coloured people and he put a heck of a lot in. He used to write letters to the welfare telling them different stories that probably he made up himself.

They reckoned dad was a bludger, and pretended he didn't have work and that, you know? It was hard. ... As far as I know dad was a battler. He'd walk miles lookin for a job, lookin for work. We'd be waiting for him to come back to tell us if he had a job. He always found something.

They took the three who were going to school and left the others with mum and dad. ... They must have went back and got a court order to take us. ... And dad said He'd be going with us, him and mum, so we all went ... to Carrolup.

Mum and dad had to leave and that was heartbreaking. That was absolutely heartbreaking. I've never felt so alone, so depressed. And I cried and cried for months and months after and so did my sister and brother. And we used to be huddled in the corner wondering what the world was coming to, why we were there and mum and dad wasn't with us.... They had to go. They were given a temporary place to stay until dad found work somewhere and moved from there. ... We never seen them for a while. They was probably workin somewhere. It never hurt them. Cos mum and dad couldn't read or write and very hard for them to get fares ... dad probably spent most of his time lookin for work. ... They told him they had to leave us for awhile, not that they wanted to, but the welfare wouldn't let us go anyway. We were bound there on the mission. It wasn't easy.

(b) Life at Carrolup native settlement

Mary, her older sister Millie, and their younger sister and brother, remained at Carrolup for a number of years. While they were there they attended school until Grade 3 which was the highest grade taught at Carrolup. Mary loved school even though the school teacher was

strict. After Grade 3 Mary was given training as a domestic to prepare her for work in the neighbouring towns. Mary describes her life at Carrolup as being terrible.

> Everybody had to work. We worked and worked and worked. It wasn't easy being a young girl and having to wash hundreds and hundreds of ... big government blankets by hand, no washing machine. When we finished school we had to be stuck into all this work.
>
> We had to clean the dormitories ourselves, we used to like doing that. It was something to look up to and made us feel better. We had to carry out the night toilet buckets in the morning and empty them. And eventually ... they did build a toilet on the dormitory ... with an alleyway with big, big wires right over.... You got to walk right through this big long passage like a cage right to the toilet. ... Every night locked in, feel like you're in jail. ... Big dormitory, all the little kids at one end and the big teenage kids at the other. And the same with the boys.
>
> [The food was] more or less slop. I don't think we had a real baked dinner or anything. It was boiled or stewed. All we got for breakfast [was] tea and toast, ... sometimes a bowl of porridge, but very seldom. Then for tea, soup, soup, soup ... Never got decent food.
>
> They had a store there. But if you ever did come across a few bob of your own ... you could buy a bit of food ... you'd be lucky to get an apple or something once in a while.
>
> [During that time at Carrolup I felt terrible]. It doesn't leave you. You're always wondering and you're watching that road. "Is mum and dad coming back to pick us up? How long are we going to be in this place", we keep wondering. "Won't be long now", I keep telling other kids that, my younger sister and brother. ... But all the time I was kidding myself trying to be kind to them. But it always made me feel better thinking that they will. I knew that even if they did come to pick us up they couldn't take us out for we were bound there.

(c) Mary's marriage and family life

After doing some domestic science training, to prepare her for duties as a servant, Mary worked in two different households. It was when she was in her second job that she met her husband, Jack Smith. He used to come from Katanning to visit her at show time. They went out together a few times before Mary fell pregnant. She left her employment and joined Jack

at Katanning. Mary was abused by Jack from early in their relationship.

> He was really good at the start but things soon changed. I found out that he was drinking too much. He was very, very cruel, physical ... I was never without a black eye or two. Belted up and put in hospital those early days. I was pregnant with Joy when he used to belt me up. Mum and dad ... took me home. He came and got me again took me back and the same thing happened again. I kept going back, back, back. Always got belted up. When he broke my jaw, smashed it, ... that's when I called it quits. He threatened to kill me. I was off.

Mary left her three eldest children with Jack and left with Sam, the youngest, who was still a baby of a few months. She went to stay with her eldest sister and her husband in the next town. That night Jack found out where she was, arrived there in the middle of the night, belted Mary up before she managed to escape in the dark. Jack took the baby Sam home with him. Mary kept away from Jack but found it extremely difficult to be without her children. She stayed with one of her uncles in a neighbouring town and from there she used to go up to Katanning from time to time to catch sight of her children.

> When I was there Uncle Jo used to take me to Katanning cos I wasn't game enough to go up to my children. I would just sit and watch them from a distance. Terrible. It was heartbreaking. I'd be crying and going. I couldn't even go and see my kids and kiss 'em. They never seen me but I seen them. Must have been for about six months, easy. I stayed over with Uncle Jo ... So eventually he gave me some money. [He encouraged me to go] So I thought I'd go and find a job somewhere, see if I could get my kids.

(d) Mary's life after separation from her children

Mary found her way to Perth where she tried to get work. At this time because of her loneliness and despair at being separated from her children, Mary began to drink heavily, something she had never done when she was with Jack and the children. After some time she did find work as a domestic in Perth.

> [Later] another thing happened. I had a nervous breakdown just after I got the job. I found out my children was in a mission and I wanted to go and see them in Wandering. I didn't know where my children was. I had lost touch for awhile. But in the back of my mind was, "I'd get a job and I could get them home with me. I could put in for welfare. I could get 'em with me." ...

I was in Royal Perth Hospital for a week or so and I was ready to jump out the top window.

It's heartbreaking. All the time you can picture their faces. You can see them and you can't reach 'em. I don't know what they was going through. I could feel it myself though. And they were abused at the mission. They were mistreated at Wandering Mission.

It affected me badly and has affected my children worse because they don't seem to understand what I've been through. It wasn't my fault that they were put in the mission and I can't get through to them to tell them it wasn't me to blame. If I had stayed on with Jack, he would have killed me eventually. He would have. Then they got no mother at all. And how it affected me being away from them, I don't think they'd ever understand that ...

It affected me most of my years. Right through. When I was with Jack I never used to drink and I never smoked and I hated swearing. But after that I took to everything, you know. ... It changes a person completely. But what hurts me is to see how my children hurt. Knowing that they've been hurting at the time and I wasn't there to tell them how I felt. And I used to try and stop the hurt, to explain it.

I even gave them the big parts I wrote down which is from my heart, but there is a void somewhere because ... it seems like it doesn't help you. Somewhere there is a space that they never seem to get over. I can't explain ... but they don't seem [to understand]:

[Nowadays when they visit] they don't sit down and talk properly. You can't sit down and have a yarn with them, talk things out. They try to avoid it.

I think once they realise and come to terms with what I've been through instead of blaming me all the time. They are not trying to acknowledge my point of view. It does hurt me. It hurts me very much.

It was always in my brain and on my mind. They have never left it. Any mother would know. You can be doing one thing but always inside you your children are there. ...no matter how far away you are. ... I think they find it hard to remember certain things.

(ii) Second Generation: Joy Smith

(a) Early life

Joy is the eldest of Mary Smith's four children. Joy was born in Collie in 1945. It has been

difficult for Joy to remember much about her early life. She attributes this loss of memory to the acute stress of her early life, "So whatever's happened in my past must have been too awful, maybe too traumatic for me to remember. Maybe there were ... a couple of good times, but a lot of bad times ...". Joy's earliest memories were of incidents of being verbally abused by european children on the school bus. As a result of one incident, when Joy was spat upon, and other similar incidents, Joy's self confidence was being affected. Other memories include feeling distressed and abandoned in the bush when put off the school bus, and an acute feeling of being alone, playing alone in the bush as a child. The family lived an itinerant lifestyle on the outskirts of towns and on farms wherever her father could find work. If they were lucky they lived in a tent, otherwise, her parents constructed a one-roomed shelter of whatever material they could find including cardboard, pieces of tin and vegetation:

> We didn't live anywhere near the white people. We lived about a mile or so in the bush, where we couldn't be seen.
>
> We lived [off] whatever was in the bush, kangaroos and goannas, ... and ants. Anything that came from town was a luxury.

Joy has glimpses of happiness as a child when her parents were still living together. To Joy, her parents were loving people. She cannot reconcile her image of her loving dad as the same person who regularly physically abused her mother. Joy admits that she cannot remember the circumstances of her mother's leaving, except that it was sudden and totally unexpected. The acute sense of abandonment which Joy was left with on her mother's sudden departure from the family was exacerbated by the fact that Joy was forced, at ten, to take responsibility for her younger siblings:

> It is hard for me to remember too, because the mother I loved and looked after us so well, all of a sudden disappeared. She was there one minute and the next minute she was gone.
>
> I was trying to look after the little bubbies because I knew I got to. I felt and I still feel we were no good. That nobody wanted us.

> I remember a lot of spite because my aunties and uncles had families of their own. My grandparents were more or less looking after another family, ... So we didn't fit in there because she ... had one lot of children. ... So we were the ones who were left out. ... And all [dad] wanted to do was go and do his own thing, he didn't have a care in the world then, except us kids.
>
> I honestly believe now that dad was pushed into putting us into the home. Because nobody wanted to look after us. And dad, being a young man, he couldn't just get out and do his own thing. He couldn't go to work and send us to school too. So he had to rely a lot on his own family to look after us. And I don't think he could have managed.

The short period when Joy and her brothers were with her father's family were acutely distressing for Joy who still feels bitter towards that family because of the physical, emotional and psychological abuse she and her brothers experienced during that time. Joy identified her relations' behaviour as spitefulness, particularly with regard to racial prejudice within the family against darker-skinned family members. The children often went hungry because they were the last to be fed when there was often little left of the meal. The relations would treat the children better when their father was with them but they soon reverted to the harsh behaviour as soon as he left. Joy considered that 'it is the cruelest thing you could ever do to a child'. The experience of being abandoned and feeling unwanted forced Joy and her brothers to grow up quickly:

> Barry learned to fight early in life. Barry's our fighter. He don't mess around. So he learned to fight. I had to grow up quickly. And Wayne and Barry was a man while Sam ... He was our baby brother and Barry and myself, we spoiled him. He [Barry] had to grow up just as quick as I had to.

To survive this difficult time Joy became a loner and gained much comfort in the bush. She spent some time with an aunt whose daughter was a few years older than Joy and it was this aunt who gave her some love and attention. While she lived with this aunt she used to go to play for hours in the bush by herself:

> I wouldn't go and play with any other kids. ... And the bush was my playground. The trees, I left everyone else to go amongst the trees. And I was happy. ... I still love the gums. I still love the land that's why I still live so

far out of town, I think. Because I don't believe fighting solved anything, I'd rather talk about it and resolve the pain, discuss and find out where the problem is and work from there. Whereas Barry, he used his fists first then talk after. I was a loner when I was a child. ... That's really how I coped with it.

(b) Life at Wandering mission

Joy cannot remember how she was brought to Wandering Mission. Her most enduring memory of the Mission was the loneliness and pain of being separated from her brothers:

> Next thing I knew, I was there and dad was gone. .. All of a sudden we were all on our own. ... And of course being on a mission my brothers were taken to their own [areas]. We was kept apart then. I knew I had brothers there and saw them at meal times and everything. Never saw them to play with, never had any decent contact with them, but I knew they were there sometimes, like in church meetings and things. But we was segregated between the girls and the boys. No contact. No real [offer of contact], "This is your brother, you must be with him for a while", or something like that.
>
> Come Saturday it was work. After school it was work, work, work. Sunday the sisters would take us for walks one way, and the brothers would take the boys the other way. So we never had any contact when we went to Wandering Mission, that's hard one.
>
> Wandering Mission, no, I'd never want to put them kids through that experience ever. If I had my life over again, that's something I'd never want to do. ... And if you were quiet like me you got the brunt of everything. You got picked on, you got growled at. The sisters were so strict. What angers me most about the sisters, and even now, was, Why did Australian people put us with Germans because we were fighting a war. And then about eight years later, they were looking after the Aboriginal kids. Those were the hated Germans.
>
> At ten years old I was given a three year old girl to look after as a guardian, her guardian. And that distresses me now to think that I was responsible for this little girl, at the age of ten and she was only three or four. And this is really distressing cos I felt so much for her. [Joy cried] It hurts still. I was ten years old, I was her mother. I'd get her out of bed, make her bed, make certain she had her shower or a wash. Make sure that she had her feed. But I didn't really mind cos Josephine was a pretty little girl. She's very dark, but she had the most beautiful black hair I've ever seen. But she was my responsibility. Sometimes she used to get on my nerves. I wanted to do my thing and here I had this little girl that I had to look after.

The other thing, the loneliness, oh the loneliness in the family being abandoned. It would have been OK if they had let me have a bit more contact with my brothers. But like I said, they lived half a mile across the other side of the paddock and I had hardly any contact whatsoever.

So the family unit wasn't even there. I knew I had brothers. I saw them, like I said, I saw them at meal time and I saw them playing around. But no sitting down and talking and no physical contact whatsoever. That was not allowed because that's a sin. Didn't matter that we brothers and sisters, that's a sin, you know. So what I did, I just buried myself in books and school. I tried not to get involved too much with the other girls,... because I got like that, I was like an only child, actually. A lot of them had sisters and brothers, a few of us were just one. Most of them had brothers and sisters.

And I'd see other families, you know, and they were together, they grow up together, they'd be happy, they'd be sharing things. And I'd be sitting somewhere over inside across there watching. So the family unit is the main thing I think I lost. I did get a bit a love from my aunty, yes I did ...

I had an aunty there, ... had some cousins there. ... But they were from different [part of the family], the Johnsons, [who] were the ones that we never ever got to see very much, so there wasn't very much to look forward there. There wasn't ever anything there in common with them.

But when we were living there about the mission, we had little wooden beds. And it came on to me so strongly in Glenys Ward's book, *Unna You Fellas*. We had those little wooden beds all lined up in a row and coming out to them you'd be crying, saying to yourself, "When is mum and dad going to see me again? Whose going to come and see me? And we'd stop crying and somewhere down the way suddenly you heard sniffling, someone else crying. That was sad. That was so sad. And that made me worse. ... And the sisters would patrol between the beds and if anybody was out of the room and if they didn't think they would settle down, they'd get whacked. So we were all quiet and stiff as mice and whatever. And then wait till they'd gone. But that's only natural, I suppose.

But we were afraid of them. We were actually afraid of them because here was these big womens, they were. Not only were they had big voices, just talking to us frightened us, you know. I took off in learning books and things at school.

Joy only rarely received visits from her family and she can recall each visit. She cannot remember being visited by her mother's family. And her father's sister was the only one who would take her out bush. Joy described the ordeal of waiting for a visit from a relative:

There was a gate there and there was a fence, and you can imagine on a Sunday, all the little kids, all lined up at the fence waiting to see what cars going to come and whose car, who's going to come. Yeah, I've been up there waiting to see if any of my people'd be coming. ... And here we are standing waiting to see who'd turn up and really you'd linger to the last. And then you'd look back and see these kids with their mothers and fathers. It was heartbreaking. Some of the kids would go off and cry. I did it myself, plenty of times. Go away and stand in the corner and cry because my mum and dad, well, nobody turned up. ... I don't know about my brothers, whether they felt the same, but I remember that that hurt. You felt that you were really abandoned. That no one cared and it was an unhappy time. And then a lot of times I don't remember anything, because it was so regimented, so strict.

We weren't allowed to talk when we were kneeling, praying. We weren't allowed to act our way. We had to be good little Catholics. We had the catechism. That was shoved down our mouths. ... Sometimes, some of the things I don't really want to remember about that place. I don't because it was too hurtful. I think what affected me the most, they just wouldn't let me have anything to do with my brothers.

I felt a lot of it had to do with the system. See they'd just started to bring out alcohol and things like that. And of course Aboriginal people are not tolerant, as far as I'm concerned to alcohol. It broke up a heck of a lot of families. ... It is what alcohol does to you.

The missionaries at Wandering encouraged the families to take their children home for the holidays. Those whose families did not take them home were allocated to white 'holiday hosts' who were usually very kind to the children. Joy remembers a few visits home for holidays and the traumatic experience these visits were because she had to switch from the European to Nyoongah way of life.

And living in the Wandering Mission was one thing. Like I said, very regimented, very strict. Then all of a sudden going back to our own people, with them it was very laid back, ... going back to Nyoongah culture. And we'd do this two, three times a year. We'd have this culture where you'd really taught to be Catholics and everything that was German. We were even taught to speak German. (And now, I won't even say a German word if I can help it.) And then all of a sudden, going back and being put back into the camps and whatever. I recall that time even to now, as we are living in two different worlds. We have to. We live in two different worlds. ... So it was a carefree word. No one really cared that much whether you had to go to school, you had to be clean everyday. You just go and play in the bush with a little dress and a pair of pants, that's what we wore ...

> But it was ... too lots of times, just going back and being yourself. You're not being somebody else, what another person wants you to be. And that's where I suppose I picked up my Nyoongah words. From the old people, mostly.

In order to survive the trauma of living in Wandering, Joy withdrew into herself. She did not mix and had very few friends; she did not have a special friend although she had relations, cousins and aunts who were also in Wandering, 'but I didn't belong to any of the special groups. I was just me, Joy Smith.' Joy showed some potential in her school work and consequently was sent away to further her secondary education in Perth. She was sent to board at Alvan House in Mount Lawley, the first hostel for Aboriginal girls who were attending secondary school in the city:

> I went to Alvan House when I was 12 and they never told us any sex education. They just said you go to this school and do the best you can. They didn't prepare us for what was coming. We lived out in the bush, all those years. No one told us what was to expect when you get to Perth. Traffic, cars, buildings, everything. Total new world again, at 12. Nowadays, kids, you can't tell them what they don't already know. And here I was with shoes and socks and thinking I'm dressed up great. And the other girls [said] "Who do you think you are, what you've got shoes and socks on for?" They were into flatties in those days. And you know I was just a country bumpkin, ... trying to fit in, but I had no idea what to expect.

(iii) Second generation: Barry Smith

(a) Early life

Barry's earliest memories were of the birth of his youngest brother, Sam, when he was seven. The Smith family lived in tents on the Reserve at Narrogin, a big block outside town. Barry recalls that summer was the best time at the camp where each family had their humpies 400 to 500 yards apart. The Narrogin reserve was the where his father's relations lived and where the Smith family returned to after the shearing season was over. The idyllic life at the camp and in the bush with his siblings and cousins ended abruptly when Barry's mother left suddenly soon after the birth of Sam. This is Barry's account of his mother's departure:

Dad was hitting her and he was mucking around. He was always at his cousins' drinking ... with other women around.... She got a hiding.

The night she left she took us to the movies. She left us inside and went outside with Sam. She asked someone to watch us until dad came looking for us and took us home. I can remember we went outside the theatre after the picture and our dad came in a taxi. We went back to our relative's place.

We didn't talk about it to each other until after we got out of the mission. My sister took it pretty hard. She took it to heart. She's my mother. I blamed my mother for leaving the kids. I did resent her for it. I remember [my mother] used to say to us, "If I didn't leave your father, I would have died." He did break her jaw once. She had her jaw strapped for a few months. That wasbefore she left. She couldn't close her mouth. Lived on fluid, soup and things like that. It was summer time.

I was heartbroken. I had nightmares and dreams she would come back to us and be the same as she was. Sometimes I'd cry. Sometimes she would come and watch us at school. ...We'd notice her sitting in the little park. I got that way that I would rush out every dinner time to see if she was there. And after a couple of times she never came to see us again. She'd never stand in the middle but right at the end. She'd stand right behind where the trees were. And I would run to her, me and Wayne would get a hiding.

Joy had to stop with my aunty. Me and Wayne stopped with our grandfather. We'd stop with our other aunty [dad's sister] quite a fair bit. [It must have been] two years from the time mum left to the time we went on the mission.

I knew She'd gone somewhere, but I didn't know where. [My brothers and sister and I] were missing school. Welfare put us there [in Wandering]. Dad was not working. He tried to convince the court that relatives would look after us, me and Wayne. My aunty couldn't have us at the time. Dad took us down in a truck. Joy and Sam were already there.

It was dad's sister who told them to take us away. We'd stay at her place. ... We went from one relation's to another. They seemed strange. [They resented us because we were extra mouths to feed.] It was not until many years later that we saw them again.

(b) Life at Wandering mission

Barry was eight years old when he went to Wandering. For him, the time in Wandering was extremely stressful and lonely because he found himself in a completely different cultural environment. He had been used to the freedom of the bush and an itinerant lifestyle in and

around the towns and farms in the wheatbelt.

> [It was] like another planet. Strange, different surroundings. There were other kids there. Most were from the south, a lot. [I] had family there, two first cousins and uncles. ... My first birthday on the mission I turned nine, 1956.
>
> We was all in the same boat, no mother and father... First couple of years [my mother] came but it wasn't very often, She'd stay for a day or two. Dad would come more often. It was really ... till after we left the mission.
>
> Mum came in drunk. She was like a different person, charged up. She didn't drink when she was with dad. Started drinking two to three years after she left. Felt shame when her like that. I was reluctant to go to her because she smelt of liquor. She kept coming back. One time she came, really drink. Don't know what year, maybe early '60's, late 50's.
>
> Holiday from the mission, once a year to Narrogin with grandfather. The year after to Williams. Sometime Mum would come to pick us up for holidays. We had two lots of holidays with my mother. 1957 or 58, with aunty down here. Then we went to North Beach.
>
> Couple of months after we got to the mission, September, October, my dad came in drunk one night and wanted to take me and Wayne. Picked us kids up [took us away] ... We followed dad shearing.

Life at Wandering Mission was one of loneliness. Barry remembers it as a time of great emptiness. The missionaries did not seem to understand the needs of the children in their care. The children were not kept informed of any significant changes in their family situations. For example, the children were not told when their grandfather died not long after they went to Wandering until long after the event and too late for them to attend the funeral. Barry found out through one of the other children at the mission. He was not able to mourn for his grandfather to whom he had a great attachment and whose death still upsets him. He spent five years at the mission during which, Barry, like most of the other children there, suffered under the strict discipline of the German missionaries. Barry and his brother received 'a hiding' regularly. "I wouldn't say they were cruel, you know, sadistic, but when they gave a hiding, they gave a hiding." Life for Barry was empty:

> Feeling empty. Did not know what future is, what past is. There was nothing out there for me, nothing to look forward to. At the mission it was bad. No mother and father ... no family.

When Barry finished primary school he was sent to the Pallottine Centre at Rossmoyne in Perth for his secondary education. The Centre provided boarding facilities for Aboriginal children who were offered the opportunity to further their education to secondary level. At this time very few Aboriginal children had reached secondary school education because of the generations of disadvantage and the policy of exclusion from state school education. Barry lasted two years at Rossmoyne before he left to seek work in the wheatbelt where he had spent his early childhood. In 1962, after working for a short time on the railway, he got in trouble with the law, was sent to the DCW Mount Lawley Reception Home and was charged with his first offence. On discharge from the Mount Lawley Reception Home he returned to his mother's family with whom he stayed until the DCW picked him up for truancy. After that Barry managed to find a job and stayed out of trouble for about eight months, until he was 16:

> Just living life from day to day. Didn't worry about the future, didn't worry about anything. Just carried on I supposed. ... I didn't seem to be able to settle down after I left the mission. Did not belong anywhere.

(c) Impact of separation and institutional life

One of the most significant effects of institutional life and the separation from family on Barry's life has been his difficulty in maintaining loving and intimate relationships. Barry admits he has thought about this very seriously and has come to the conclusion that the patterns in his life have turned out to be similar to his father's:

> It is a repetition of what happened with dad.... I thought I could stabilise through a relationship, but I couldn't. [I would stay] for a couple of years. I suppose too, being taken [as children] you expect that to happen for the rest of your life, I suppose, and it does. ... Just treat it as normal these days. I've had two lots of relationships [apart from] the one I have now.

Barry's first de facto marriage lasted seven years. He met his first partner, Beth, when he was a teenager and had two children with Beth. This relationship broke up because of his drinking, during which he physically abused Beth. Barry married his second partner after they had been living together for some time. They have two children. Again this relationship broke up because of his drinking. At nearly 50, Barry is trying to re-establish his third relationship which also broke up because of his drinking and periods of imprisonment.

Alcoholism is another major impact on Barry's life. Barry had his first drink at 17 or 18. By the late 1960's he drank day in and day out. In the 1970's Barry realised he had a serious drinking problem and desperately wanted to stop. At this time he was drinking in public places and in the company with his mother and brother.

The drinking led to serious breaches of the law. Barry spent years in prison for alcohol related offences. During the time he was living under the influence of alcohol and in prison, he missed out on being with his family and seeing his children grow up. This break in Barry's relationships with his family, especially his children now causes him great anguish.

(iv) Second generation: Wayne Smith

(a) Early life

Wayne's earliest memories of his childhood are of living in a tent and helping his father who worked as a farm hand, clearing paddocks and burning-off. As a child he spent time in and around shearing sheds where his father worked as a shearer. Wayne and his siblings lived with his father's family, his aunts, uncles and grandparents, all of whom camped at the same Reserve. "It was a good life I remember."

Everything changed when, in Grade 1, he was taken to Wandering Mission. Wayne's recollection of how he was taken to the mission indicates that in spite of his age, he resisted being removed from his environment:

> All I can remember was that there was a big truck come from the mission ... and chuck all us kids in the back. And with what we had on, nothing else. And took us to the mission. They was saying, "Ah, you'll be in a better place." And I was thinking to myself, "Must be a good place, you know?" And when I got there, I can't describe it. There was all these little kids.
>
> I cried. I used to cry day in and day out ... at the mission. When the truck come and get us for the mission, I used to run and hide in the bush. Then they used to come and hunt for me, about six or eight of them,... to drag me out and put me in the back of the truck and take me out to the mission. Not only me, whole family of us. Not only my family, but other Nyoongah families.

Wayne considers that drink was the cause of his family's problems and that his dad came under a great deal of pressure when he received citizenship rights which gave him the right to drink with his mates. The most serious impact of his father's drinking was the break-up of the family.

> We never had nothing. That's why we got chucked in the mission. Dad was not home. He started drinking. Mum couldn't look after the kids herself. The rest of the family had kids of their own; they couldn't handle us. They had no room for us.

(b) Life at Wandering mission

Wayne had a particularly difficult time at Wandering Mission. Mission life was a shock to the independent and strong-minded young boy who found it extremely difficult to settle down to mission life. One of the most stressful situations for Wayne was receiving corporal punishment for his "cheeky" behaviour, particularly his swearing.

> Mission life was very strict. Right down to the last minute everything was regimented, ... Play and school. Everything was timetable. Get up in the morning, make your bed, clean your dormitory, cross the paddock to have your breakfast, change, your task. ... time for lunch, time for school, used to ring 'em, couple of bells. ... Everybody had his jobs to do. There was no hardly free time for us. Working hard and one hour play. We sometimes were allowed to go for walks. But we had all our work to do. We more or less had no control.

Go to school. ... All these jobs, every jobs. And we had to do, otherwise we didn't get a feed. ... When I was living with my family at home, if something gone wrong, they used to swear at me. They used to teach me to swear. I was swearing away. I didn't like being told off by anybody. ... And then I went and got punished for that. I learnt the hard way. Turned me right up. I remember I had a few good hidings for that. Really bad hiding with a stick, ... all over. ... I seen a lot of kids get hidings. I had my mouth washed out with sand, soap and nearly drowned, they held my head under water for swearing. ... I remember one time I was pretty well flogged, Mum come when I got a belting from somebody [one of the missionaries] and she flogged him with the stick. Showed the priest the better end of the stick because he flogged me. She hit him that hard, must have been sometime when I was six or eight [when she] came down ...

There were times when we had to go without food, do some extra chores. For any little thing we had some sort of punishment.

Belting, stay at night in the cold for a couple of hours. We had to do someone else's work. Extra work for yourself. And sometimes ... they don't give you nothing to eat.

There was not enough to eat. You was always hungry, everybody was hungry all the time. I used to like working in the dairy because slipped in some free milk and eat the mash, the mash for pigs and that. I used to mash it up with the grain and put the milk in it and eat it up. I used to gather up a few raw eggs. Didn't have much to eat ... there was a lot of children there.

There was a couple of big pots and when that's empty, you miss out. And those big fellas used to be served first and got to have seconds, and the little fellas missed out. No more in the pot. One bowl of soup and a piece of bread and that's it. That's for lunch, tea. The diet was not good. We used to supplement it by eating from the bush. Eating berries, us kids. Kept all the berries in our pockets. We used to raid the dairy, raid the chook pen. A few of us supplemented by getting our own bush tucker. We never got enough...

Well, my only memories of the dormitory, we all get up, and all have a shower. And it was an old wood heater. And the first to get to the shower had a hot shower and the little fellas always got the cold shower. Sometimes in the mid winter we'd be sitting there with the cold shower, minus one degrees and that. ... And we tried hard to light the fire and it takes too long to boil, so you have to dash in and soap yourself, dash in the shower. It is really bad. And then your bed isn't made properly, it is messed up and you had to make it again. The floor had to be polished you could see your face in it. Wooden floor, you had to polish it.

> Another thing we had this doctrine, Christian. ... And they really used to brainwash us with that. We used to have discussions on reading the bible, and reciting Latin. ... Five, six of us sitting around for hours reciting Latin, praying. And I would rather be in the bush doing something young boys used to do instead of being brainwashed in this. I was an altar boy for a long time. Going to Church, sitting in the church on a wooden bench for hours and hours listening to a priest's sermon. You don't know what he's talking about half the time. Still you have to stand.
>
> Everybody sort of thought we got to be an altar boy. We didn't question it. Imagine a big priest dressed in black going up to you and saying you got to be an altar boy. Just take one look at him and you'd say, "Oh, yes, of course I'll be altar boy". ... You wouldn't say no. You were told definitely whether you like it or not. The German priests used to terrify me. They were big guys, they used to carry some sort of thing in their hand, just to intimidate you, I suppose. ...

Wayne, the third child in the Smith family, was protective of his younger brother, Sam, who was a baby, barely a small boy, when he was placed at Wandering.

> I personally looked after Sam in there. ... I got to be mother and father to him, and a brother. When he had a hard time, I took off for him. I was there for him. [The age difference between us was two years] ... I grew that close to him, attached to him, I hardly wanted to leave him. I mean, I hardly seen mum and dad once a year. I'd forgotten what family life was about. I remember them saying to him, "Don't cry, mum and dad will come one day", trying to toughen him, to help him.

While at Wandering, Wayne acutely felt the loss of his family, particularly during school holidays and weekends when other children used to be able to return to their families or received visits from relatives. Wayne recalls that he rarely went on holidays:

> [T]here was no one to take us, mum and dad were split up. .. And I didn't know where mum was half the time, I knew dad was around there somewhere, drinking. He really lost everything. And I was fostered out to white people, for holidays, [in Perth] ..., Larry and Peg. They were my second family, a family to me, white family. They treated me well. They fostered me.

(c) Life after Wandering mission

From Wandering, Wayne, like his brother Barry, was sent to the Pallotine Centre at Rossmoyne to further his education in secondary school. He completed his secondary education and went on to an apprenticeship in boilermaking. Again the constraints of the institutional environment were acutely felt by Wayne:

> When I finally left the mission, I went to Rossmoyne. I was seven years there now. I was going to school. And that was like a military camp, it was. ... And I think it might be worse. ... Old Father Andrew, ... he was too strict. If you did anything wrong, you got it. ... He is a different man now, different man. That time, ... you wouldn't look at him. He could stare straight in my eye and he would see ... I can talk about it, I don't worry about it no more. He had good intentions, for us. Just not in our nature, you know. Wasn't in our nature for somebody to standing there and telling us what to do all the time. Specially how hard it was for us ... See, I grew up independent. You grow up independent you got your pride, you know. And then when someone tells you what to do, no way, no way.
>
> [I got used to living in the bush] It is the Aboriginal right to ... have that freedom. He likes that walkabout, you know. ... If something comes up, he'll think about it and say, "I don't worry about it. I'm going back to where my heart tells me, not what anybody tells me, but my heart. I don't want to be told by you two." I got to think for myself. If I'm going to do wrong, I know, I'll do wrong. If I'm going to do right, I'll do right ... This was at Rossmoyne.

The move to Rossmoyne created separation from his beloved younger brother, Sam. This separation re-opened the wounds of the removal from his family to Wandering:

> In Rossmoyne for two or three years ... I couldn't concentrate. I cried for him [Sam] cos after all those years with him, I got taken away from him. After taking me away from mum and dad and my other brothers and my sister, they took me away from him. And that really hurt me. I cried to get back to Wandering. I did not want to be in school. I used to go back holidays. That was fair enough, I did not want to go to my friend, I wanted to go back to him. I wanted to keep him company. ... Every year we had two school holidays. If you were lucky, you had someone to take you for your school holidays and your Christmas holidays. But half the time ... I spent the school holidays in the mission and Christmas holidays out.

> It used to hurt me, you know. I'd see all the kids going with their parents. And we'd be sitting back just waiting, wondering when our mum and dad would come and pick us up and take us away. Never happened. ... When they did come, they came drunk. Yeah, and I used to be really shame, you know.

By the time Wayne left the mission he had been thoroughly institutionalised. He had spent most of his life there and knew little else. The scars of institutionalisation have affected Wayne emotionally, psychologically and physically. Wayne attributes the decline of his health and his abuse of alcohol, to the effects of separation from his family and the harsh, emotionally-deprived life he and his siblings experienced on the mission.

> The thirteen years I was in the mission, I was institutionalised I did not know what anything was. ... And when I left the mission I was lost. I didn't know where to go, where to turn. I had no friends down here. I used to roam the streets of Perth here drinking. I was just lost, completely lost.
>
> [At nineteen] I was kicked out of the mission. [Father Andrew] sent me away because I punched him. Cos he met me when I went home one night, I was drinking. [When I was] a young fella I used to play football and I was doing an apprenticeship. And I would like to enjoy myself with the boys. He caught me in the pub one day for a few beers. And that's when he hit me. So I turned around and hit him back. He told me to pack my bags ... So I took off, I went to stay with my foster parents, [Larry and Peg] at Carlisle. First class foster parents. They treated my like their own son. They were my foster parents from the time I was 13 when I first came to Rossmoyne.
>
> When I got kicked out I didn't know whether I belonged to the white side or the dark side. So I mixed with other boys who were in the mission with me and whose life was the same thing. We used to all go on the grog. Drink booze and talk about it. We did have our bad and sad moments but we used to love to talk about it, 'cos it was company for us, something we shared together, you know. And life seemed better. Something we shared. But half the time we getting grog and talking about it didn't take the feeling away. But a lot of children from the mission, a lot of them now done really good for themselves. A few done good for themselves. But most of them turned to alcoholics and drank themselves to death. Younger than me, same age as me, bit older. Most of them all gone. ... They had no mother and father's loyalty, nothing.
>
> So I used to hit the streets drinking. I met my missus in town there. She done good. She don't drink and smoke at all. Really nice, really nice lady.

> Me and her we settled down. We had six kids, the oldest 25 and the youngest 14. We are not living together because, its not her fault, its my fault, you know. .... I was never in half the time. And I think to myself, "What am I doing, where am I heading?" and this house is the first positive step I am taking for myself. ... Otherwise I would be out running around, ... with the first person who went drinking. But since I got sick, I want to get a place of my own and tried to get some organisation. But it's took me a long time ...

(d) Impact of separation and institutional life

For Wayne, one of the deepest and most crippling impacts in his life has been the loneliness, emptiness and feeling of loss which he attributes to the dislocation from family. Wayne was able to articulate this sense of emptiness, having reflected on its presence in practically all aspects of his life. Because of the diminished experience of family life, whether positive or negative, he has developed a vision of ideal family life to which he aspires but which he feels has been beyond his reach. He feels he has failed in his role as 'good husband and father', particularly as a 'good provider' for his family because of his long-term unemployment and the effects of his alcoholism. Wayne recognises a connection between the model of dysfunctional family life he has inherited from his early childhood with his mother and father, his life in the Pallottine institutions which deprived him of intimacy and love, and his sense of failure in his own relationships and family life. Wayne indicated in a number of ways how he has been searching for love, companionship and intimacy:

> It is hard to describe this loneliness and heartache, its really hard, this loneliness. ... I used to mess around before but these days I can't seem to live with anybody. I live by myself and I feel good. I feel that I am by myself, my own person. And after all them years being told what to do, I had a big family, but there was always that feeling inside me, that I was missing out on something. I got that feeling... But you take away your family but there is always that feeling yet. You try to make another family, try to do something, but you keep thinking .. you keep getting this feeling one day and then you've dammed it. You keep thinking there is something missing, and you can't sort of bring it back. And you worry that you are getting in deeper and you wish you can bring it back, but you can't bring it back, hey. It is something you've lost for life. ... [I have felt] that loss practically all my life.

Wayne expressed that what he wants most of all is the love of his father and mother which he feels he did not receive as a child. He feels deprived of parental love and care which are expressed in practical ways; like visits, clothes and gifts, which are significant to children. He was also deprived of, and hence craves, the signs of affection which other children take for granted.

> What I missed out on, all the love from the beginning, you know. All that mother and son love. Mother's love. Father and son come back to her house. All that love what you enjoy like any type of family supposed to be. I used to think to myself, "I used to love to have a bike, love to have toys. We had none of these things, nothing, no lollies nothing. When I used to come home [to Wandering] I used to see the mothers and fathers coming with flash cars, give them lollies, toys, new shoes, and we used to walk around bare foot, going around with clothes from the mission. And the love and the kisses when we were put to bed, hot things on the table. ... Those type of things now I try to do for my kids. I tried my best for them. And I gave all the love, fatherly love that I could give them. ... They come round and see me now.

(v) Second generation: Sam Smith

(a) Impact of separation and institutional life

Sam, the youngest of the Smith siblings, did not participate in this part of the project although he at first indicated his interest. A number of attempts were made to contact Sam and to arrange a suitable time to meet but Sam did not keep these appointments.

It appears that Sam, who was a baby when his mother left the family and about three years old when he was placed at Wandering Mission, has taken the longest to deal with the trauma of separation and institutionalisation. He was the last of his siblings to approach the ALS with his story and was reluctant to participate further. His siblings indicated that Sam had had personal and relationship difficulties for most of his life and he too had developed a severe problem with alcohol. Sam had indicated to his brother, Wayne, that he was very anxious about being interviewed and at one stage had asked his brother to be present at the interview to give him moral support through the process. Sam was worried that the interview would raise issues for him which he had buried for years and that he may not be able to cope

with the emotional impact of this process. Wayne was prepared to give his brother all the support he needed to deal with these issues but eventually Sam decided not to participate.

Sam's situation represents that of countless other Aboriginal people who have been removed from their family and cultural environments in childhood. It appears that the earlier the child is removed and institutionalised, the deeper the impact because the parental bonding which is essential for the healthy emotional and psychological development of the individual is disrupted. Sam's relationships with his siblings has been tenuous. According to his mother, she has had great difficulty in re-establishing her relationship with him, in spite of her willingness and attempts to do so. Sam represents those people whose lives have been damaged by the trauma of removal but who are not able to face the deeply distressing issues underlying their unhappy and dysfunctional lives. Many are not able or prepared to give up destructive habits such as alcohol and substance abuse and other self-destructive behaviours which they adopt in an attempt to deal with their psychological and emotional pain. Others have suffered severe mental illness and depression, yet others have developed chronic physical illnesses and others still have died, prematurely, sometimes violently.

Endnote

1. Barry Smith, born 1947, 'taken away' aged eight years.

CHAPTER SIX

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF REMOVAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

> Every administration has trouble with half-caste girls. I know of 200-300 girls, however, in Western Australia who have gone into domestic service and the majority are doing very well. Our policy is to send them out into the white community, and if the girl comes back pregnant our rule is to keep her for two years. The child is then taken away from the mother and sometimes never sees her again. Thus these children grow up as whites, knowing nothing of their own environment. At the expiration of the period of two years the mother goes back into service. So that it really doesn't matter if she has half a dozen children.[1]

Introduction

The action of removing Aboriginal children from their families and culture, by successive governments and authorities, denied Aboriginal people their fundamental human rights in regard to the land and association with family, tribe and culture, and constituted genocide. Religious organisations or orders were often complicit in the breach of fundamental human rights. The discussion in the preceding chapters provides strong evidence that these breaches of human rights have had and continue to have devastating effects on both Aboriginal culture and individuals and therefore demand legal scrutiny. This chapter discusses in a preliminary manner, the legal options available to those who were removed and kept away from their families, culture and land, whether it was by government, some other body or institution (i.e. a church group) or a combination of these. Although not discussed here, there is also the possibility of criminal prosecutions being initiated against perpetrators of sexual abuse against children who were institutionalised.

The International Law of Genocide

The *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* ("the *Convention*") was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 9th

December, 1948. It declared genocide a crime under international law in times of peace or war. All parties to the *Convention* have an obligation to ensure that genocide is prevented, punished, and that the provisions of the *Convention* are enforceable in domestic courts.

Australia ratified the *Convention* on the 8th July, 1949[2]. The *Convention* attained international legal status upon the twentieth ratification on the 12th January, 1951.

The Commonwealth Parliament passed the *Genocide Convention Act 1949* (Cth). While this Act approves the ratification of the *Convention* and replicates nearly all of the provisions of the *Convention*, it did not make breaches of the *Convention* or breaches of the identical provisions of the Act, enforceable by prosecution in the domestic courts of Australia.[3]

However, although there is no legislation expressly implemented which enables the enforcement of the *Convention* in Australian domestic law[4], the prevention and punishment of genocide is part of customary international law[5] and thus forms part of the common law of Australia.[6]

The definitions of genocide in customary international law and in the *Convention* contain the same concepts and key elements.

The Convention Against Genocide

Article II of the *Convention* confirms that "genocide, whether committed in times of peace or in times of war, is a crime under international law" which the contracting parties "undertake to prevent and punish".

Article II defines genocide as:

> any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, any national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:
>
> (a) killing members of the group;
>
> (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

(d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and

(e) **forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.**

Article III provides that the following acts shall be punishable:

(a) genocide;

(b) conspiracy to commit genocide;

(c) direct and public incitement to commit genocide;

(d) attempt to commit genocide;

(e) complicity in genocide.

Article IV provides persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

Article V provides that the ratifying parties undertake to enact, in accordance with their respective Constitutions, the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the present *Convention* and, in particular, to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III.

Past policies and practices of assimilation, the removal of peoples from their lands, and the taking of Aboriginal children from their families, being intentional and having a tendency to destroy the Aboriginal people as a separate group by assimilating them into another society, each falls within the acts prohibited by Articles II(c), (d) and (e) of the *Convention*. There was an attempt to destroy the racial group in whole or in part and to that end, children of that racial group were forcibly transferred to another group. As J.H. Wootten, QC, Commissioner of the RCIADIC[7] stated:

> In its crudest form the policy of assimilation fell within the modern definition of genocide, and in particular the attempt to 'solve the Aboriginal problem' by the taking away of children and merging them into white society fell within that definition[8].

There is little doubt that the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and culture amounted to genocide.

Customary International Law of Genocide

The removal of Aboriginal children from their families also falls within the scope of the customary international law of genocide.

Raphael Lemkin developed the term 'genocide' in 1944[9]. The pre-convention definition of genocide included:

> Deliberate separation of families for depopulation purposes subordinated to the criminal intent to destroy or to cripple permanently a human group. The acts are directed as such, and individuals are selected for destruction only because they belong to these groups.[10]

The International Court of Justice declared in 1951 that the principles underlying the *Convention* "are principles which are recognised by civilised nations and binding on states, even without any conventional obligation."[11]

It is universally accepted[12] that the principle prohibiting genocide is a pre-emptory norm of international law[13] that is "... accepted and recognised by the international community of States as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted ...."[14] Inconsistent treaties or agreements are rendered void.

The customary international law of genocide applies in Australian domestic law, even in the absence of appropriate legislation implementing Australia's *Convention* obligations.[15]

The Australian Constitution - Implied Rights

The High Court has recently displayed a willingness to imply from the Constitution certain specific personal rights arising from the doctrine of the rule of law and representative democracy. The High Court has accepted a number of implied freedoms in the Constitution, such as the right to freedom of speech.[16] It is probable that other fundamental rights and freedoms are implied in the Constitution.[17]

Whilst there is no express constitutional provision that prevents or prevented the removal of Aboriginal children from their families, it could be forcefully argued that the taking of children constituted a breach of fundamental personal or human rights implied in the Constitution. This view is supported by the recognition of the common law of Australia as incorporating the international customary law which recognises as fundamental the right of a racial group not to be subject to genocide. A basic principle of the common law for centuries has been the protection of the freedom and liberty of the subject and prevention of arbitrary interference with the person's liberty unless specifically authorised by law.

Ron Merkel QC referred to three potential rights that might be argued by parents and children who were affected by the government's policy of removing children from their families. These are:

(a) the right of equal treatment for the protection of the law;

(b) freedom from detention or arbitrary removal from family or community without due process of law; and

(c) the right of association with family, culture and community limited only by due process of law.[18]

The *Aboriginal Act 1905* (WA) and subsequent related legislation[19] actually made the 'Chief Protector' the legal guardian of 'every Aboriginal and half-caste child ...' Parents therefore had no legal authority or control for the upbringing of their children. It is arguable that the legislation is invalid because it breaches the implied rights of parents to parent their own

children or the right of children to be parented by their Aboriginal parents.[20]

Whilst the doctrine of implied constitutional guarantees may be limited by the sovereignty of Parliament, the democratic rights of the electorate might not be able to be diminished. As Justice Toohey has explained:

> It might be contended that the Courts should ... conclude ... that where the people of Australia, in adopting a Constitution conferred power to legislate with respect of various subject matters upon a Commonwealth Parliament, it is to be presumed that they do not intend that those grants of power extend to invasion of fundamental common law civil liberties - a presumption only rebuttable by express authorisation in the Constitutional document ...[21]

Civil Law Options

(i) Negligence

The law of negligence applies to public authorities and governments.[22] The statutory framework in Western Australia established a Chief Protector as legal guardian of every Aboriginal and half-caste child up until 1963[23]. It is evident that the Western Australian government and/or relevant public authorities and officials, for example, 'the guardians' and 'the Chief Protectors', owed a duty of care to the Aboriginal children who were removed. (The duty of care would also be for children removed after 1963 and placed in the care of the State). It is unquestionable that 'guardians' and 'protectors' should have contemplated the effect on the welfare of Aboriginal children and parents when effecting their duties under the statute, and in particular considered the individual welfare of each Aboriginal child when removing them from the custody of their biological parents and/or immediate families.

A person in a responsible position, for example, such as the Chief Protector of Aborigines should have foreseen that the removal of Aboriginal children from their family and cultural groups could and probably would, cause them significant harm. Further, the pain and suffering caused to the children removed and to the parents was reasonably foreseeable.

The possible defendants may argue they are immune from action because the removal of Aboriginal children also brought about a positive result that could not have reasonably been achieved in any other fashion. That is to say, the risk and potential seriousness of injury must be balanced against the utility of the defendant's conduct. In *Watt v Hertfordshire County Council*[24] Denning LJ stated:

> It is well settled that in measuring the duty of care you must balance the risk against the measures necessary to eliminate the risk. To that proposition there ought to be added this: you must balance the risk against the end to be achieved.

It is submitted that this defence will not be open to the defendants on the available evidence. The elements to establish negligence against the relevant public authorities and governments can be made out.

(ii) Misfeasance in a public office

The existence of this form of public law tort, is well established[25]. It renders public officials accountable and liable for damages for abuse of their powers (knowingly engaging in unlawful conduct).

(iii) Beaudesert principle[26]

Under the *Beaudesert Principle*, a person can be awarded damages if they have, inevitably suffered harm or loss from the unlawful, intentional and positive acts of another. It may be possible to apply the *Beaudesert Principle* to the actions taken by the Chief Protector of Aborigines personally, or the State, based on the principle of vicarious liability. Questions could be raised as to the unlawfulness of the conduct of removal of children from their families and placing them in environments where they were often emotionally and physically abused. However, it is acknowledged that, given the wide powers conferred by the various Native Welfare legislations, it may be difficult to establish unlawful conduct on the part of the Chief Protector and his delegates.

(iv) Breach of statutory duty

If a duty is imposed on a person by statute, a departure from that duty may result in an action being brought for breach of duty[27]. An action for breach of duty may be possible against, for example, the Chief Protector or the State government.

Legislation which would need to be examined to establish a breach of statutory duty includes the *Aborigines Act 1905* (WA), *State Children's Act* 1907 (WA), *Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1911* (WA), *Native Welfare Act 1954*, (WA), and *Native Welfare Act 1963* (WA) and the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (WA)[28].

A concern for potential claimants, not only for actions based on breach of statutory duty, but for all or many civil suits, would be S.16 of the *Native Welfare Act 1963* (WA) and S.17 of the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (WA), which provides an exemption from personal liability for the relevant Minister, the relevant Commissioner and other identifying officers of the Department for actions and decisions taken pursuant to powers conferred on them by the relevant Acts.

However, the protective provisions will not be a defence to an otherwise well-founded claim if the public official's actions and/or decisions were motivated solely or predominantly by a wrong or indirect motive. This is even if the defendant had a genuine but mistaken belief that they were acting within the jurisdiction of the powers conferred by the relevant Act[29]. Further, the wording of the protective provisions in the *Native Welfare Act 1963* (WA) and the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* (WA) do not appear to include the Crown; the Crown cannot shield itself behind the protective provisions[30].

(v) Limitation period

Pursuant to S.47A of the *Limitation Act 1936* (WA) an action against a person acting in public office must be brought within six years from the date on which the cause of action occurred. The same limitation period applies for actions against other persons (for example the religious organisations or orders) pursuant to S.38 of the Act.

Additionally, an action against the Crown, pursuant to Section 6 of the *Crown Suits Act 1947* (WA) which applies for 12 month limitation period may present another obstacle to litigation for claimants affected by the removal policies and practices of successive State governments. Under S.6(1) of the *Crown Suits Act* 1942 (WA) an action against the Crown must be commenced before the expiration of one year from when the cause of action accrued. However, pursuant to S.6(2), the Attorney-General has the discretion to waiver the one year period, to allow an action to be brought within the six year limitation period, and pursuant to S.6(2), leave can be sought for the court to bring an action within six years even though S.6(1) has not been complied with.

However, as stated by Löfgren and Kilduff[31] there may:

> be ways of overcoming the relevant *Limitation of Action* statute. For example, no statutory limitation exists under international treaty law for the crime of genocide[32] and the same may be true for the common law (see *Polyukhovich v The Commonwealth (War Crimes Act Case)* (1991) 172 CLR 501 at 557). Governments could also waive their respective *Limitation of Actions* statutes, and settle claims by negotiation, rather than litigation. This gesture would be in the spirit of recommendation 4 of the *Final Report of the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, which was made in relation to claims for deaths based upon the findings of the Royal Commissioners.

Another possibility in overcoming the limitation hurdle is to seek equitable compensation for a breach of fiduciary duty.

Futher Civil Law Option - Breach of Fiduciary Duty

(i) Fiduciary relationship

When the State government or its officers and/or the Churches undertook guardian or wardship roles in respect of Aboriginal children a fiduciary relationship arose[33] between the guardian and the child.[34]

In *Hospital Products Ltd v United States Surgical Corporations*[35] Mason J as he then was stated:

> The critical feature of these [fiduciary] relationships is that the fiduciary undertakes or agrees to act for or on behalf of or in the interest of another person in the exercise of a power or discretion which will effect the interests of the other person in a legal or practical sense. The relationship between the parties is therefore one which gives the fiduciary a special opportunity to exercise the power or discretion to the detriment of the other person who is accordingly vulnerable to be abused by the fiduciary's position.

Dawson J, in *Hospital Products*[36] stated that:

> There is, however, the notion underlying all the cases of fiduciary obligations that inherent in the nature of the relationship itself is a position of disadvantage or vulnerability on the part of one of the parties which causes him to place reliance upon the other and requires the protection of equity acting upon the conscience of that other ...

By removing Aboriginal children from their families, the State government unilaterally undertook responsibility for them, creating fiduciary obligations.[37]

(ii) Fiduciary duty

A fiduciary will be in breach of his/her fiduciary obligations if an act or decision cannot reasonably be said to be in the best interest of the beneficiary. A major motivating factor behind the removal of Aboriginal children was assimilation into white society. It is submitted that a Court would decide that a breach of fiduciary duty has occurred. It would be difficult to establish any plausible argument that the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents was in each child's best interests.

(iii) No limitation obstacle

Bringing an action in equity for breach of fiduciary duty may overcome the non-discretionary six-year limitation period for bringing an action that otherwise would apply under S.38(1) and S.47A of the *Limitation Act 1935* (WA). Apart from sections of the Act which refer to specific equitable claims (not relevant here), the Act does not apply to equitable claims or

other relief for breach of fiduciary duty. The defence of laches (unreasonable time delay in bringing a claim) may be available but would be unlikely to succeed because nearly all potential claimants would not have known at any earlier time that they had suffered injury and hurt which was compensable.

In the New South Wales case of *Williams v The Minister, Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 and Anor* unreported[38], it was held that no extension of time under the *Limitation Act 1969* (NSW) was required to bring a claim for equitable compensation for breach of fiduciary duty. The case concerned an action brought by an Aboriginal woman against the NSW Government for negligence, wrongful detention and breach of fiduciary duty relating to the conduct of the Aboriginal Welfare Board in 1947 in removing the applicant from a home containing Aboriginal children on the grounds of her fair skin. Similarly the Canadian case of *KM v HM*[39] which was concerned with an action brought by a woman against her father for damages for incest, shortly after being given therapy, held that "the *Limitations Act* does not apply to equitable action such as an action for compensation for breach of fiduciary duty". In that case it was presumed that the victim did not discover the nexus between the injuries and abuse until the therapy commenced.

Whether the fiduciary duty argument can also be applied to overcome the limitation period under the *Crown Suits Act 1947* (WA), for actions against the Crown has not been conclusively decided.[40]

Conclusion

The policies and practices of removing Aboriginal children from their families and culture breached a number of fundamental human rights to which all Australians are entitled. Thus a number of legal causes of actions are available for people removed from their families and their parents.

The ALS strongly believes that the legal causes of actions discussed in this chapter should not be prohibited by procedural obstacles. The State Government should remove legislative barriers to litigation, if the Government is to be a full partner in the reconciliation process

between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

Legal action may prove difficult from a procedural point of view, and there are significant legal arguments to be overcome, however the ALS believes overall there is a high likelihood of success for individual claimants.

At a fundamental level, the State Government has a moral obligation to redress the wrongs of the past and, in particular, facilitate the hearing of any actions on their substantive merits, rather than arguing every technical legal point to wear down potential claimants.

Endnotes

1. Mr O Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines, speech at the Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities held in Canberra, April, 1937. See Appendix A for the full speech.

2. *Genocide Convention Act 1949* (Cth).

3. cf: *Genocide Act 1969* (UK) which includes imprisonment for acts of genocide.

4. In *Koowarta v Bjelke Petersen* (1982) 153 CLR p168 at p220, Mason J stated "to effect an incorporation into Australian law, the provisions of the treaty must be enacted as part of our domestic law, whether by Commonwealth or State statute." Also refer to *Simsek v MacPhee* (1982) 148 CLR p636 at p642, and *Deitrich v The Queen* (1992) 177 CLR p292 at p298, and *Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs v Teoh* 128 ALR p353. It should be noted, that although *Teoh* affirms the principle that the provisions of an international treaty to which Australia is a party does not form part of the Australian Law unless incorporated into domestic law by statute, the High Court in *Teoh* did hold that ratification of a convention obliges the Executive Government and its agencies to act according to the convention, per Mason C J, Deane J at p365, and Toohey J per p374.

5. R Lemkin, "Genocide as a Crime under International Law" *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 41, 1947, p141 at p147.

6. *Koowarta v Bjelke Petersen op.cit*, at p220.

7. Commissioner JH Wootten, *Report of the Inquiry into the Death of Malcolm Charles Smith* of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, NZ, AGPS, 1989.

8. *ibid*, at pp75-77.

9. R Lemkin, *op.cit.*

10. *ibid*, at p147.

11. *Reservations to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* [1951] ICJ p15 at p23.

12. "A state violates jus congens, as currently defined if it practices, encourages or condones genocide". *Hugo Prince v Federal Republic of Germany* 26 F.3d 1116, 1 July, 1994 (US App) at p23.

13. Otherwise known as *jus congens*.

14. *Vienna Convention on the Laws of Treaties*, Article 53, 23 May, 1969, 1155 UNTS p332.

15. *Koowarta v Bjelke-Peterson op.cit.*, at p220; *Trendtex Trading Corporation v Central Bank of Nigeria* [1977] QB 529 at pp553-558; cf *Jago v Judges of the District Court of New South Wales* (1988) 12 NSWLR p588 at p570.

16. *Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd and Ors v Commonwealth of Australia [No. 2]* (1992) 177 CLR p106, *Nationwide News Pty Ltd v Wills* (1992) 177 CLR p1, for other implied constitutional fundamental rights and freedoms, refer to Murphy J's dissenting judgment in *McInnis v The Queen* (1979) 143 CLR p575, and *Street v Queensland Bar Associations* (1989) 168 CLR p461.

17. TH Jones, "Legal Protection for Fundamental Rights and Freedoms: European Lessons for Australia?" Vol. 22, 1994, *Federal Law Review*, p57.

18. R Merkel, "A Paper on Legal Options for Aborigines taken from their families and their people". *The Going Home Conference*, Darwin, 3-6 October, 1994, p2.

19. For example, *Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1936* (WA), *Native Administration Act 1936* (WA). Refer further to endnote number 26 for other relevant statutes.

20. The policy of assimilation may also have breached S.116 of the Australian Constitution (freedom of religion).

21. Justice J Toohey, "A Government of Laws, and Not of Men" *Public Law Review*, Vol. 4, 1993, 158 at p170; Justice Toohey's statement was referring to the Australian Constitutions and the Commonwealth Parliament, but it could also apply to the State Constitution and Parliament.

22. *Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Trustees v Gibbs Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Trustees and Anor* (1866) LR 1 HL 93; *Anns v Merton London Borough Council* [1978] AC p728.

23. *The Native Welfare Act 1963* (WA) repealed the previous legislation framework set up under the *Aborigines Act 1905* (WA) which established the position of 'Chief Protector.'

24. [1954] 1 WLR p835 at p838.

25. For example, see *Dunlop v Woollahra Municipal Council* [1982] AC p158 at p172.

26. *Beaudesert Shire Council v Smith* (1966) 120 CLR p145.

27. *Board of Fire Commissioners of New South Wales v Ardouin* (1962-1963) 109 CLR p105 at p108-110, and *Sovar v Henry Lane Pty Ltd* (1967) 116 CLR p397.

28. The relevant sections of the various statutes identified here are:

Aborigines Act 1905 (WA)

S.6 It shall be the duty of the Department (Aboriginal Department S.4)

(3) To provide for the custody, maintenance and education of the children of Aborigines.

(4) To provide, as far as practicable, for the supply of medical attendance, medicines, rations and shelter to sick, aged and infirm Aborigines.

(6) To exercise general supervision and care over all matters affecting the interests and welfare of the Aborigines, and to protect them against injustice, imposition and fraud.

S.4 The establishment of the Aboriginal Department "to be charted with duty of promoting the welfare of the Aborigines ... providing for the education of Aboriginal children and generally assisting in the preservation and well-being of the Aborigines."

S.8 "The Chief Protector shall be the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and half-caste child until" the age of 16.

State Children's Act 1907 (WA)

S.4 "child" - *any* boy or girl under the age of 18 years.

Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1911 (WA)

S.3 S.8 of the principal Act amended by adding "to the exclusion of the rights of the mother of an illegitimate or half-caste child."

S.11 creation of S.55A - application of *State Children's Act* (WA) 1907 powers to Aboriginal Institutions vis-a-vis Aboriginal children.

Native Welfare Act 1954 (WA)

S.11 amends S.8 of 1905 Act by adding "the Commissioner may ... direct what person is to have the custody of a native child of whom he is the legal guardian."

Native Welfare Act 1963 (WA)

S.5(1) Establishment of Department of Native Welfare "and be charged with the duty of promoting the welfare of natives."

S.7 Duties of Department

(c) To provide for custody, maintenance and education of the children of natives.

(f) To exercise such general supervision and care in respect to all matters affecting the interests of natives as the Minister in his discretion considers

most fit to assist in their economic and social assimilation by the community of the State, and to protect them against injustice, imposition and fraud.

S.16 Exemption from personal liability of Minister, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, representative, manager or officer of the Department - occupies or *has occupied* office.

Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972 (WA)

S.5 This Act binds the Crown

S.6(1) The Native Welfare Act, 1963, is repealed.

S.12 The Authority is charged with the duty of promoting the well being of persons of Aboriginal descent ...

S.17 Exemption from personal liability of "Minister or Commissioner, or deputy of the Commissioner, or who otherwise exercises or performs or who has exercised or performed any power or function conferred or any duty imported by this Act."

29. *Webster and Anor v Lampard* (1993) 177 CLR p598.

30. Refer to *Bropho v State of Western Australia and Anor* (1990) 171 CLR p1 for the High Courts approach to statutory interpretation and binding of the Crown to provisions of a statute.

31. N. Löfgren and P. Kilduff, "Genocide and Australian Law" *Aboriginal Law Bulletin* Vol.3, No. 70, p6 at p7.

32. See Article 1(b) of the *Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity* (1970), 754 UNTS p73, and Article 1(1) of the *European Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes* (1974) ETS p82.

33. R Merkel, *op.cit*, at p47, also refer to *Bennett v Minister for Community Welfare* (1992) 176 CLR p408. For discussion of fiduciary relationships between governments and indigenous peoples see *Mabo v Queensland [No. 2]* (1992) 175 CLR p1; *Menominee Tribe v United States* 101 Ct. Cl. 10 (1994); and *Manchester Band of Pomo Indians v United States* 363 F. Supp. 1233 (N.D. Cal.) (1973).

34. For a general discussion on the fiduciary principle and Crown-Aboriginal relationship, refer to D Tan, "The Fidicuary as an Accordian Term: Can the Crown Play a Different Tune?", *Australian Law Journal*, Vol.69, No.6, 1995, p440.

35. (1984) 156 CLR p41 at pp96-97.

36. *ibid*, at p142.

37. There are 104 pieces of Western Australian legislation dealing with Aboriginals which provides the requisite assumption of responsibility.

38. NSW Court of Appeal, Unreported, 23 December, 1944, CA 60472/93.

39. (1993) 96 DLR (4th) p289.

40. However, for judicial discussion of limitation period under the *Crown Suits Act 1967* (WA) refer to the *Snowy Judamia, Crow Yougala, Paddy Yarborloo, Billy Thomas and Lesley Arkie v The State of Western Australia*, Supreme Court of Western Australia, Unreported, 23 January, 1995, No. 1661 of 1993.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

> I think I spent about 11 years in missions and during that time there was a lot of suppression of feelings and we were not encouraged to show our feelings. I find as I am getting older that there is a build-up of this depressed feeling that I have, that I seem to want to get out. I seem to have no control over these feelings and when they want to express themselves, it just seems to happen. It can be quite embarrassing, because it can happen when you wish it wasn't happening. It is part of the problem that I have had with my employment. I have left my last two jobs partly because of these depressed feelings and because I haven't been able to accept authority, which is a reaction to the authoritarian rules that we were subjected to at the missions. It is often easy for people to say the past is the past and you should forget about it, but the past is affecting us in the present.[1]

In collecting stories from Aboriginal people who were removed in childhood from their families, and sometimes their parents, what becomes most obvious is the sheer enormity of the impact of the past policies and practices of removal authorised by successive State governments. The policy existed from at least 1905 to the late 1960s. People interviewed by the ALS still carry deep psychological and emotional scars from being removed from their families and culture and placed in missions, orphanages and/or foster care.

The essence of the policy and practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families and culture was the object of assimilating children of 'mixed' Aboriginal blood into the 'white community.' There was an attempt to 'segregate' the 'full-blood' Aboriginal race in Western Australia with the view that they would eventually die out. The removal policies in regards to Aboriginal children amount to genocide[2] of the 'Aboriginal race.'

Aboriginal people who were removed from family and culture had their fundamental human rights in regard to association with land, family, tribe and culture violated. Religious

organisations or orders were often complicit in successive governments' breaches of fundamental human rights.

The ALS collected over 600 stories from Aboriginal people who were removed in childhood from their families. Most people were from the south-west of Western Australia with smaller numbers from the Goldfields, Gascoyne and Kimberley regions. Of course there were many more Aboriginal people who were removed, many of whom are now deceased. The ALS has not had the resources to access people in all areas of the State, and we do not present these findings as only being applicable to people in the regions mentioned. We believe the personal histories of the people in this report are representative of the effects on large numbers of Aboriginal people throughout the State.

The removal policies and practices of the past has affected at least three to four generations of Aboriginal families. The ALS believes that any comprehensive national inquiry will find that the policies and practices of removal have touched virtually every Aboriginal family in Western Australia.

The intrinsic impact of removal from family and culture was exacerbated by institutionalisation itself and, in many cases, the harsh, cruel, uncaring environment of missions and foster care. Also for many people, removal severed forever their relationship with their parents and other family members.

Those who were able to regain contact with family often found it difficult to re-establish a happy relationship with family members. The passage of time and alienation from their 'Aboriginal culture' often proved insurmountable.

The long lasting effects of the removal policies and practices should not be underestimated. There is little doubt that the past policies and practices of systematically removing Aboriginal children from their families has contributed to Aboriginal ill-health and other identified negative enduring effects. This report cannot be regarded as conclusive in identifying all negative effects - there are undoubtedly others.

It is necessary for the State Government to acknowledge that the policies and practices that led to the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents was wrong. The State Government must communicate to the wider community the long-lasting effects of the removal policies and practices. The wider community must be made aware that as a result of the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual hurt suffered by people removed, by their families, and by communities, Aboriginal people have found it difficult to adequately cope in a society which is often hostile and uncaring. Further, adequate support systems must be set up so that Aboriginal people can deal with the enduring effects of being removed from their family and culture. Aboriginal people must be given control of this process.

The question of compensation must be seriously considered by the Government. If necessary, legal impediments to people affected by the removal policies from seeking legal redress must be eliminated. People's fundamental human rights were taken from them; they should be able to obtain appropriate compensation for such human rights violations. The body of evidence collected for this report strongly supports legal arguments for compensation for the hurt, pain, suffering and in many cases dysfunction resulting from removal and assimilation policies and practices of the past. Also the question of criminal prosecution for the physical sexual abuse of those removed needs urgent attention.

It is crucial that the State and Commonwealth Governments provide leadership in ensuring all Australians recognise the removal policies for what they were and acknowledge the enduring effects of prior policies and practices. Governments must respond to the consequences of removing Aboriginal children from their families if reconciliation between indigenous people and the wider community is to be genuine and effective. We must all deal with the effects of the past, in order to progress in the future.

a rainy day,
the window sill too high,
I struggle to take a peek.

amazingly, my eyes catch a glimpse
there, standing there, my dad!

I've never seen him since that day,
I wonder where he's gone?

mum, my mum,
she left too ...
haven't seen her since when.

I've got a photo,
when will it be
that day that I'll meet her again?[3]

Endnotes

1. Monica, born 1951, 'taken away', aged four years.

2. Refer back to chapter six for legal discourse on genocide.

3. Terry, born 1961, 'taken away' aged six months, a poem - 'Missing Parents.'

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APPENDIX A

Excerpt from the report on the initial conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities which met at Parliament House, Canberra in April 1937

(State Archives of Western Australia Department of Native Affairs, ACC. 993 File 427/36. Conference of Commonwealth and State Protectors of Aborigines)

This is the speech made by Mr. A.O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia at Parliament House, Canberra, April 1937.

The opinion held by Western Australian authorities is that the problem of the native race, including half-castes, should be dealt with in a long range plan. We should ask ourselves what will be the position, say, 50 years hence; it is not so much the position today that has to be considered. Western Australia has gone further in the development of such a long range policy than has any other State, by accepting the view that ultimately the natives must be absorbed into the white population of Australia. That is the principal objective of legislation which was passed by the Parliament of Western Australia in its last session. I followed closely the debates which accompanied the passage of that measure, and although some divergence was, at time, displayed, most members expressed the view that sooner or later the native and white population of Australia must become merged. The Western Australian law to which I have referred is based on the presumption that the Aborigines of Australia sprang from the same stock as we did ourselves; that is to say, they are not negroid, but give evidence of Caucasian origin. I think that the Adelaide Anthropological Board has voiced the opinion that there is no such thing as atavism in the Aboriginal, and Dr. Cliento has expressed the view to which I have referred. We have accepted that view in Western Australia.

In Western Australia the problem of the Aborigines has three phases. In the far-north there are between 7,000 and 8,000 pure blooded Aborigines; in the middle-north the number

of half-castes is increasing, and the full-blooded Aborigines are being detribalised, and in the south-west there are about 5,000 coloured people. We have dropped the use of the term "half-caste." As a matter of fact, in the legislation passed last session the term "Aborigines" has been discarded altogether; we refer to them as natives whether they are full-blooded or half-caste. Quadroons over the age of 21 years are, however, excluded. From childhood, quadroons are to be treated as whites. In my state there are several institutions for the treatment of the natives, including eleven missions and a number of departmental establishments. At the mission stations, the natives are encouraged to multiply by marriage, with a consequent increase of population. The missions are thus able to claim that they are doing valuable work for the natives. Undoubtedly they are doing good work, but they keep an increasing number of natives on their properties, whereas the departmental institutions, whilst approving marriages, encourage the natives to mix with the general community, and earn their own living which, I am glad to say, they are doing. As a matter of fact, for some years now I have been able to supply sufficient youngsters of both sexes to meet the demand for their labour.

As I have pointed out, the policy of the missions is in direct contrast to that of the department, because they do not encourage the young people born on the mission properties to leave them. The ultimate result of this policy in Western Australia will be an increase in the number of coloured people, that is, half-castes, and a diminution of the number of full-blooded Aborigines. It seems to reflect the task which confronts us is educating and training these people to enable them to be assimilated into the white community. Accordingly we have taken steps to improve the health and physical fitness of the coloured population. At present only about 10% of these people show any sign of ill-health, and the majority of the complaints from which they may suffer are trifling. This has been ascertained over two or three years of intensive medical inspection. If the coloured people of this country are to be absorbed into the general community they must be thoroughly fit and educated at least to the extent of the three R's. If they can read, write and count, and know what wages they should get, and how to enter into an agreement with an employer, that is all that should be necessary. Once that is accomplished there is no reason in the world why these coloured people should not be absorbed into the community. To achieve this end, however, we must have charge of the children at the age of six years; it is useless to wait until they are twelve

or thirteen years of age. In Western Australia we have power under the Act to take any child from its mother at any stage of its life, no matter whether the mother be legally married or not. It is, however, our intention to establish sufficient settlements to undertake the training and education of these children so that they may become absorbed into the general community.

Another important point is marriage. I realise that the problem in Queensland as outlined by Mr. Bleakley, is different; but the natives in Western Australia are mostly of 'purer' stock. There is some Asiatic blood in the north and a certain amount of negroid strain is to be seen due to the fact that some of the early settlers brought with them to Western Australia negro servants who left their mark on the native population. The negro strain remains. The Asiatic Cross, however, is not a bad one. We find that half-caste Asiatics do very well indeed; in fact, very often they beat the white cross. In order that the existing state of affairs in Western Australia shall continue, and in order to prevent the return of those half-castes who are nearly white to the black, the State Parliament has enacted legislation including the giving of control over the marriages of half-castes. Under this law no half-caste need be allowed to marry a full-blooded Aboriginal if it is possible to avoid it, but the missions do not always take steps to prevent this from occurring; they allow the half-castes under their control to marry anybody.

Dr. Morris - You cannot stop them from having babies even if they don't marry.

Mr. Neville - We realise that. As a matter of fact that very often does occur as the result of half-caste mingling with whites; but that does not matter very much. What does matter is that, when a child is born and the father cannot be found, the child becomes a charge upon the State.

Another matter upon which we differ from Queensland is in the fundamental character of the natives. Mr. Bleakley has mentioned settlements and cultivations; our experience is that one can never make a farmer out of a native - seldom even out of a half-caste. In Western Australia blocks of land have been granted to the natives and all that they have done is to build humpies and then sit down. Without constant supervision it is impossible to make them

cultivate land. Then we have the important difference between the female and the male. In furtherance of the scheme which we have in view, we have definitely excluded from certain provisions of the Act, a more adult person of half-blood who is living more or less like a white man. We give him the benefit of the doubt, and tell him that so long as he does certain things and conforms to the Act we shall not worry about him. In other words, we give him a chance to enter into the communal life of the State. Many have taken advantage of this provision and have done so. However, it is a gradual process to merge the two races. As I have explained, in Western Australia we have full-blooded Aborigines, half-castes from detribalised blacks, and half-castes producing their own children. In the lower half of the State we are approaching the stage where half-castes will be able to be assimilated. It will be, perhaps, 25 years before the same stage is reached in the middle north, and 50 years in the far north. In any case there is no reason why we should not adopt a long-sighted policy.

An important aspect of the policy is the cost. The different States are creating institutions for the welfare of the native race, and, as the result of this policy, the native population is increasing. What is to be the limit? Are we going to have a population of 1,000,000 blacks in the Commonwealth, or are we going to merge them into our white community and eventually forget that there ever were any Aborigines in Australia. There are not many now, whereas not so many generations ago there were a great many. When Western Australia was first settled in 1829 it is alleged that there was a population within the State of 55,000 natives. In the south-west portion of the State alone there were 13,000 natives. In 1901 the native population in the south-west was reduced to 1,419, of whom 45% where half-castes. Today there are nearly 6,000 natives in the same area, so I venture the opinion that in 25 years time the native population in that district along will have increased to 15,000. How can we keep them apart from the community? Our own population is not increasing at such a rapid rate as to lead us to expect that there will be a great many more white people in that area 25 years hence than there are at present. The Aborigines have inter-mixed with our own people. I know of some 80 white men who are married to native women, with whom they are living happy, contented lives, so I see no objection to the ultimate absorption into our own race of the whole of the existing Australian native race. In order to do this we must guard the health of the natives in every possible way so that they may be, physically, as fit as is possible. The children must be trained as we would train our own children. The

stigma at present attaching to half-castes must be banished. In Western Australia half-caste boys and men take part in football, cricket and other games as a sporting equal to that of their white club mates, but are excluded from the social life of the community. They feel this deeply as do their white companions in sport. This state of affairs will have to disappear.

To do all these things into which we in Western Australia have put our hearts, will require much greater expenditure than is at present allowed for native welfare purposes. The current level of expenditure for the purpose in Western Australia is ridiculous. My calculation is that, excluding the 10,000 full-blooded natives in Western Australia who are considered to be outside the influence of civilisation, the cost estimated to ensure the well being of each native is 30s 2d a head. In other States the expenditure a head of this account is as follows:

Queensland	£2 10s 7d
New South Wales	£5 5s
South Australia	£5 10s 10d
Victoria	£13 4s 4d

The per capita cost of educating a white child in Western Australia today is about £10 10s a year, yet in that State 30 Shillings a year is supposed to cover everything, including food, clothing and education of one of the native population. It is a ridiculous sum, but my State is not in a position to expend a large amount of money on these people, and I think the suggestion made by Mr. Bleakley, that the Commonwealth should render assistance in this direction, is excellent. In my State there are certain situations, such as cattle stations, in which the natives are housed. These are almost self-supporting, so we do not need capital for them; but money is needed in other directions. In conclusion, I emphasise that Western Australia has no native problem. Its problem is a financial one. If we had the money we could embark upon the policy I have outlined.

Re: Aboriginal Girls in Service

We have much the same difficulty in Western Australia. Every administration has trouble with half-caste girls. I know of 200-300 girls, however, in Western Australia who have gone into domestic service and the majority are doing very well. Our policy is to send them out into the white community, and if the girl comes back pregnant our rule is to keep her for two years. The child is then taken away from the mother and sometimes never sees her again. Thus these children grow up as whites, knowing nothing of their own environment. At the expiration of the period of two years the mother goes back into service. So that it really doesn't matter if she has half a dozen children. Our new legislation makes it an offence for a white man to have sexual intercourse with a coloured girl. About twelve prosecutions are pending for contravention of that provision of the new act, and before long I am sure that there will be a diminution of that trouble.

General Dimension

There are a great many full-blooded Aborigines in Western Australia living their own natural lives. They are not, for the most part, getting enough food, and they are, in fact, being decimated by their own tribal practices. In my opinion, no matter what we do, they will die out. It is interesting to note that on the departmental cattle stations established in the far north for the preservation of these people, the number of full-blooded children is increasing, because of the care people get. The establishment of these stations has also had the effect of putting an end to the cattle killing which formerly prevailed. At the present time however, there are in Western Australia about 10,000 full-blooded Aborigines who are detribalised, but there are only 1932 children. On the other hand among the 2,229 half-castes there are approximately 2,000 children. It will be seen, therefore, that the problem of the future will be not with the full-blood, but with the coloured people of various degrees. Infanticide and abortion are extensively practised amongst the bush people.

In Western Australia, we have only a few institutions for the separation of half-caste illegitimate children, but there are hundreds living in camps close to the country towns under revolting conditions. It is infinitely better to take a child from its mother, and put it in an

institution, where it will be looked after, than to allow it to be brought up subject to the influence of such camps. We allow the mothers to go to the institutions also, though they are separated from the children. The mothers are camped some distance away, while the children live in dormitories. The parents may go out to work, and return to see that their children are well and properly looked after. We generally find that, after a few months, they are quire content to leave their children there.

Mr. Harkness - What happens to these children afterwards?

Mr. Neville - They leave in time and go into service or other employment, and they may return to the institution, any time, if they like. Our experience is that they come to regard the institution as their home, and are happy to return to it for their holidays. Their homes are simple clearing stations for the future members of the race. We recognise that we cannot do much with the older people, except look after them and see that they are fed. As regards the young people, from 20 years upwards, we can find employment for them if possible, but it is of the children we must take notice. You cannot change a native after he had reached the age of puberty, but before that it is possible to mould him. When the quarter-caste, in which there are now nearly 100 children, was started we had some trouble with the mothers. Although the children were illegitimate, the mothers were greatly attached to them, and did not wish to be parted from them. I adopted the practice of allowing the mothers to go to the institution with the children until they satisfied themselves that they were properly looked after. The mothers were then usually content to leave them there, and some eventually forgot all about them.

Mr. Bailey - Are the children, during their hours of recreation, allowed to run back to their mothers who are camped at the institution?

Mr. Neville - No. The native settlement is divided into two parts, the compound, and the camp, which is about half a mile away. When they enter the institution, the children are removed from the parents who are allowed to see them occasionally in order to satisfy themselves that they are being properly looked after. At first the mothers tried to entice the children back to the camps, but that difficulty is now being overcome.

Mr. Harkness - can your department take them by force up to any age?

Mr. Neville - Yes, up to the age of 21.

The young Aborigines of our State are wards of the Commissioner up to the age of 21 years. The Commissioner is entitled to treat these young coloured people in *loco parentis*. That applies to quarter-caste children living under native conditions, but quarter-caste children living under other conditions may, if necessary, be taken to court to be declared natives within the law. Our method of dealing with these young people has been to find decent employers for them. A good many employers have taken both boys and girls of a fairly early age. Up to sixteen years no question of wage arises, but when sixteen years of age is reached the scale of wages becomes appropriate. Children taken under such conditions never go back to their beginnings. They take their food in the kitchen with the rest of the staff of the homestead. We do not permit them to go back to native conditions. When their holiday time comes they travel to Perth and if they wish to go to see their parents on the reserve they are allowed to do so for a limited time. If they lose one position we do our best to find them another. When they turn 21 years of age they become practically free and can do as they like as members of the general community. First and last with us, it is a matter of money available. If we had more money we could do very much more than we have been doing.

Resolution

- That this conference believes that the destiny of the natives of Aboriginal origin, but not of full-blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth and it therefore recommends that all efforts to be directed to that end.

- That the details of administration, in accordance with the general principles agreed upon, be left to the individual States, but there shall be uniformity of legislation as far as possible.

- That, subject to the previous resolution, efforts of all State authorities should be directed towards the education of children of mixed Aboriginal blood at white

standards, and their subsequent employment under the same conditions as whites with a view to their taking their place in the white community or on an equal footing with the whites.

Mr. Neville

... If any State has claim for Commonwealth consideration in this matter, it is Western Australia. It has a good record on its treatment of the native population, which was estimated at 55,000 when white settlement began, and is now about 30,000. Because the white population is small, the cost to support the natives within the State is 15 Shillings per capita. It is unfair in relation to population.

Policy in respect of full-blood natives:

(a) To educate to white standards, children of detribalised centres of white population, and subsequently to place them in employment in lucrative occupations, which will not bring them into economic or social conflict with the white community;

(b) To keep the semi-civilised under a benevolent supervision in regard to employment social and medical services in their own tribal areas. Small local reserves selected for tribal suitability should be provided in these tribal areas where unemployable natives may live as nearly as possible a natural tribal life, and unobjectionable tribal connections may continue and to which employees may repair when unemployed. The ultimate destiny of their people should be their devotion of clause (a).

(c) To preserve as far as possible the uncivilised native in his social tribal state by the establishment of individual resources, each State of Territory determining for itself whether mission activities should be conducted on these reserves and the conditions under which they may be permitted.

APPENDIX B

Profile Summaries

Charmaine

Charmaine was born in 1955. She was removed from her mother when she was three months old and taken to Marribank Mission. While she was at the mission the missionaries used to tell her that the reason she was there was that her parents did not want her. This has had a profound effect on Charmaine because it made her feel that she was not wanted. Charmaine felt unwanted for the entire time that she was at the mission. "I wasn't receiving any visits from my parents and I was being told by the missionaries that my parents didn't want me, I felt unwanted and unloved and had a low self-esteem." Charmaine was subjected to sexual abuse by an older 'inmate' from when she was very young. While she was at the mission, Charmaine had to do a lot of chores, besides attending school, which "included washing clothes, ironing, washing the dishes, peeling vegetables and other general domestic type tasks." Charmaine left the mission when she was fifteen years old and went to the Baptist Hostel in Como. Charmaine soon got into trouble with the police. She also got quite heavily involved with drugs and some serious crime and she spent time in prison. While she was in prison, one of the prison officers commented that "prison life doesn't seem to worry you." Charmaine replied, "it doesn't as there is not much difference between a prison and Marribank, the only difference is that in prison the prison officers wear uniforms and shut the doors behind them, otherwise there is little difference from what I have experienced since I was three months old." After leaving prison Charmaine was able to "get off the drugs." She has two children and is currently studying at University. However being institutionalised for 15 years has had an affect on Charmaine. She felt "caught between two cultures, my Aboriginal culture and trying to live in a white society."

Lindsey

Lindsey was a baby when he and his brother were removed from their parents. They were taken to the United Aboriginal Mission in Gnowangerup where their parents were only allowed to see them once every month. Lindsey missed his parents very much. Lindsey remembers the mission as "a very difficult time and quite a rough way of living". He had to work hard with many chores to do. As a result he rarely saw his brother. "We never received any education on our Aboriginal cultural history and our education consisted of going to school and learning about the Baptist religion." Lindsey was physically beaten at the Mission and because of being hit around his ears, Lindsey now has defective hearing. When he was twelve years of age, in 1965, Lindsey was allowed to leave the Mission and go to the Gnowangerup Native Reserve with his parents. "I (find) it very hard to adjust to different people and find it hard to communicate with people." Lindsey feels that the mission retarded him socially.

Naomi

Naomi does not know who her parents are or were. She was born in Pinjarra in 1937 and her mother died three years later. Naomi went to live with her grandmother until she died when Naomi was seven or eight. Naomi then went to live with her aunty but the Native Welfare authorities took her to Mogumber Mission. Naomi was at Mogumber Mission for two years before she was shifted to St. Joseph's Orphanage in New Norcia. Naomi remained at St. Joseph's until she turned 20 years old. "I worked as a domestic servant on farms ... All the girls at New Norcia Mission had to work at Keaney College for three month intervals from 5.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. without pay." Naomi is now involved with the Aboriginal community and has tried to discover things about her parents from Aboriginal elders.

Jarred

Jarred was born at Mogumber Mission in 1946. Jarred is not sure whether his mother was at the mission or not, as he never saw her. "I missed my mother quite a lot and it was very upsetting not seeing her." Life was hard at the mission with many chores and no education

regarding Aboriginal culture. Jarred left Mogumber Mission at 15 and went to work in the north. Although his siblings were at the mission with him, they all scattered after leaving Mogumber Mission. "I have not been able to keep a close relationship with them." Upon leaving, Jarred "didn't know where to go" and felt "very lost." "It is a funny feeling really, you feel you have no roots ... I am just trying to find some facility. I wished that it had never happened and I could have led a normal life."

Tina

Tina and five of her brothers and sisters were removed from their parents in 1970 when Tina was two years old. Four of them went to Safety Bay but Tina and one of her sisters were sent to a foster home in Margaret River. Tina stayed in this foster home until she was seven or eight years old. Then she went to Bunbury where she was placed in two foster homes and then to a foster placement in Brunswick. "It is inexcusable for the government to take us away from our parents. ... It scarred a lot of us kids and families for life ... What I missed during my childhood can never be repaid." It was only when she was in Brunswick that Tina began to understand what it meant to be an Aborigine. Before that she just thought that she had a darker tan. She was teased by whites for being Aboriginal and by Aboriginals for being in foster homes. The Aborigines would call her "whitey". For years Tina used to scrub herself white with soap, Ajax and detergent. It was not until Tina started to get to know her family that she knew who she was. Tina lost her Aboriginal identity and culture by being removed from her family.

Paul

Paul remembers the Welfare Authorities coming to his parents' home in Mount Barker and taking himself and his brothers and sisters away. Paul and one of his brothers were separated and sent to Gnowangerup, the rest of them went to Marribank Mission. Paul was at Gnowangerup from the age of three until he was ten years old. Then Paul was moved to Marribank Mission. Marribank Mission was just as bad as Gnowangerup, "we were really institutionalised and not treated like human beings and we were all longing for our parents and a family. ... Even when my parents or my grandparents wanted to come and see us they

were not even allowed to come and see us." When he was about 11 years old, Paul and his brother ran away in the middle of the night back to Mount Barker. The authorities caught Paul and his brother when they returned to their families in Mount Barker and returned them to Marribank Mission where they were flogged with a hose and a stock whip. When he was in high school, Paul ran away again. This time he walked to Gnowangerup where his aunt lived. Again the Welfare caught him and returned him to Marribank Mission. When Paul was finally released from Marribank Mission, he was not allowed to return to his paretns. He had to go to a hostel in Mount Lawley. He didn't even get to see his parents. He was 15 years of age then. Paul says "my childhood was taken away from me, as was a part of my identity and it is something that I have much trouble coping with and coming to grips with."

Henry

Henry was born in 1964. He was removed from his parents when he was five years old by the Native Welfare Department and placed in Norseman Mission. Henry found out where he came from in 1974. He found out the names of his parents when he was 13 in 1977. Henry was sexually abused by one of the fathers at the mission. He was also raped and bashed by the older boys in the hostel. After his removal, Henry "felt lost, suffocated by the surroundings ... felt confused, sad, powerless and angry." Henry believes that being removed from his family has affected him "emotionally, sexually and physically. It has affected me in relating to other people." While he was in the mission, Henry used to run away a lot. He also used to wet the bed. He "did not like being there because I was away from my family most of the time." Henry was in the mission for about five years before he was placed in another hostel for a few years. Henry is currently in Casuarina Prison.

Jenny

At the age of seven, Jenny and six of her seven brothers and sisters were removed from their mother. Jenny vividly remembers her mother running after the car that transported her and her other siblings to Bridgewater in Applecross. Jenny says that "it wasn't that bad there but I was crying out for my mother." After about two years, Jenny and her brothers and sisters

were fostered to a family in Narrogin. They were there for two years and the foster family was very strict. While they were with this foster family "our Aboriginality was never discussed and we lost any sense of Aboriginal culture." The foster family brought them up as white people. Jenny saw her mother infrequently. "The foster family would only allow her to stay for one night at a time when she wanted to come and see us." Jenny's mother used to go to the Native Welfare Department to "try and get us back." Jenny is still hurting inside, especially when she recalls the day her mother was running behind the car that took Jenny away.

Gabriella

Gabriella was born at Mogumber in 1934. She had 12 siblings. When Gabriella was very young she was removed from her parents and sent to the Salvation Army Home in Cottesloe. She doesn't know why she was removed. While she was at the Salvation Army Home, Gabriella got taunted about the colour of her skin and was always given the dirtiest jobs, probably because of her colour. She received no love and was not told where she came from or who she was. When she turned 13 years old, Gabriella was sent out as a servant to Bridgetown. Gabriella received no pay for this work. When she was 15, Gabriella was returned to Mogumber on the back of a cattle truck, but was sent back to Perth because of an administrative error. Gabriella feels that "nothing can reclaim or compensate for what happened in that I lost my childhood and was removed from a loving family."

Jean

Jean was taken from her parents in about 1965 when she was six years old. Jean's parents refused to let her go but she was forced to leave. Jean only saw her parents once between the ages of six and 18. Jean was fostered out straight away. She was with her first foster family for about one year. She was physically beaten by this family. Jean was with her second foster family for six or seven years. She was hit by this foster family because she was not looking after their baby properly. The foster mother once threw a knife at Jean and it hit her in her leg. Jean still suffers from nightmares because the father in this second

foster home used to sexually assault her and call her a 'boong'. When she was about 14, Jean was placed in a third foster home. She was there for two years before being sent to a boarding house in Mount Lawley by the Native Welfare Department. Jean was not told anything about Aborigines or the Aboriginal culture. She has been brought up as a white and so she found it difficult to adapt when she returned to her parents at 18. The result has been that Jean has two conflicting personalities, one white and one Nyoongah. Jean feels robbed of part of her life. She had a childhood without any love when it should have been her most joyous years.

Faith

In 1941 at the age of three Faith was removed from her mother. She was sent to SKCH and she did not leave until she turned 17. Faith was sad to be away from her mother. She only saw her mother once between the ages of three and 23. At SKCH visits from Aboriginal families were not encouraged. Faith did not see any other relatives during this time except one uncle. Faith considers herself lucky because she received a reasonable education at SKCH and she developed close relationships with the other children there. But she feels that she "walked out with no money and no real experience or skills on how to cope with the real world." She says that there were no role models of either sex for the children at SKCH and she was not taught how to bring up children. Faith says that a part of her has "always longed to be in a family relationship". Faith managed to achieve a reasonable relationship with her mother "until the time of her death. However, being separated did make it difficult to get really close to my mother." Faith feels robbed of her Aboriginal heritage and identity and a loving family relationship.

Yoko

In 1948, Yoko was born in New Norcia. About two years later, she and her four siblings were removed from their parents. Yoko was taken to New Norcia Mission where the children were separated. Her mother used to visit on Sundays but she was not allowed to stay long. Yoko only saw her father occasionally. Yoko was brought up in the white culture at New Norcia Mission. There was no teaching or encouragement of Aboriginal culture.

The nuns and monks at New Norcia Mission were very strict. "We were treated very badly. It was like a prison ... It was very confined and there was no space in which to roam around as kids would like to do." The Aboriginal girls had to do the white boys washing, mending and ironing. There was no loving or caring relationship formed. Yoko describes her time at the mission as a very sad and very hard time. She used to wonder what it would be like to be in a family relationship and wished that could be the case. Yoko and her sisters weren't allowed to contact her brothers who were in the mission. When she was 17 or 18, Yoko's mother died but she was not allowed to go to the funeral. "Being institutionalised and not being able to see my brothers certainly took away much of the family relationship that I did have."

Portia

Portia was removed from her parents with two of her brothers in 1948 when she was ten years old. Portia had eight other siblings. Portia and her brothers were taken to the United Aboriginal Mission in Gnowangerup. For the time that they were at the mission, Portia had limited contact with one of her brothers and no contact with her other brother who was also there. Portia had been very happy in her family home, despite moving around a lot because her father was looking for work. Portia was at the mission for two years. At night she used to be locked in so she couldn't leave the mission. Portia used to cover her head with a rug and cry. She still feels the effects of this and feels very uncomfortable in closed environments. Portia rarely saw her parents in the two years she was at the mission, she only remembers seeing them once. She felt isolated and robbed of her parents' affection.

Richard

Richard is one of three generations to have been removed from their parents in his family. His mother was taken away from her family when she was young, Richard was removed from his parents and Richard's children were taken away from him. Richard was born in Gnowangerup in 1943. At age four, Richard, a brother and a sister were taken to Gnowangerup Mission. Richard found it very difficult at the mission because they were brought up as 'white Christians' which was very different to his own Aboriginal culture.

Richard was at Gnowangerup Mission for about four or five years. In that time he rarely saw his parents. The mission was not a loving environment and Richard was not encouraged at all to "seek or practice" his Aboriginal culture. When he left the Gnowangerup Mission he went to Borden with his parents where he had to re-learn the Aboriginal way. Richard found it difficult to try and balance the two cultures. Richard is still very sad and he finds it painful and upsetting to think about this part of his life and that trauma was increased when his children were taken from him. Richard says "a big part of my life left me when I was removed from my parents and another big part was removed when my children were taken away from me."

Arnold

Arnold was born in Mount Magnet in 1930. When he was about three or four years old, Arnold and his sister were taken away from their grandparents to Mogumber. Arnold had to work very hard at Mogumber and only received a minimal education. In 1946 Arnold was sent to the Roelands Mission for two years. While he was at the Mission, Arnold received no education about his Aboriginal culture from the staff. However, Arnold was lucky because he used to go to see some elderly Aborigines who lived in huts near Mogumber. They taught Arnold about Aboriginal culture. Arnold feels robbed of some of his childhood which can never be brought back. He has felt a loss throughout his life for losing the opportunity to have a family. "We have not received any help from the authorities to adjust from Mogumber to a normal society or to adjust to the pain of being removed from our families."

Oliver

Oliver and his three younger siblings were taken from their parents in 1936 when Oliver was four years old. He was told that the reason he was removed was because his father took the kids into the bush and that it was an offence to take a female child into the bush. Oliver cried for a week at SKCH. He never saw his mother again. He was later told by relatives that she had died. Oliver saw his father once when he was about 15 years old and his uncle visited him two or three times at SKCH. Oliver was shifted between the different Sister Kate's establishments. He was hit with a belt for discipline while he was at SKCH and he

was never paid for the work that he did there. "It is not right for another to take away completely another persons right to family connections ... I myself have never had any help to deal with my inner feelings. I think now there should be."

Olinda

Olinda was born in 1961 and has five older siblings. When Olinda was still in nappies, she and her brothers and sisters were taken to SKCH. Olinda thinks that her mother put all of her children in SKCH for a couple of months because she was having trouble coping with seven kids on her own. After a few months the whole family moved down south. When Olinda was five years old she went to the Salvation Army Girls Home in Cottesloe with her two sisters. Olinda's mother put them in the home because both of her marriages had failed and she had no help to look after her children. Olinda and her sisters used to go home to their mother on the weekends. After spending about one year in the Cottesloe home, Olinda was put into the Salvation Army Home in Maylands. She had no other family there. Olinda went to school for grades one and two while she was at Maylands. Olinda saw her mother quite a lot while she was at Maylands. From Maylands, Olinda shifted to the Hollywood Children's Village in Nedlands where she was with her four brothers. She stayed there until she turned 15 years old. The cottage parent at the Hollywood Children's Village discouraged visits from Olinda's mother. The cottage mother used to hit Olinda with her fist and a cane and humiliated Olinda and called her a dirty nigger. Olinda continued her education at various schools. When she was 15 years old, Olinda left and returned to her mother's. Olinda found it difficult to relate to people. Olinda feels that she lost her childhood and her identity. She has low self-esteem and is trying to recover her Aboriginal identity. She cannot maintain a relationship and finds it difficult to communicate with or trust people. Olinda is trying hard to re-establish a relationship with her mother but her mother does not want to think about the past.

Brendan

Brendan was nine years old in 1965 when he was taken from his parents to the Receiving Home in Mount Lawley. While he was at the Receiving Home, Brendan was locked up in

a corrugated iron compound during the day, like a jail. He was taken from the Receiving Home to SKCH for three years. Brendan was never visited when he was at SKCH. He ran away when he was 13 years old because he did not think anyone loved or cared for him. Brendan was sent back to SKCH and was caned by the Principal of the Queens Park Primary School for running away. He was also belted by the staff at SKCH as punishment for running away. One day, Brendan hit the Principal of the Primary School with a milk bottle and was sent to Longmore Detention Centre where he suffered a nervous breakdown. He left there when he was 14 years old and has been on the road ever since. Brendan cannot settle down and form a relationship. His marriage did not last and he has never felt happy. Brendan does not know where his place is in life, he has had no chance to enjoy his Aboriginal culture. "I really just do not have any family relationship ... I have always wanted to have a family relationship."

Adam

Adam was six months old in 1961 when he was removed from his parents and taken to SKCH. He was placed in a foster home with white foster parents when he was eight years old. He stayed there until he was 14. His foster parents did not encourage Adam to be proud of his Aboriginal heritage. Adam did not mix with any Aborigines and he was brought up as a white. When he was 14 years old, Adam's father and one of his sisters came and collected him. Adam went with them in a car to his parents' home. Adam describes this as "a strange experience being thrust back into Aboriginal culture and could not bring myself to call my parents mum and dad." Adam has kept in contact with his foster parents. Adam occasionally sees his parents and his brothers and sisters. Adam has five children to different women. He feels guilty that he is not living with his children but at the same time he does not want to get close to people. "The reason I can't settle down ... all stems back from being separated from my parents."

Shelley

Shelley was born in 1943. When Shelley was four years old, she and her siblings were taken to New Norcia Mission. Shelley felt very lonely while she was at New Norcia Mission, it

was not a loving environment. Shelley left New Norcia Mission when she was 16 years old. She feels a sense of loss from losing the loving, caring environment. She feels robbed of her childhood. Shelley does not have good relationships with her brothers.

Sonia

Sonia was born in 1960 and was still in nappies when she and her twelve siblings were removed from their parents. They were taken to SKCH. Sonia was the last person in her family to leave SKCH. When she left she was 15 years old. During that time, Sonia went to four or five foster homes. Sonia did not receive any love at SKCH. She saw her mother and father a couple of times each year. When she was 15, Sonia was allowed to leave Sister Kate's. Sonia found it difficult when she got home, it was not what she had expected. She found it hard to get to know her parents but she still persists. She is not close to her siblings. Sonia has a lot of hurt inside of her. She feels hurt because she does not have a close relationship with her parents and she hurts because she was not brought up in a traditional family way.

Amanda

Amanda was born at Kellerberrin Hospital in April, 1950. Amanda was first removed from her parents in 1959 with her five brothers and sisters. The children were taken to the Kellerberrin Police Station. While they were sitting in the van outside the Police Station, members of her family converged on the building. "Dad was vocal and aggressive. He just wanted to take his kids home but they wouldn't allow it. Mum was crying, we were crying, Dad was crying. Dad was trying to tell them not to take his kids." This led to a violent incident in which Amanda's father assaulted the police officer and the two welfare officers. Amanda's father was jailed for about two years and he was later transferred to Graylands Psychiatric Hospital. Amanda and her brothers and sisters were taken to Roelands Mission. Amanda and her siblings were at Roelands Mission for three years. "The hardest part at the mission was that the little blokes would be crying at night and we would hear them at night across the playground - we weren't allowed across there or near them, to comfort them ... In winter time, the children used to walk around the mission on gravel with no shoes. We

missed our parents. The school teacher used his hands to beat me, he hit my legs repeatedly and humiliated me in front of the class. ... I tried to stay in touch with my parents. Mum and I were very close ... I had to let her know that the kids were alright." Amanda is still strongly effected by what happened to her. She has had flashbacks all of her life. She has not been able to talk to her children about it at all. It was only very recently that she told one of her daughters her story.

Elena

Elena, born in 1960, was one of 11 children. When she was very young, her family moved to the Goomalling Reserve. There were about 12 houses on the reserve. "We were enclosed in one tin house with cement floors - two bedrooms ... The family unit was destroyed by being put into houses on the outskirts of town - three bedrooms, wash room and toilet - all cement, cold." Elena's parents were drinking at the time. Elena used to attend the local Catholic Church School. One day the welfare officer came to pick up Elena and another girl from Northam, to take them to New Norcia. Elena said "[I] hated being away from my mum and dad and my people." Elena's mother used to come to New Norcia Mission to visit her but the nuns would not let her stay for long. Elena ran away from the Mission once but she got caught and two nuns returned her to New Norcia Mission, to the biggest flogging she got in her life. Elena was fostered out to a white couple in Guildford. She was told her parents were dead. Elena's father died in 1979 and her mother died in 1982 "I got to see them but there were a lot of years that were lost."

Raphael

Raphael was born in Northampton in 1928. Raphael had five siblings and the whole family lived together until their parents separated in about 1935. Then the family scattered. Raphael and one of his brothers lived in a camp with their uncle and aunt. Another brother went to their grandparents. The two eldest brothers went out to work. Raphael and his brother were going to school when they were living in the camp. One day a police officer turned up and took Raphael in a car to Northampton. Raphael was joined in Northampton by his brother and they stayed with an aunt. Both of them were then taken by police car

to Geraldton and conveyed to Mogumber Mission. It was nine years before Raphael saw his mother again. Both Raphael and his brother were devastated and bewildered as to what they were doing at Mogumber. The children at Mogumber had very little recreation time. They were locked in their rooms at 5.30 p.m. and released at 6.00 a.m. when they had to perform chores before school. Raphael received no secondary education or training for a trade at Mogumber Mission. He was not prepared for life outside the mission. Raphael was not returned to his parents and he only saw his father once before he died in 1947. Raphael says that even now he wakes up at night thinking about his removal and wondering why it happened.

Elsie

Elsie was born in 1957. She can not remember how old she was when she and four of her six siblings were placed in the Norseman Mission as State Wards, but she was very young. Elsie and her brothers and sisters were only there for a little while before they were shifted to Kurrawang Mission. Even though Elsie's siblings were at the mission with her, they were not allowed to mix. Elsie remembers her time at Kurrawang Mission as being very rough. The Mission had Aboriginal children from many different tribes which made it very hard. Elsie was about nine or ten years old before she saw her mother for the first time and that was only for a short period. Elsie now has a good relationship with her mother "but there was a period of time that was lost." Elsie says that "the time at the mission has had a profound affect on me. ... It was a very non-loving environment, very institutionalised and quite brutal at times."

Radford

Radford was removed from his parents' custody in 1965 when he was about 13 years of age for stealing. He was placed in Roelands Mission near Bunbury. Later, Radford was placed with foster parents in Bunbury and he then lost contact with his parents. Radford's foster family did not want him to go to school with other Aboriginal children. Radford feels that he was "treated like dirt and had to do all the dirty jobs and treated like a second class citizen." He was told that "Aboriginal people were useless layabout people, nothing but

animals and dirty and smelly." He felt isolated and empty because he could not see his mother and father or his brothers and sisters. He did not really get to know his mother and father before they died. Radford feels bitter against society because he was removed from his family. He thinks that it is probably the reason why he has been in trouble with the authorities and spent most of his time in jail. Radford has never received any help to deal with his problems. He thinks that "people like me should receive counselling by Aboriginal people and that the Government should acknowledge that removing Aboriginal children from their parents is going to cause problems in the long run and that the policy was wrong."

Kyle

Kyle thinks that "it is important for people to realise that it was not only the parents and children who were taken away from their parents who really hurt, but it is also the children of the children who were taken away who suffer." Kyle's mother was living in Halls Creek with the Jaru tribe. She was taken from her parents to Beagle Bay Mission when she was about three years of age. Kyle's mother did not leave Beagle Bay Mission until she was about 21 years old. Kyle's mother did not really like to talk about Beagle Bay. When she did speak about it she spoke about incidental things. It was a very harsh place and the children there had to work very hard. Kyle's mother received a number of floggings. Kyle's mother was very bitter about what happened to her. She suffered a lot of hurt which reflected back on her family. Kyle's family began disintegrating in 1939 when his family shifted to Queensland. Kyle believes that his mother was straddling a fence. She associated with Aboriginal people but never really got back into their community. As a consequence, Kyle and his brothers and sisters have lost their cultural identity. Kyle's mother died in 1991. Kyle married when he was living in Queensland but his marriage lasted only for four years. He became an alcoholic. He has married again and believes that if it was not for his second wife, he would not have survived. He feels that he does not know who he is. Kyle is very lonely because he feels that he has lost his family structure and his identity.

Miles

Miles was born in 1966. He was removed from his parents at the age of three by the

Department of Welfare. Miles did not know his parents' names or where he came from until he was nine years old. His mother died when he was nine and so Miles never knew "what my mother looked like or what a mother's love feels like." Miles knew that he was an Aborigine but he did not start mixing with other Aborigines until he went to high school. Before then, Miles had not been taught anything about Aboriginal people. Miles has had constant contact with his Aboriginal family nearly every day since he left the hostel. Miles feels that his removal from his family should never have happened because it "took half of my life away." He feels that the government "took my life and changed it to suit them."

Bruno

Bruno was removed from his parents' home with his six brothers and sisters when he was six years old. The Native Welfare Department picked the children up from the family home in Doodlakine and told their parents that they were going into a home somewhere in Perth. Bruno's parents said "Words cannot explain the grief we felt to see our babies teary eyes looking back at us. We were helpless to help our own children who were broken hearted. We were not told our children were going to be taken from us beforehand, they just came and took them. The Welfare said they had every right to take them. How could an eight month old baby commit a crime to be taken away?" Bruno's parents were never told where their children were taken. Bruno was placed in 14 different institutions while he was in the care of the Native Welfare Department. Bruno says that he was "emotionally scarred for life. All of my childhood was wasted living another life that was not mine, I was made to live like white people."

Morgan

Morgan was born in Cranbrook in 1952 and was one of 16 children born to his parents. In his early childhood, Morgan's family used to roam around the country side from Cranbrook to Boyup Brook. When he was about five years old, Morgan remembers a Combie van coming to Mt Barker and collecting himself, six brothers and sisters and another family. The Native Welfare Department took them to Marribank Mission. Morgan only saw his parents on one or two occasions when he was at Marribank. When he was 14 years old, Morgan

ran away from Marribank with his sister back to his parents in Cranbrook. Morgan says that he "wanted to get away because I wanted to see my parents and there was something inside me saying that I was a Nyoongah and needed to get away." Morgan ran away from the mission three times. He wanted to be with his parents because they loved him. Morgan says "there was no feeling at the mission". Morgan first got into crime and drinking heavily when he was 15 years old. Morgan has spent about five years of his life in prison for various crimes. Morgan took control of his life and stopped drinking when he had children. Morgan believes that the loss of love and enjoyment of his culture while he was in Marribank contributed to his life of drinking and crime. He also feels bitter because his "parents who had so much love to give me were denied the opportunity of giving me love and I was denied the opportunity of receiving that love." Morgan says "the Marribank Mission took something out of me, it took my Aboriginality away from me although I always knew I was a Nyoongah it was just that I was not able to experience the culture and kinship of being a Nyoongah warrior while I was in Marribank Mission."

Verity

Verity was eight years old when she and three of her brothers and sisters were taken from their parents in 1930. Verity and her sister were taken to the Salvation Army Home in Cottesloe. Verity does not have any complaints about her treatment at the Home because she can not say if she was happy or unhappy. She could not compare her upbringing to a family life because she did not have one. "It is a shame that I was not able to stay with my family and that I lost my cultural identity." Verity was never told why she was taken away. When she was 15 years old, Verity was sent out to service to a family in Gnowangerup. Verity did not consider herself to be different from anyone else until she hurt her hand while she was in Gnowangerup. Verity was admitted to the Hospital and was taken aback when they put her in a room reserved for Aborigines and the room only had a sand floor. Verity gave birth to a daughter, who was taken away from her and placed in a Home. Verity visited her as often as she could but when the child grew older the Welfare moved her to a Catholic Home in the country. Verity now lives with her daughter. Her daughter came to live with her when she was 16. "I still wonder why they took me, my sisters and brothers away from my parents."

Julie

Julie, born in 1936, was removed from her parents at age five and sent to Mogumber Mission. "Life was generally pretty rough and it was tough at Mogumber, but we survived it all. I and the others had to." At Mogumber Mission the children were not allowed to speak any Aboriginal languages. Later, when being sent to Wandering Mission, Julie was not allowed to speak of her Aboriginality. "It is just very hard to understand why we were treated like we were and why we were removed from our parents. It really amounted to robbing me of the best years of my childhood and removed me from my family environment ... this should never happen again."

Matthew

Matthew was born in Kellerberrin in 1958. When he was about 11 years old, he and six of his brothers and sisters were removed from their mother in Kellerberrin. A woman from Community Welfare came and took them to Bridgewater at Applecross. Matthew thinks that "Bridgewater wasn't too bad. There were a lot of Aboriginals there but I still longed to be back with my mother." The seven of them were taken from Bridgewater after about three years to some foster people in Narrogin. Matthew was only with the foster people for about one year. He thought they were strict and they were not encouraged to meet other Aboriginal people or to learn about their own culture. After he had been removed, Matthew could not find any answers to what had happened and did not know who to trust or who to talk to. Matthew feels that the removal from his mother was very wrong. He says that it has definitely affected him and affected his brothers and sisters. He says, "those years with our family should have been the most treasured years but that was not to be as we were not with our families."

Delia

Delia was about two years of age when she was removed from her parents in Collie in 1937. She has no idea why she was removed. She always knew that she was Aboriginal but she

did not get to know the names of her parents until June 1994. Delia was taken to Sister Kate's when she was two years old and she was never happy there. While at SKCH she was told that she had to forget her parents, that they were not good for her and that she had to forget that she was Aboriginal. Delia does not know what happened to her brothers and sisters. She only met them in June 1994. When she was at SKCH Delia would cry for her mother but she did not know who her mother was. Delia feels very angry that a family's life and a family's love has been robbed from her. Delia believes that being removed from her parents has affected the upbringing of her own children who are distant from her. She cannot get close to people. Delia believes that this is due to the fact that no one ever got close to her in her childhood. "There was never that intimate affection."

Orissa

One of 13 children, Orissa was removed from her parents when she was about four years old. She was placed in a foster home. Orissa was sent to four foster homes in Margaret River, Brunswick, Bunbury and Mt Helena. At one foster home, Orissa was sexually abused. Orissa did not know she was Aboriginal until she went to school where she met other Aborigines. She did not even know she had an Aboriginal family. Orissa thought the white families were her parents and she called them mum and dad. She was never told anything about Aboriginal people or Aboriginal culture. "I reckon that people who have been in foster homes should have some counselling for them ... It would also be appropriate to receive some compensation for all the hurt we have faced."

Daniel

Daniel was five years old when he was taken away from his parents by the Welfare. To this day he does not know why he was taken away from his parents. Daniel was put in Mogumber Mission. He first thought that he was being punished for something he had done wrong. After a few years he just accepted what had happened and tried to fit in. Daniel and his siblings were split up. Daniel, his two sisters and one of his brothers currently live in Bunbury and he sees his two older brothers who live in Perth often. Daniel feels angry that the Welfare could just break up families. He blames the Welfare for the early death of his

mother and the maiming and eventual death of his father. "They destroyed their lives, my father never recovered."

Rebecca

Rebecca was ten years old when she, her sister and her three brothers were removed from their parents in 1969. Rebecca can remember the day they were taken. She was carrying her two year old brother when her mum and dad came out of the Court room. Her mum was crying and her dad looked really sad. Rebecca said, "I had this horrible feeling inside that they were going to take us away and there was nothing that mum and dad could do." Rebecca and her sister and brothers were sent to Mogumber Mission where they spent the next six years. At Mogumber Mission, Rebecca and her sister were separated from their brothers and put into different cottages. There were a lot of Aboriginal children at Mogumber Mission which Rebecca thinks made it easier to adjust "because these kids were going through the same thing". Rebecca sees a lot of her Aboriginal family now but she feels a lot of anger. Rebecca believes that if she and her siblings had not been taken from their parents then their parents would still be living today. When they were taken away, Rebecca's parents began to drink more heavily. "It just seemed like they completely gave up. ... Maybe they drank to stop themselves worrying so much about us."

Christobel

Christobel was eight years of age when she was taken from her parents by the Welfare to Mogumber Mission. She does not know why she and her brothers and sister were removed from their parents. She did not see her parents much because it was a long way away but they did come and see them and stay one weekend at the mission. After the removal she realised they were going away from their parents and would never be seeing them again. Now she feels that she has missed out on her mother's and father's love and never got the chance to have what other children have had with their parents. Christobel finds it difficult to socialise and cannot talk to her own people much. She does not mix when there is a family reunion. Christobel has not received any help to deal with any problems that may have resulted from being taken away from her parents.

Gemma

Gemma, together with six of her seven siblings, was five years old when she was removed, from her mother in Kellerberrin. The seven of them were taken to Bridgewater in Perth where they stayed for nearly three years. All of them were then fostered to a white family in Narrogin. The foster family tried to bring up Gemma and her brothers and sisters as white people. Their Aboriginality was never discussed and they lost any sense of Aboriginal culture. "I was very close to my mother and it hurt her so much to be removed." Gemma cried a lot during the time that she was away from her mother. Without her sister, Gemma does not think she would have got through it. "It was such a traumatic experience." Gemma finds it very difficult and painful to talk about what has happened. "I basically want to forget about it, but I know it is important that people know my story so that this doesn't happen again".

Terry

Terry was born in Kellerberrin in 1959. In 1970, Terry and his six brothers and sisters were removed from their parents' home in Kellerberrin. Terry was terrified because he was forced into a car by strangers. He was angry because he was being taken away from his Mum and Dad and he was afraid because he did not know where he was going. Terry was sent to Receiving Homes all over Perth. He was forced to live white fellas way. While he was in the various homes, Terry received hidings with straps and sticks and was made to sit in locked rooms if he did not do what he was told. He was separated from his sisters. He was not told anything about the Nyoongah culture, family or relations. Terry felt confused and ran away several times trying to get back home. He often cried himself to sleep because he felt lost and lonely because he had to fend for himself. Terry still hates them, the system and the Department people for breaking his family up. "They will never be able to repay for the lost years and time, and the damage that was done to my family."

Kelvin

Kelvin was born in 1962 and was removed from his parents when he was about eight years old. Kelvin was living with his parents and brothers and sisters in Doodlakine when he was removed. Kelvin does not understand why they were removed. His dad was in full-time work doing shearing and working for farmers. Kelvin and his six siblings who were also removed were taken to a home in Perth. Kelvin's parents were not told that their children would be taken from them beforehand nor were they ever told where they were taken or if they were sick or hurt. After the removal, Kelvin felt lost and lonely. All he could do was obey the rules of those who looked after them. Kelvin missed out on the chance of having the family love from his parents and he also missed out on his Aboriginal culture. Kelvin knew he was an Aborigine. Most of the kids in the school and homes used to call him names like boong or nigger. Now that Kelvin is with his family he feels free to come and go as he pleases. He has the freedom to visit his family and he is catching up on learning his Nyoongah culture and knowing his other brothers and sisters. It has taken him this long to know how much he missed out on, especially his parents' love.

Quentin

Quentin was born in 1948 in Kellerberrin. Quentin was ten years old when he was taken to New Norcia. Quentin finds it difficult to describe how he felt in New Norcia but he knows he was not happy. He had no shoes or socks and had to walk to school in the cold in bare feet. There was never any discussion about Aboriginal culture. Quentin's parents tried to come and see them when they could but it was a long way for them to travel. When Quentin was 14 years old his parents came and picked him up and took him home. Quentin has never been back to New Norcia Mission. He finds it very painful to think about the time spent there. "I lost something inside of me, that longing to be with my family and to speak to my parents about my Aboriginal culture".

Lolita

Lolita was removed from her parents when she was six years old in 1952 to New Norcia Mission. Lolita remembers crying a lot because she was being taken away from her mother. She recalls that her mother had a drinking problem. Lolita was very lonely in the mission. She was with her two sisters but she was not able to see her brothers who were also at the mission. When she was about 14 years old, Lolita was placed in Mogumber Mission. She stayed there for one year before she was allowed to go back to live with her mother.

Vittoria

Vittoria was born in 1942 in Moora. When she was about five years old, Vittoria and her seven brothers and sisters were removed from their mother and taken to the New Norcia Mission. Vittoria has no idea why they were taken away. Her mother was a mid-wife and was a loving and caring mother. Vittoria rarely saw her mother after being taken to the mission. It was very sad when her mother left after a visit because they were not sure how long it would be before they would see each other again. Vittoria did not like it at New Norcia Mission. In winter when it was very cold she had to walk in bare feet. The nuns hit her across the face or used a horse rash strap to hit her, often seemingly without reason. Vittoria's Aboriginal culture was never discussed or encouraged. Vittoria feels that a part of her childhood that should have been very enjoyable was robbed from her. "The New Norcia Mission never trained us for the outside world, we were thrown out and had to cope the best way we could".

Virginia

Virginia was removed from her parents when she was seven years old in 1959. She was taken to New Norcia Mission. At the mission she was only allowed to wash with ten girls in a tub at the same time. Punishment of the children involved the nuns hitting them on the head with spoons. Sometimes they had to kneel on the ground on top of a pile of rocks. If they tried to move away, the nuns would move the rocks back under their knees. Virginia was not told anything about Aboriginal people when she was growing up. Her father only

visited her a couple of times. While at New Norcia Mission, Virginia was sexually abused by the older girls. When Virginia was released from the mission she went to live with her grandmother as her mother had died. While she was living there one of Virginia's aunts sexually abused her. Virginia feels disappointed but mainly angry and upset that she was removed from her parents.

Marie

Marie was removed from her parents when she was about four years old. She had been living with her parents and her seven brothers and sisters the 'bush ways'. Marie was removed along with two of her sisters and one brother. The four of them were taken to St Joseph's Orphanage in Subiaco. Two of Marie's other brothers were removed and taken to New Norcia Mission. On outings, Marie used to try and hold her sister's hand but the nuns would separate them. Marie remained at the Orphanage until she was about 18 years old. In that time she saw her mother and her father once. The only time her mother came she was only able to see her out the front, her mother was standing in front of a frangipani tree waiting to take Marie out. Her mother was crying and Marie was very upset. Marie was not told of her mother's death by the authorities. Her sister Beatrice told her when Marie was in her early 20s. Marie still hurts because she was removed from her parents. She believes that she needs counselling to help her come to terms with what happened to her.

Rachael

Rachael was born in 1951 and was removed from her mother when she was very young. She was taken to Marribank Mission and she stayed there until she was about 15 years old. While she was at Marribank Mission Rachael rarely saw her mother. She was allowed to go and see her mother during holidays but she was forced to return to Marribank Mission. Rachael found it strange living at Marribank Mission because she had to live the 'white way.' She was not allowed to identify with her Aboriginal culture. Since leaving Marribank Mission, Rachael has found it difficult to adapt to her own people and to live the Aboriginal way. Rachael identifies that the two most upsetting and destabilising elements of her institutionalisation are that she was not allowed to see her mother and father and that "it is

very difficult to adapt to my own people and to live the Aboriginal way."

Ordelia

Ordelia was six years old when he was removed from his grandfather and taken to Wandering Mission. His mother had died and he did not know where his father was. Ordelia left Wandering Mission when he was about 15 years old. Even though he went to primary and high school while he was at the mission, Ordelia was behind other children when he left the mission. He had lived in a protective mission environment which had not taught him how to fend for himself. He found this very difficult.

Aaron

Aaron was removed from his mother when he was two years old. He and one of his brothers were taken to Roelands Mission. Aaron had 11 other siblings. Two of his sisters were already at the mission and another two joined them later. While he was at the mission Aaron saw his mother once when he was about 13 years old. Aaron found it quite scary to see his mother because it was unexpected. He also saw his father a couple of times while he was at the mission. Aaron finds it difficult to say whether he enjoyed being at the mission or not, as he does not have anything else to compare the experience against. "I did miss out on the close family knit community . There was also a lack of stability of feeling some identity with a place". Aaron had a lot of chores to perform at the mission. He went to school where "there was very strict teaching of the Christian doctrine and the white ways". Aaron had a lot of cousins at the mission which gave him some sort of family. Aaron joined the Army when he left the mission. He found the army to be similar to the mission in the sense that everything was regimented and controlled.

Elmer

Elmer was removed from his family by the Native Welfare Department when he was 11 years old in 1962. He can remember that before he was taken away he had the love and care of his parents and most importantly he was taught and encouraged to be a proud Nyoongah.

"Aboriginal people told me about old stories, Dreamtime stories and about my parents and grandparents." Elmer found it very different living in the mission. "For nine long years I was told nothing about my history and family." Elmer believes that "to be physically forced to be separated from my parents and family has caused unrepairable damage to me because of the loss of my identity and knowledge of my Aboriginal culture. He has "suffered ten years of heartache in researching and having to relive the experiences of the past." Elmer missed out on the physical hugs from his parents, the "touching which I believe is so important to my Aboriginal culture." Elmer only saw his father once at Wandering Mission before he died. He was told of his father's death by another inmate. Elmer was not allowed to go to the funeral. Elmer believes that the experiences he went through have affected his older children because they were brought up by a father who was on the road to being an alcoholic. He believes he drank heavily because of his past and alcohol was a way of forgetting the mission days.

Paige

Paige was removed from her parents when she was six years old in 1941. She was taken to New Norcia Mission by the NWD. Paige remained at New Norcia Mission until she was 16 years old when she was placed in foster care until she turned 21. Paige had weekly visits from her parents who were living and working in New Norcia. "But the fact remains that at the mission and at the foster home there was no loving environment and it was a very institutionalised existence ..., rather than the loving and caring relationship that I could have obtained in a family situation." Paige says that even though she felt safe at the mission and in the foster home, she felt very lonely and remains unsure about herself and her culture. She "knew more about the Christian religion and the Spanish language" than her Aboriginal culture. Paige said, "how the authorities and government thought it was better for us to be removed from our families and thrown into an alien institutionalised existence is hard to fathom."

Terri

Terri was born in Kellerberrin in 1970. When she was about six months old, she was placed in a home in Safety Bay. Terri was placed in two other homes during her childhood. In one of the homes, Terri was "belted with straps, wooden spoons, and egg slices" across her legs and hands. Sometimes she "was locked in the room until the next day with nothing to eat." Terri was never told where she came from. She did not know her parents' names until she got in touch with them through a church organisation much later in life. Terri now knows her real family well and wishes she had been able to grow up in their care.

Cameron

Cameron was born in 1943. When he was six years old, Cameron was removed from his parents in Moora and taken to Mogumber Mission. Cameron was taken away on his own, but two of his sisters joined him at Mogumber Mission four years later. He only saw his parents about once a year when he was first at the mission. Cameron said, "my parents used to come just for the day and it was great to see them but it was very sad when they left. I was very upset being away from my parents and family." Cameron was at Mogumber Mission until he was about fifteen years old and returned to his parents in Moora. He only stayed there a year before he left to work on farms in various country towns. Cameron has been in prison for cheque fraud, drink driving, assaults and rape. Cameron said that he is "not trying to say that being in the mission is the only cause of me being in prison but one of the problems being in the mission was that it didn't teach me about what to do when I left the mission. I was basically out in an unprotected world."

Elliott

Elliott has nine brothers and sisters. He was removed from his family when he was four years old in about 1968. He has been told by one of his older sisters that the Native Welfare Department took them away because their parents fought a lot. At the Wandering Mission the boys and girls lived in separate dormitories and were not allowed to mix. Elliott can "remember the younger kids sleeping four to a bed and if they wet the bed they would be

given cold showers and hit with a scrubbing brush." Elliott was too young when he was removed from his parents to know if Aboriginal families lived differently. He thought that "being in the mission with Aboriginal children was the acceptable thing." Wandering Mission had strict rules and Elliott was "made to do chores from a young age." Elliott remembers being hit with a horse whip and also being hit with a scrubbing brush because he wet the bed. Elliott says that he now feels inclined to punish his children for minor things which he believes is a result of the severe discipline he suffered at the mission. Elliott now sees his brothers and sisters fairly regularly but he feels bitter because he did not get to know his father who died one year after he left the mission. "I was deprived of my parents' upbringing and the ways Aboriginal people lived and survived in the past. It has greatly affected my identity as an Aboriginal person."

Theodore

Theodore was born in 1962. When he was about four years old, he, two of his sisters and one brother were removed from their parents and taken to New Norcia Mission. Theodore's youngest two brothers were later fostered out. Theodore stayed at the New Norcia Mission until he was about ten years old. He was then placed in three successive foster families for about one year. Theodore remembers that when he was with one of the foster families he was badly treated. He used to "have to sleep out in the bush and have cold showers while the other boy who had been fostered out was looked after very well." When he was 11 years old, Theodore returned to his parents. Theodore says that "one of the sad things is that I have never been able to get close to my family because I have been separated from them."

Ursula

Ursula was removed from her parents with her brother in 1936 when she was four years old. They were taken to Roelands Mission. Ursula said that "Roelands became a home for me because I didn't know anything else." However, "one sad aspect of the mission was that I never felt Aboriginal." She knew she was Aboriginal because all of the other children there were Aboriginal but she left Roelands Mission "without receiving any education of my people or my culture." When she left Roelands Mission, Ursula went to work at Mogumber. "It was

strange going to Mogumber because I didn't feel that I should be there, even though I knew I was Aboriginal I didn't really feel Aboriginal. Its a sad thing that I missed out a lot of my Aboriginal culture."

Abraham

Abraham was born in 1947 and was taken from his family when he was about one or two years old. He was taken to Roelands Mission where he was for most of his childhood. Abraham had two sisters and two brothers but only one sister is still alive. Abraham has been in contact with her for about six years. When they were at the mission, Abraham and his brothers were separated from their sisters. Abraham's father visited them once and his mother visited them a couple of times. When they came to visit, Abraham did not know who they were. Abraham's father was killed by a train in Perth. Abraham was told about his death but he wasn't allowed to go to the funeral. His mother died when he was in Fremantle Prison. Abraham did not attend her funeral because the prison officers wouldn't let him go.

Gerald

Gerald was taken to Roelands Mission in 1963 when he was four years old. Gerald left Roelands Mission when he was 16 years old but he was still under the control of the Native Welfare and he went to live in a hostel near Bunbury. He was only there for a year before he shifted to another home with ex-missionaries in Nollamara. Gerald met his sister there. Gerald still feels the effect of the mission days. He has trouble staying with his mother for any length of time. While he was at the mission he was not allowed to communicate with his brothers and sisters. "It was a very clinical, no feeling type of mission." Gerald says that "one of the major problems is that we lost a lot of our identity, roots and stability by being placed in the mission and living in an institutionalised environment." Gerald has "had some very good employment but I have no loyalty to the white man and I think that extends from the fact that I was treated badly by white people when I was younger."

Tallara

In about 1952, Tallara was taken by train to Mogumber Mission, she was six years old. "The mission was not a good place to be when you are so young, you miss your parents and their support and love and the early nurturing which young children need." Tallara used to get flogged by the superintendent of the mission but she does not remember doing anything wrong. She "got belted up by the bigger kids there but I was frightened to tell on them."

Hazel

Hazel's parents "were living under the stars in Kojonup when I was taken away." Hazel was about three months old when she was taken to Mogumber Mission. Her mother was killed in a car accident when she was a baby. If she thinks of her mother now, she cries. When she was 17 years old, Hazel ran away from Mogumber Mission. Hazel hasn't been a stable person since being at Mogumber. She can't settle down.

Ian

Ian was born in 1932. He was taken away when he was still a baby. He was placed in a nursery in the Salvation Army Nursing Home in North Fremantle. Ian was later taken to Mogumber Mission and then to SKCH. He stayed at SKCH until he was about 14 or 15 years old. Ian was not taught anything about his Aboriginality while he was at SKCH. He did not know where he came from. When he left SKCH, Ian was about 15 years old and he had "not been prepared for the outside world. I had just been working hard at SKCH. There was no real education and no education on how to survive in the real world." Ian has never been married and said "part of the reason was that I could never get that close to a female as I was embarrassed about not knowing anything about my past. When I did get close to a woman they would ask me where I was from and I got embarrassed to say that I didn't know." Ian has never seen his parents.

Simon

Simon was staying with his oldest sister while his mother was visiting his father in hospital when the Native Welfare came and took him away to Wandering Mission. His mother tried to get Simon and his brothers and sisters out of the mission when she returned but the NWD would not let them go home. Simon was taken to the mission when he was very young and left there when he was about 14 years old. Simon used to receive "hidings from the fathers there." He was never happy there. Simon did not receive an education at the mission, instead he "was sent to do hard work in the fields and bush." He still does not know how to read and write. Simon feels that "the whole mission life was traumatised because I was not with his parents."

Marnie

In 1945, Marnie and her twin sister were removed from their mother at Mogumber Mission and taken to New Norcia Mission. They were five years old. Their nine year old sister was left with their mother. Marnie "didn't find it too bad in New Norcia, although it was very strict and a lot of Catholicism was pushed" onto them. She missed her parents. She never saw her father and she only saw her mother twice. Marnie says that while "it was alright at New Norcia, it was an institution type environment and not a small family caring unit." Marnie still finds it upsetting that she did not have a normal childhood. While she was at New Norcia Mission there was no encouragement or education of her Aboriginal language or culture.

Gareth

Gareth was born in 1951. He was removed from his parents when he was very young and was taken to Mogumber Mission. Gareth describes Mogumber as an "institutionalised environment", he said "there was no loving or caring." Gareth says that the mission has had a profound affect" on him. He did not meet his mother until he was 21 years old, "there were all those years, the childhood years when I should have had my mother with me." Gareth still gets upset with his mother because he blames her for putting him there. Gareth does not see

his mother although he knows that she is alive and lives somewhere in Perth. Gareth's father is dead, he never met him.

Wallace

Wallace was born in 1950 in Merredin. When he was taken away to New Norcia Mission he was about four years of age. He was living with his mum and dad on a farm near Moora. They were living in a tent and his parents were working on the farm. When Wallace was taken away, his four brothers and sisters who were alive at the time were also taken away. His youngest brother and sister were still in nappies. At the New Norcia Mission Wallace led a very strict routine. They had to do a lot of chores and there was a lot of religion pumped into them. Wallace remembers "getting flogged with an electric cord 37 times around the back from the neck to the leg which drew blood." Wallace never saw his parents much after he left New Norcia. He has seen his brothers and sisters and formed a pretty close relationship with them. Wallace thinks being removed from his parents has severely affected him.

Sylvia

Sylvia was born in 1930. She was a baby when she was taken away from her parents and placed in the Cottesloe Salvation Army Home. She did not know who her parents were. Sylvia did not know that she was an Aborigine. The Matron told her she was a native and that she had been put there to be brought up as a white person. Sylvia did not understand what she meant. While she was at the home, Sylvia was "flogged quite often." She remembers "standing in the hallway night after night, wearing a thin night gown with my hands on my head until 2.00 a.m." Sylvia left the home when she was 14 years old and was sent to a farm in Bridgetown as a servant. Sylvia has never seen her mother or father. Sylvia does not know why she was removed from her family. She assumes it was done in the name of the law to make her a white person. However Sylvia says, "I was born an Aboriginal and I will die an Aboriginal."

Peg

Peg was removed from her mother by the NWD and taken to Carrolup Mission in 1936 when she was 11 years old. Two of her sisters were also taken away. Peg found the mission life to be quite regimented. She had to do all of the domestic chores. "It was very institutionalised and not like a family environment." Peg's mother worked at the bakery at the mission but they were not allowed to see each other. When she was at the Carrolup Mission, Peg tried to run away. She was caught and put into a cell at the Carrolup Mission. Peg was at the mission until she was married when aged 25 years old. She married to get out of the mission. Peg had a daughter who was removed from her by the NWD and sent to SKCH. Her relationship with her daughter has never re-formed. Peg also had a son who was removed from her and placed in the Wandering Mission. He was taken away for about five years. Peg feels that the long lasting effect of the mission is that part of her life is missing. A lot of her dignity was taken away from her, as were her `freedom and rights.'

Christian

Christian was born in 1958 in Narrogin. He was removed from his parents when he was about six years of age and placed in the Wandering Mission. Christian's older brother and sister were also removed with him. When he was in the mission, Christian went to school and also had to do a lot of chores around the place. He did not see his family very often. He only saw his mother a few times. He never saw his father while he was at the mission. Christian was transferred to a hostel in Mosman Park when he was 12 years old. Christian found out where his mother was living and he went to visit her for half a day. When he returned to the hostel he was kicked out because he had been to visit his mother. Christian returned to his mother. Christian feels that there was a part of his childhood that was robbed from him and "which can never be replaced." He thinks that being taken away has affected the upbringing of his own children. He has "found it hard to get close to them." He tends to stay away from them. He rarely sees his children.

Pamela

Pamela does not remember being taken away from her mother when she was four years old, all she remembers is the big black car. Pamela and two of her brothers were taken to Gnowangerup Mission. They were there from 1955 until it closed in 1965. Then they were transferred to Roelands Mission. Pamela's mother used to visit her at the Gnowangerup Mission when she was very little but the visits stopped after a while. The missionaries had told her mother to stop visiting because her visits were upsetting Pamela and her brothers. The missionaries told Pamela that she was at the Mission because her parents did not look after her. Pamela said that there was "this longing to be with my parents, but then there was this negative feedback from the missionaries that my parents didn't want me so I had this great feeling of rejection that still stays with me." Pamela had to work while she was at the mission, she was up early, before dawn, and she had to do chores, then have breakfast, go to school and then return to do more chores. "It was a very rigorous and demanding lifestyle at the mission ... it was very demanding and we were only about eight or nine." While she was at the Gnowangerup Mission Pamela attended the local school. She used to envy the other kids who could walk home for lunch. "I even knew what freedom meant there, because we didn't have freedom, we were basically very constrained, we couldn't even go down the shops, where other kids could have done that." Pamela was subjected to physical punishment and cruelty while she was at the mission. One time she and another girl stole two potatoes because they were hungry. They received 13 cuts on their hands from the superintendent. The next day Pamela couldn't hold her pen at school. In another incident when Pamela was 14 years old, she got into trouble. The houseparent "came up and shook me vigorously and then he said he wanted me to take my pants off, go over to the bed and he was going to smack me. ... it wasn't just the hurt of being smacked, it was the indignation, the embarrassment of being a 14 year old and having to remove my pants to a grown adult male." At the age of six, Pamela was subjected to sexual abuse at the mission. Of course, "this still affects me to this day." Pamela thinks "a big problem with myself and other mission kids is that we feel that we are in between a white society and an Aboriginal society and don't really fit in either, but there is always one bonding thing, we are very strong with each other."

Danny

Danny is currently in Casuarina Prison. He was born in 1955 and has six brothers and sisters alive. When he was about six years old, Danny was removed from his parents by the NWD and taken to the Mt Magnet Mission. He was at the mission for about ten years. During that time his parents used to visit him about twice a year. Danny does not see much of his family now "because they are all too far away." He feels that they "have been too long apart." Danny said, "Being removed has changed my life. By taking me away from my family they have taken my feelings away." Danny has talked to "other Aboriginal boys about this" and they "all feel the same."