

## Part 3 Consequences of Removal

### Chapter 12 *The Effects of Separation from the Indigenous Community*

*I went through an identity crisis. And our identity is where we come from and who we are. And I think, instead of compensation being in the form of large sums of money, I personally would like to see it go into some form of land acquisition for the people who were taken away, if they so wish, to have a place that they can call their own and that they can give to their children. My wife and I are trying to break this cycle, trying our hardest to break this cycle of shattered families. We're going to make sure that we stick together and bring our children up so they know who they are, what they are and where they came from.*

[New South Wales: man happily adopted into a non-Indigenous family at 13 months in the 1960s.]

### **Cultural knowledge**

One principal effect of the forcible removal policies was the destruction of cultural links. This was of course their declared aim. The children were to be *prevented from acquiring the habits and customs of the Aborigines* (South Australia's Protector of Aborigines in 1909); *the young people will merge into the present civilisation and become worthy citizens* (NSW Colonial Secretary in 1915). Culture, language, land and identity were to be stripped from the children in the hope that the traditional law and culture would die by losing their claim on them and sustenance of them.

*The culture that we should have had has been taken away. No, it's not that I don't like the people or whatever, it's just that I'd never really mixed with them to understand what it is to be part of the tribal system, which is the big thing ...*

[Victoria: removed to an orphanage in the mid-1940s.]

... they have been deprived of their right to the songs and the spiritual and cultural heritage that was theirs, and I think there are direct financial consequences of that. I mean, in doing so, they have been removed from the very link which most land rights legislation demands in order for your rights to native title to be recognised. So in effect their removal in that way from their own family and context was also to deprive them of certain legal rights that we later recognised ...

... the cost is not only confined to inheritance losses, the loss of rights from father to son, mother to daughter; they also lost their sense of identity very clearly (Rev. Bernie Clarke, Uniting Church, former Superintendent at Croker Island Mission).

The response of some people 'brought up to be white' is to deny their heritage. In turn their descendants are disinherited.

If just one Aboriginal person denies their Aboriginality, by the third generation of descendants from that person, there may be 50 or 60 Aboriginals who up to now were not aware of their heritage.

Others work to renew their cultural links.

*When we left Port Augusta, when they took us away, we could only talk Aboriginal. We only knew one language and when we went down there, well we had to communicate somehow. Anyway, when I come back I couldn't even speak my own language. And that really bugged my identity up. It took me 40 odd years before I became a man in my own people's eyes, through Aboriginal law. Whereas I should've went through that when I was about 12 years of age.*

[South Australia: man removed as an 'experiment' in assimilation to a Church of England boys' home in the 1950s.]

*I had to relearn lots of things. I had to relearn humour, ways of sitting, ways of being which were another way totally to what I was actually brought up with. It was like having to re-do me, I suppose. The thing that people were denied in being removed from family was that they were denied being read as Aboriginal people, they were denied being educated in an Aboriginal way.*

[New South Wales: woman who lived from 5 months to 16 years in Cootamundra Girls' Home in the 1950s and 1960s.]

## **Indigenous identity**

Many witnesses spoke of their strong sense of not belonging either in the Indigenous community or in the non-Indigenous community.

*You spend your whole life wondering where you fit. You're not white enough to be white and your skin isn't black enough to be black either, and it really does come down to that.*

*I felt like a stranger in Ernabella, a stranger in my father's people. We had no identity with the land, no identity with a certain people. I've decided in the last 10, 11 years to, y'know, I went through the law. I've been learning culture and learning everything that goes with it because I felt, growing up, that I wasn't really a blackfella.*

*You hear whitefellas tell you you're a blackfella. But blackfellas tell you you're a whitefella. So you're caught in a half-caste world.*

[South Australia: speaker's father was removed and the speaker grew up in Adelaide.]

The policies of separation were often administered in such a way as would directly cause feelings of alienation.

I was taken there because I was 'half-caste'. I started thinking, 'Why do I deserve to be treated like this?' But as the years went by, I sort of accepted all that. We were treated differently to white and black people. We weren't allowed to go down to see our Aboriginal people, or go into the houses where the white people were. We just had to live around the outside of the house. They made us feel like we weren't allowed to do anything: no freedom of movement, even to think for yourself. They had to tell you what to do, and how to think.

*We were locked up in the dormitories, and had to go and ask for anything. We had to go and ask if we could go and see our people. We were more or less like slaves, I think. We didn't think that was wrong. We just thought it was our duty. We did what we were told.*

*Years later, when we were grown up, our own boss – by this time we were married and having our children – we were having families and still couldn't go up and ask the managers if we could get married. They had to tell you who you had to marry. We didn't know what was their plans for us. We just lived and did what we were told.*

*I was almost ashamed to be half-caste sometimes. I had no confidence in myself, or how to make up my mind what to do ... When I was growing up I wanted to be a teacher or a nurse. But you couldn't say that because you had to go to school and go out and work in the house, do domestic duties. That's what they said. We lost much of our culture, our language and traditional knowledge, our kinship and our land.*

[Western Australia: woman removed to Moola Bulla Station at 5 years in 1944.]

This loss of identity has ramifications for individuals' well-being and in turn for the well-being of their families.

The alienation from culture can create an increase in anger and frustration which can also lead to increases in violence and lawlessness, and we're talking here about a profound sense of alienation ... a lack of ego strength, a lack of the capacity to test reality ...

I think there is a connection between people's loss of identity and their experience of lawlessness and being gaoled and then losing that sense of

identity within the context of that very big institution and the experience of total alienation from themselves, resulting in death (Lynne Datnow, Victorian Koori Kids Mental Health Network).

... it is our experience that most Aborigines raised within the Tasmanian Aboriginal community are far more secure in where they belong than are those who were raised outside the Aboriginal community. We have seen Aborigines raised outside the community being confused, uncertain and insecure about their belonging. That is not, of course, the case with every displaced child (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre).

Anna's story illustrates the inter-generational transfer of the effects of forcible removal. Anna's Koori grandmother was forcibly removed from her family and her mother abandoned her when she was six years old. In time Anna moved in with her uncle and his family and only then, at the age of 16, did she realise her Koori heritage. She sought to identify herself as Koori but her uncle opposed this. She was forced to leave home, joining the airforce after concealing her true age. Anna continues to experience problems relating to her Indigenous identity.

## **Native title**

The removal of 'Stolen Generations' people from their families has, in the majority of cases, prevented them from acquiring language, culture and the ability to carry out traditional responsibilities and in many cases, has prevented them from establishing their genealogical links.

'Stolen Generations' people are therefore prevented or seriously prejudiced from successfully asserting rights under the LRA [*Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*] or NTA [*Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*] (Central Land Council).

Separation has broken or disrupted not only the links that Aboriginals have with other Aboriginals, but importantly, the spiritual connection we should have had with our country, our land. It is vital to our healing process that these bonds be re-established or re-affirmed.

Separation from their families has dramatically affected people's land entitlements as summarised for the Inquiry by the legal firm Corrs Chambers Westgarth. In all jurisdictions the ability to bring a native title claim will generally be extinguished by forced removal. The Full Court of the Federal Court considered an analogous situation in the case of *Kanak* in 1995 and concluded that,

... native title can be enjoyed only by members of an identifiable community who are entitled to enjoy the land under the traditionally based laws and customs, as currently acknowledged and observed, of that community. Individuals may have native title rights that are protected, but these rights are dependent upon the existence of communal native title and are 'carved out' of that title.

The only persons entitled to claim native title are those who can show biological descent from the indigenous people entitled to enjoy the land under the laws and customs of their own clan or group.

Establishing 'biological descent' is the first hurdle for separated people seeking to re-establish their relationship with 'their' land. The person must be able to trace his or her family and the family's community of origin must be known. Although a separated person is unlikely to be able to sustain a native title claim independently (and native title claims are collective claims in any event), a person who has been accepted back into his or her community of origin may participate in a claim brought by that community.

It is possible for Aboriginal people who were removed from their traditional families to become a participant in a collective claim by a group or clan of Aboriginals. However, in order for this to happen it would first be necessary for them to be accepted as a member of the Aboriginal community which has collectively maintained the requisite use and spiritual and cultural ties to the land that have allowed the group's native title to survive.

As a matter of practicality, Aboriginal people who have been removed from their families may be accepted back into Aboriginal communities. The issue is one for the Aboriginal clan or group to decide. However, there may be traditional laws and customs which govern the acceptance of people in the community and it is possible they may be refused permission to rejoin a community, or refused recognition as a member of a community, because they have not participated in the traditional and cultural activities of that community for a length of time. If this is the case, the disentitlement to claim as a member of a group would be a direct result of the forced separation of that person from the community as a child (Corrs Chambers Westgarth).

Including a person who has yet to be fully reintegrated into the traditional laws relating to the land in a claimant group may jeopardise the land claim under some legislation, for example the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, although the Inquiry received no evidence that this has occurred. However, once a claim is successful (for example under the *Native Title Act 1993*), or once traditional lands have been granted (for example under the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act 1981 (SA)*), it is entirely up to the traditional owners to decide whether they will accept a person taken away in childhood and permit him or her to share in the enjoyment of the land.

Where collective land ownership is vested in an association, the rules of the association usually provide for the acceptance of new members (for example *Aboriginal Land Grant (Jervis Bay Territory) Act 1986 (Cth)*; *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)*).

Under some legislation a requirement of a period of uninterrupted residence is imposed before the person can become a member of the land-owning group (for example with respect to Framlingham Forest, Victoria, under the *Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest) Act 1987*).

*We can't even claim for that, because we're not living on it. But that's not our fault. The Government took us off our land, so how can we get land rights when this is what the Government has done to us?*

[New South Wales: woman removed at 2 years in the 1940s, first to Bomaderry Children's Home, then to Cootamundra Girls' Home; now working to assist former Cootamundra inmates.]

*I have no legal claim to come back here. I can't speak on the board of management, I'm not a living member out here on this mission. What right have I got to speak out here? And this is the way that a lot of the Aboriginals living on this mission see me – as a blow-in, a blow-through. Yet I've got family that are buried out here on the mission ... and I have no rights. As an Aboriginal I don't have any rights out here.*

[Victoria: man whose mother was removed from Lake Tyers as a child; mother buried at Lake Tyers.]

Although they may not be able to make land claims based on a traditional connection to the land, some separated people may succeed by proving an 'historical association' instead. Queensland (*Aboriginal Land Act 1991* section 54 and *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991* section 51), New South Wales (*Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*) and the Northern Territory (*Pastoral Land Act 1992* with respect to pastoral excisions for community residential areas) all recognise this as a basis for claim. Thus, a group dispersed from their traditional lands and detained on a mission station may be able to reclaim the mission land on the basis of historical association.

Queensland also permits claims based on a group's need for 'economic or cultural viability' (*Aboriginal Land Act 1991* section 55, *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991* section 52). The group's land claim may succeed if it shows the land would assist in restoring, maintaining or enhancing the capacity for self-development and the self-reliance and cultural integrity of the group.

A number of governments have established funds to permit the acquisition of land for Aboriginal groups or communities, regardless of their traditional or historic ties. The primary basis for these land purchases will be cultural or economic need. Such land would also usually be held collectively. The principal fund is the Commonwealth's Indigenous Land Fund established in 1995 for the purchase of land for Indigenous corporations. The New South Wales *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* also established a fund from which land could be purchased for economic or other purposes.

## **Rose**

We always lived by ourselves. Not that we thought we were better than any other Koori family. It's just that the white welfare, if they seen

a group of Koori families together, they would step in and take their children away never to be seen again.

We moved from South Gippsland to East Gippsland. By this time I was about 9 years old. My parents pulled me out of school because the Welfare was taking the Koori kids from school never to be seen again. My parents didn't want this to happen to us. That's why we always lived by ourselves.

My parents made a little mia-mia with bushes and sticks around our heads and our feet at the fire which would burn all night. We all shared the 2 big grey government of Victoria blankets and was a very close family. Our little jobs were to gather whatever we could while our parents were picking [bean and pea picking for a local grower].

We were never allowed to walk down to our camp the same way because our parents didn't want the welfare to find us. That's why we couldn't make a beaten track. Then my parents got paid from picking. They went into Lakes Entrance to get a few groceries and left me, being the oldest, to care for my other brothers and sisters, which I always done. I was like their second mother but big sister. [4 younger siblings aged between 6 months and 7 years.]

The baby started crying so I went and got my uncle to come and watch the kids until I walked in town to look for my parents. The town was about 15 km so I left the camp and walked through the bush. I wouldn't walk along the main Highway because I was scared someone might murder me or take me away. I got into town just before dark and this Koori woman who I didn't know asked me was I looking for my parents. I said yes. She said they got a ride out to the camp with some people. That's how I missed them because I wasn't walking on the highway.

She said to me what are you going to do now. I said I'm going to walk back to the camp. She said it's getting dark, you can't walk out there now. You better come and stay with us and go back out tomorrow. I said OK. I trusted this Koori woman whom I didn't know. She gave me a meal and a bed.

The next day I thought and knew that my parents would be upset with me for leaving the kids but I knew they would be alright because they were with Mum's brother.

While I was walking through the bush the police and Welfare were going out to the camp which they had found in the bush. I was so upset that I didn't walk along the Highway. That way the Welfare would have seen me.

The next day I knew that the Welfare had taken my brothers and sisters. This lady who I stayed with overnight: her brother came that morning and told her the Welfare had taken the kids to the homes. She called me aside and said, babe it's no good of you going out to the camp today because the Welfare has taken your brothers and sisters

away to the homes. I started crying and said to her no I have to go back to the camp to see for myself. She got her brother and sister to take me out there and I just couldn't stop crying. All I could see was our little camp. My baby brother's bottle was laying on the ground. And I could see where my brother and sisters were making mud pies in a Sunshine milk tin that we used for our tea or soup. I didn't know where my parents were.

I was sad crying lost didn't know what I was going to do. I wished I had of walked along the Highway so my brothers and sisters would have seen me and told the Welfare just so I would have been with them.

Eventually I found my parents in Lakes Entrance. They were shattered upset crying so they went and got a flagon of wine, which they never ever worried about drink.

They took the kids to Melbourne Allambie Children's Home and bought them back when it was court day.

The Welfare and the Police told my parents that they would have to get a house, furniture, plenty of food in the cupboard and my Dad had to get a job. It was very hard in those days what Welfare put on my parents. Just couldn't happen. People wouldn't let black people have a good home. Or give them anything – not like now.

My parents knew that what the Welfare wanted them to do they couldn't. We just weren't allowed to be up to white man's standards. That's why they knew that they had my brothers and sisters for good. At court my parents knew that was the last time they would see their kids. So they told the court that they didn't want them split up.

The kids was glad to see Mum and Dad at court. They were jumping all over them. Glad to see them. When the Welfare took the kids off Mum and Dad they were holding out their arms trying to stay with Mum and Dad. Everyone was crying sad. Sad. Sad.

After the kids had gone to the home Mum and Dad hit the grog hard as they had done everything in their power and in their hearts to keep us away from the (predators) the Welfare. But they sniffed us out of the bush like dogs.

My parents couldn't handle the trauma of not having the closest warmth loving caring family we were. They separated. My Mum went one way; my Dad went his way.

And I was 9 years of age left to go my way. I didn't know anyone. So I lived with Koori families who took me in. And in return I would look after their kids while they went picking just so I had some sort of family caring. I done this for years. Still not knowing where my brothers and sisters were. I tried hard to find them but couldn't.

The families that took me in I have a lot of respect for them

because they tried to mend a 9 year old's broken heart. I love them dearly.

Eventually I got married when I was 21 years old. I thought maybe I could get my brothers and sisters and give them the home that the Welfare said my parents had to do. My husband worked in a sawmill and we had a sawmill house. After about 14 years my [eldest] brother came to live with us. One sister found us through the Salvation Army about 16 years later. Then my brother [the baby] who died last year who was caught up in the System was like a lost street kid and was bashed by the police in Melbourne a couple of years ago ended up with a tumour on the brain and was never the same again. My second sister who I or my family didn't see for 27 years. What could anyone do now to make up for those 27 years of not having their sister a part of their life. A terrible big hole in my heart that will never be filled.

We all are in contact with each other now and we try to make up for all those lost years. But something's missing. Could you put yourself in the situation that we were put through?

X

*I was there for 16 years and I was brainwashed every day of the week. You never go near Blacks. Your people don't want you anyway. They're just dirty. They don't want anything to do with you ... We were playing in the schoolyard and this old black man came to the fence. I could hear him singing out to me and my sister. I said to [my sister], 'Don't go. There's a black man'. And we took off. It was two years ago I found out that was my grandfather. He came looking for us. I don't know when I ever stopped being frightened of Aboriginal people. I don't know when I even realised I was Aboriginal. It's been a long hard fight for me.*

Confidential evidence 10, Queensland: NSW woman removed 1940s and placed in Cootamundra Girls' Home

## **The effects on family and community**

The trauma of forcible separation affected the parents and other relatives left behind as well as the children taken. Few of the parents have survived to tell their own stories.

Furthermore, many Aboriginal women were unwilling and unable to speak about the immense pain, grief and anguish that losing their children had caused them. That pain was so strong that we were unable to find a mother who had healed enough to be able to speak, and to share her experience with us and with the Commission ...

*We end up feeling helpless in front of our mother's pain. We see how hurt they have been. We see that they judge themselves harshly, never forgiving themselves for losing their children – no*

*matter that they were part of ongoing systematic removal of Aboriginal children ...*

*Our mothers inevitably say that they didn't want to hurt us. But also we realise that here is where our mothers were hurt most deeply. Here is where they were shamed and humiliated – they were deprived of the opportunity to participate in growing up the next generation. They were made to feel failures; unworthy of loving and caring for their own children; they were denied participation in the future of their community.*

The evidence clearly establishes that families and whole communities suffered grievously upon the forcible removal of their children.

*The interesting thing was that he was such a great provider ... He was a great provider and had a great name and a great reputation. Now, when this intrusion occurred it had a devastating impact upon him and upon all those values that he believed in and that he put in place in his life which included us, and so therefore I think the effect upon Dad was so devastating. And when that destruction occurred, which was the destruction of his own personal private family which included us, it had a very strong devastating effect upon him, so much so that he never ever recovered from the trauma that had occurred ...*

*Progressively the shattering effect continued in my father's life to the point that he couldn't see the sense in reuniting the family again. He had lost all confidence as a parent and as an adult in having the ability to be able to reunite our family.*

[ Victoria: woman removed with her sisters from their father and grandmother in the 1960s.]

*Mum was kidnapped. My grandfather was away working at the time, and he came home and found that his kids had been taken away, and he didn't know nothing about it. Four years later he died of a broken heart. He had a breakdown and was sent to Kew [Psychiatric] Hospital. He was buried in a pauper's grave and on his death certificate he died of malnutrition, ulcers and plus he had bedsores. He was 51.*

X

*I remember my Aunty, it was her daughter that got taken. She used to carry these letters around with her. They were reference letters from the white fellas in town ... Those letters said she was a good, respectable women ... She judged herself and she felt the community judged her for letting the welfare get her child ...*

*She carried those letters with her, folded up, as proof, until the day she died.*

Part of the reaction to being traumatised, like suddenly having your child torn away from you, is what we call a high level of arousal ... that heightened arousal can stay on a heightened level with physiological responsiveness for the rest of one's life ... so that people are aroused, alert. And one reason they take alcohol and other substances is often to dampen this down and they don't know its cause.

*My parents were continually trying to get us back. Eventually they gave up and started drinking. They separated. My father ended up in jail. He died before my mother. On her death bed she called his name and all us kids. She died with a broken heart.*

[New South Wales: woman removed at 11 months in the late 1950s with her three siblings; children fostered in two separate non-Indigenous families.]

There is little if any research on the effects of forcible removal of a child or children on the parents and other family members. However there is research on the effects of the death of a child and some research on the effects of relinquishing a child for adoption. Speaking at the Third Australian Conference on Adoption in 1982 Margaret van Keppel and Robin Winkler summarised some of this research.

Sanders (1979-80) assessed the intensities of bereavement reactions of people who had experienced three different types of death (spouse, parent and child) and found that those who had experienced the death of a child revealed more intense grief reactions of somatic types and greater guilt with accompanying feelings of despair, than did those bereaved who had experienced the loss of a spouse or parent ...

There is consistent evidence indicating that bereavement increases mortality and morbidity ...

There is no evidence contradicting the assumption that relinquishing a child for adoption is an undesirable life event, a life crisis, for the relinquishing mother. [Research evidence shows]:

- 1 That people respond to crises in specific predictable ways, e.g., shock, anger, depression.
- 2 That people go through a series of stages over time, attempting to come to terms with an aversive life-event.
- 3 That people eventually accept or resolve their crises [although there is] extreme variability in peoples' responses to life crises [and ] the difficulty following a crisis may be experienced indefinitely.

[Factors affecting recovery are]:

- 1 Perceived social support facilitates adjustment
- 2 The opportunity for free expression of feelings facilitates adjustment

- 3 The presence of other life-stressors impedes adjustment
- 4 The ability to find meaning in the outcome facilitates adjustment

These findings about bereaved and relinquishing parents can be extended approximately to the experience of Indigenous parents whose children were forcibly removed. They have the lowest likelihood of recovering from the trauma of that event. While social supports would usually have been available within the Indigenous community, beyond that there were none. Indigenous families continued to experience profound disadvantages ('other life-stressors ') including exclusion and control, racism and poverty which would have acted as severe stresses compounding their grief and trauma. They could generally find no meaning in the forcible removal.

A Western Australian mother of two boys was working as a nurse and well able to fit her sons out for school. Yet they were made wards of the State in the late 1950s.

*It has left me sick, also my son sick too, never to be the same people again that we were before, being separated from one another, it has made our lives to be nothing on this earth. My sons and myself went through a lot of pain and heartbreak. It's a thing that I'll never forget until I die, it will always be in my mind that the Welfare has ruined my thinking and my life.*

*I felt so miserable and sad and very unhappy, that I took to drinking after they took my sons. I thought there was nothing left for me.*

X

*I'm not under the influence of alcohol anymore, you know. Because then you used to sort of deal with it more or less in drink and I thought I could solve my problems in a bottle, you know. That's the only way I could deal with my feelings for my kids not living here ... My kids are with me today, but I've lost a lot. I've lost that motherhood with my kids, you know.*

Because 'mixed race' children were particularly targeted for forcible removal, non-Indigenous parents and families also lost children.

In some circumstances the non-Aboriginal parent actually believed that they could have done something to stop what happened. In some experiences that I'm aware of, that has led to long-term ill health of that non-Aboriginal parent. In some circumstances it has led to breakdown in those relationships [between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parent] ... But how do you tell your father that it's okay; that it wasn't their fault; and that his whiteness and maleness in a patriarchal society that should have been enough to protect any person's family did no good because of the nature of the relationship with his partner? (Joanne Selfe, NSW Aboriginal Women's Legal Resource Centre).

Parenting roles, nurturing and socialising responsibilities are widely shared in Indigenous societies: 'relatives beyond that of the immediate family have nurturing responsibilities and emotional ties with children as they grow up' (Dr Ian Anderson). When the children were taken, many people in addition to the biological parents were bereft of their role and purpose in connection with those children.

Aboriginal life was based on the sharing of all resources for the good of the group. The family unit was not the restricted modern nuclear family but an extended family of sharing and caring. Everybody was related and all relations were important, individual interests were subordinate to the lore. Aboriginal society was an all-inclusive network of reciprocal obligations of giving and receiving, which reinforced the bonds of kinship (Elvie Kelly, Victorian Koori Kids Mental Health Network).

When you look at a family tree, every person that is within that family tree is born into a spiritual inheritance. And when that person isn't there, there's a void. There's something missing on that tree. And that person has to be slotted back into his rightful position within the extended family. While that person is missing from the extended family, then that family will continue to grieve and continue to have dysfunctions within it, until the rightful person comes and takes their spiritual inheritance within that family (Kevin Booter, NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Worker).

The loss of so many of their children has affected the efficacy and morale of many Indigenous communities. Evidence to the Inquiry referred particularly to the way in which the child-rearing function of whole communities was undermined and denied, particularly where all children were required to live in mission dormitories. Psychiatrist Professor Ernest Hunter documented how removal on missions in the Kimberley region of Western Australia undermined the confidence of families and diluted their ability to rear their children.

Parental roles and adult authority were compromised, as the responsibility for education and discipline was claimed by Europeans.

*... you can say parenting can be undermined absolutely in those instances where a child is physically removed. It can be undermined to a degree in settings where there's sequestration such as dormitorisation, but you could say that parenting is undermined universally in a society where parental roles – particularly Aboriginal paternal roles, male roles – are undervalued generally.*

*[The] mission agenda [was] intrusion into family structure and intrusion into the kind of dynamic relationship between sacred and family roles because you can't undermine one without undermining the other ...*

*I think there's a problem blaming the problems with alcohol and social distress on the removal of kids ... However, it certainly is tied in with the broader process of undermining parenting roles and undermining family structure ....*

Hunter documented how Kimberley Aboriginal parents responded when the government station managers and missionaries relinquished their control over the children with the growth of self-management progressively from the mid-1970s.

It was anticipated that Aboriginal adults would reassert their role in the discipline and control of children ... Aborigines [in Jigalong, for example] ... had relinquished a significant dimension of that function to European mission control, defining it as 'whitefellow business'. When it became redefined as 'blackfellow business' a conflict arose .

The anticipated reassertion of parental control did not occur. The adults had experienced discipline as children but not nurturing. It had been a model of discipline reliant on physical chastisement, something unacceptable in traditional child-rearing. With their own methods denigrated and largely lost to them and European methods unacceptable, there seems to have been a discipline vacuum.

*That's also impacted on my own life with my kids. I have three children. And it's not as though I don't love my kids. It's just that I expected them to be as strong and independent and to fight for their own self like I had to do. And people misinterpret that as though I don't care about my kids. But that's not true. I do love my kids. But it's not as though the Church provided good role models, either, for a proper family relationship.*

[Northern Territory: Western Australian woman removed at 4 years in the 1950s and placed at a north-west Catholic orphanage and then at Beagle Bay Mission.]

Hunter and other researchers noted how Europeans devalued the paternal role in particular, in common with most other aspects of the traditional male role. Indigenous men generally lost their purpose in relation to their families and communities. Often their individual responses to that loss took them away from their families: on drinking binges, in hospital following accidents or assaults, in the gaol or lock-up, or prematurely dead.

[This has] a significant impact on child development. For Aboriginal boys, the compromise of traditional and contemporary role models resulting from the father's absence or functional unavailability has a damaging impact on the development of male identity (Hunter 1993 page 231).

Forcible removal affected community life in another way, too. To escape 'the welfare' and avoid their children being taken some families exiled

themselves from their communities and sometimes hid their Aboriginal identity.

Because forcible and seemingly arbitrary separation was so widespread and because the government used the threat of separation to coerce Aboriginal adults, most Aboriginal people lived with the fear of separation structuring their lives. Some tried to protect their families from separation by continually moving; others called themselves Maori or Indian; others cut off all ties with other Aboriginal people, including family members.

This almost as effectively removed children from community ties and culture; 'social removal and nil contact with Aboriginal people was also achieved by the very real fear of removal and the severance of family ties'.

*I didn't know anything about my Aboriginality until I was 46 years of age – 12 years after my father died. I felt very offended and hurt that this knowledge was denied me, for whatever reason. For without this knowledge I was not able to put the pathway of my own life into its correct place. When I did find out, for the first time in my life I understood why I had always felt different when I was a young man.*

[Man whose Aboriginal father lived as a white.]

*My grandfather wanted us to deny our Aboriginality so that we wouldn't be taken away. He used to say that none of his kids would live on a mission. We weren't allowed to say that we were Aboriginal, and we weren't allowed to mix with the Aboriginal people in the country town where we lived ... I didn't find out until Mum passed on that I was related to nearly everyone on the south coast. I even found out that the woman who lived across the street when we were growing up was my Aunty. But all those years growing up I hadn't known.*

When a child was forcibly removed that child's entire community lost, often permanently, its chance to perpetuate itself in that child. The Inquiry has concluded that this was a primary objective of forcible removals and is the reason they amount to genocide.

[Children are] core elements of the present and future of the community. The removal of these children creates a sense of death and loss in the community, and the community dies too ... there's a sense of hopelessness that becomes part of the experience for that family, that community... (Lynne Datnow, Victorian Koori Kids Mental Health Network).

There have been similar conclusions in the comparable context of forcible removal to educational institutions of Native American children.

*Because the family is the most fundamental economic, education, 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 (Byler 1977 page 8).*

A Congressional Inquiry in 1978 found that the removal of Indian children had a severe effect on Indian tribes, threatening their existence as identifiable cultural entities (US Congress 1978).

‘Culture’ has been defined as ‘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’ (*Telling Our Story* 1995 page 52).

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 (Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1995 page 25 quoted by *Telling Our Story* 1995 on page 52).

Every culture is continually changing and adapting to new conditions. Cultural stress such as the massive disruption caused by massacres, introduced diseases, dispossession and forcible removal of children robbed Indigenous societies of almost every opportunity to control the nature of their adaptations.

The impacts of forcible removal are renewed when societies must deal with the desire of removed children to return and reclaim their inheritance. The Jawoyn Association in the Northern Territory states,

*... the impact of the former policy of assimilation on traditional Aboriginal Law – in particular the Law applying to inheritance and inclusion within traditional clan and kinship systems ... is creating continuing social tensions and division and has the potential to disrupt and damage – well into the future – traditional land ownership and management structures.*

... the establishment of a genealogical affiliation does not necessarily determine ‘who speaks for country’ under Jawoyn traditional law – and it is this aspect of trying to cope with the colonialist history of assimilationism that has created difficulties for the Jawoyn nation ...

... To be able to 'speak for country' crucially involves *knowledge*: knowledge about the law; knowledge about country; knowledge about 'the system'; and a social connectedness to all things Jawoyn. Without such knowledge and connectedness, appropriate to one's age group and experience, one is not entitled to 'speak for country'.

The Jawoyn Association has found a way to resolve two competing interests.

The ability of Jawoyn people living on or near Jawoyn traditional lands, and whose lives are completely integrated in Jawoyn society, to determine what happens on those Jawoyn traditional lands. There has been a strongly expressed fear – perhaps unfounded – of Jawoyn people in this situation being potentially 'outvoted' on decisions by people living well away from their traditional lands and having little if any strong connectedness to those lands or its people.

Recognition and an acknowledgment of and respect for the Jawoyn heritage of those people stolen from their kin and country, and their descendants. Significantly, very few people in this situation have said they want to receive a share in rentals or royalties (except perhaps as a symbol of recognition), however a number of people from a Stolen Generation background have stated they wished to 'come back' to Jawoyn land; some have stated they wished to establish commercial ventures and/or living areas on Jawoyn land.

The resolution chosen by the Jawoyn will not necessarily appeal to other communities and associations dealing with this issue. The Central Land Council advised the Inquiry,

In some cases, the reunification of some 'Stolen Generations' people with their families and culture has led to Land Councils including those people in land ownership and native title holder records, as determined and as directed by Traditional Owners.

In other cases, while reunited family members are often involved in land and native title claims, their loss of language and culture often 'disables' them from taking part.

There are also cases where 'Stolen Generations' people claim genealogical relationships which may not be acknowledged and cases where there is not recognition of a genealogical link between people in a land or native title claim, situations which are painful for all concerned.

What is clear from the Jawoyn experience is the imperative that each community exercising its right of self-determination must be empowered to resolve the matter for itself.

It has not been through choice that the Jawoyn had their children kidnapped from their country; likewise those children suffered a cruel fate.

*If you grow up with no love ... I thought sex was love. That's why I probably had all those kids, 'cause I was trying to get all this love, y'know. 'Cause I never got it when I was in the Home.*

[South Australia: woman removed at about 4 years in the 1940s and raised largely at Koonibba Lutheran Children's Home.]

*We wasn't told anything about the facts of life. When we left the Home they didn't tell us anything about sex and that. All us girls, when we all come out the Home, we were all just, bang, pregnant straight away.*

## **Inter-generational effects**

*There's things in my life that I haven't dealt with and I've passed them on to my children. Gone to pieces. Anxiety attacks. I've passed this on to my kids. I know for a fact if you go and knock at their door they run and hide.*

*I look at my son today who had to be taken away because he was going to commit suicide because he can't handle it; he just can't take any more of the anxiety attacks that he and Karen have. I have passed that on to my kids because I haven't dealt with it. How do you deal with it? How do you sit down and go through all those years of abuse? Somehow I'm passing down negativity to my kids.*

The impacts of the removal policies continue to resound through the generations of Indigenous families. The overwhelming evidence is that the impact does not stop with the children removed. It is inherited by their own children in complex and sometimes heightened ways.

## **Parenting**

Most forcibly removed children were denied the experience of being parented or at least cared for by a person to whom they were attached. This is the very experience people rely on to become effective and successful parents themselves. This was the most significant of all the major consequences of the removal policies.

Denial of this experience results in an individual whose ability to parent his or her own children is severely compromised, and this is certainly my observation with people who were removed in early childhood. Not only has the legacy of impaired interpersonal relationships and poor self-worth rendered them more liable to unplanned parenthood, but they make poor parents and their children in turn have often been taken into care for having been abused or neglected. Such parents are often disorganised, impatient, capricious and ultimately demoralised, feeling unable to provide for their children what they missed out on and often being painfully aware that the

experience of childhood they are providing for their children [is] not dissimilar to that which they experienced (Dr Brent Waters).

... when they grow up and begin to form family relationships as adults, they have not had a history of socialisation which includes processes of being nurtured, so that they have difficulty in sustaining and developing good constructive family relationships with their own children (Dr Ian Anderson).

The way it translates to the way they become parents down the track is that from a personal point of view sometimes they are very struck by the incongruity of the desire and yearning to look after their kids consistently, the difficulties in dealing with all the real world limitations on that at different times, but also just the sense of emotional continuity that they have not personally experienced because of their disruption and loss. In some way it becomes built into them as a way of defending against the need that their children may have for them in a consistent and ongoing fashion.

So what it means is that they might become afraid of the dependency of the children, or they might become afraid of the needs of their children and they might not be as ready to ensure that all the things that maintain trust and continuity with the care of their children can be sustained (Dr Nick Kowalenko).

The damage was recognised by a senior State welfare official in evidence to the Inquiry.

*The fact that there has been no history there of family caring, nurturing, and because there has been a fair degree of in some cases institutionalisation upbringing, people don't have the social and emotional skills to cope. The child has been deprived of its role models (Mike Hepburn, WA Department of Family and Community Services).*

Many parents from the stolen generations are very good parents. Dr Ian Anderson noted that 'some individuals have been very lucky in the way in which they've been able to reconstruct their sense of self-worth and their sense of commitment to their children'. Michael Constable noted that 'despite all the odds and despite the pain, so many people function. They manage to keep families together'.

*I feel I have been totally denied of a childhood, but I could never repeat the cycle that happens to so many Aboriginal children that have been removed. It happened to my eldest brother: he had his five children removed. My other brother suffers from alcoholism.*

*Even though I drink, it's probably once or twice a year. I believe I got it out of my system when I had my first child. Even though I continued to drink when I had my first child, the drinking binges*

*started easing up [to the point] where I didn't need to be drunk every weekend, 'cause my little boy needed me to be sober.*

Shaun and his mother, Clare, are among the fortunate. Although her parents died when she was young, Clare was raised until the age of 13 by her mother's sister and her husband. She was then removed to a children's home with her younger sister. Clare was determined that her own two sons would not be taken from her and at one stage, when they were quite young, she decided to board them with different relatives to ensure that her own status as a sole parent would not lead to their removal. In this period Clare commuted on weekends alternately to the two homes from her place of work. Shaun told the Inquiry that,

*I probably would've been still trying to find my way in life, but the foresight was there from our elders [mother and aunts], teaching some respect and some form or way of getting through life without having to worry.*

Many Indigenous parents experience anxiety in rearing their children. In adulthood the forcibly removed children carry with them the fear that their own children will be taken from them in turn. This was said to be one reason Indigenous people 'don't tap into mainstream services, because there's that fear that the children could be taken away' (Joyce Smith).

*I now understand the way I am and why my life is so full of troubles and fears. I find it hard to take my children to hospital for the fear of being misunderstood and those in authority might take my children away as I was.*

[South Australia: woman removed at 18 months in the 1960s.]

*Now I understand why Mum is the way she is, why she's been strict on us, why she never used to take us to the doctors when we used to hurt ourselves, because the first thing they would have looked at was her skin and said, 'Well, you're obviously not looking after them properly'. So now I know why all those times we never used to go to the doctors and go to the hospital ... because Dad worked all his life and Mum stayed home and looked after us kids, so she was very hesitant to take us kids to doctors.*

Professor Ernest Hunter found among his patients a group of parents who 'feel extremely uncertain and almost paranoid about looking after their kids and concerned for their kids' welfare'. The fears of the parents can translate into a lack of discipline for their children.

*A lot of people think I'm very, very easy on my children. I don't smack them because I really used to get belted. A lot of people think a smack's not going to hurt them but I just remember it as a*

*child, you know. They've got a lot of spirit in them and I won't knock it out of them. I just won't knock anything out of them that's in them already like I had it all knocked out of me.*

[ Queensland: WA woman removed as a baby in the 1960s and eventually fostered at 10 years.]

*... You see some people that just don't know how to show love and they're getting into a lot of financial problems because they're spending all their money on their grandkids. They're doing this so that the kids think that they love them. You see other parents that can't chastise their kids at all or say no to them, you know, in case they won't love them. So some of the kids have just grown up with no limits set on them at all (Sister Pat Swan).*

*That's another thing that we find hard is giving our children love. Because we never had it. So we don't know how to tell our kids that we love them. All we do is protect them. I can't even cuddle my kids 'cause I never ever got cuddled. The only time was when I was getting raped and that's not what you'd call a cuddle, is it?*

[New South Wales: woman placed in Parramatta Girls' Home at 13 years in the 1960s.]

*I have a problem with smacking kids. I won't smack them. I won't control them. I'm just scared of everything about myself. I just don't know how to be a proper parent sometimes. I can never say no, because I think they're going to hate me. I remember hating [foster mother] so I never want the kids to hate me. I try to be perfect.*

[New South Wales: woman fostered as a baby in the 1970s.]

## **Behavioural problems**

A high proportion of the 'stolen generations' have 'problem children' of their own. Dr Max Kamien's 1972 study in Bourke, NSW, found that one-third of the Aboriginal adults he interviewed had been separated in childhood for more than five years. One-quarter of the Aboriginal boys aged between 5 and 14 and one-third of the girls had 'substantial behavioural problems'. Kamien commented that nearly all the Bourke children experienced 'inconsistency, unpredictability, and a conflict of values with the dominant white society' (*The Dark People of Bourke* page 168). However, the study was not conducted in such a way that it could confirm a causal link between a parental history of separation and their children's 'behavioural problems'.

Dr Jo Topp, a Victorian General Practitioner, was able to compare parenting among Koories in Victoria with parenting in remote communities in Central Australia where 'most people had not been directly affected by removal policies'.

*In Central Australia I never saw any infants with feeding or sleep difficulties and whenever I saw infants who were unsettled it was because they were unwell. Young mothers were clearly well supported and advised by their relatives and they had a strong belief in what they were doing. In contrast in Victoria ... I saw many young mothers with very little idea of how to interact with their young infants, how to feed them, how to rear and discipline their older children or how to set limits. Removal of children from their families and from their culture has at the very least resulted in loss of role models for them to learn their parenting skills.*

Separation of people from families interrupts the flow of knowledge and understanding with respect to stages of child development and culturally appropriate models of parenting and household management (Marion Kickett, WA Health Department).

Linda Briskman confirmed that 'children coming to the attention of Aboriginal child care agencies frequently had parents who had been removed as children'. Professor Ernest Hunter, in his practice as a psychiatrist, has found that many adolescent patients of the second generation present 'with pictures that look like personality disorders: girls with patterns of substance abuse, promiscuity, self-harm'.

*Because of their behavioural problems there is a significantly increased risk that these second generation children will in turn be removed from their families or will have their children removed.*

*... as children who grew up under the stolen generations, the fact that we didn't often have our own parents, that we in fact as children when we were raised were not parented by other people and as adults and as women we go on to have children and that those skills and experiences that our extended family would have instilled in us are not there – that puts us at great risk of having our children removed under the current policies and practices that exist today.*

[Joanne Selfe, NSW Aboriginal Women's Legal Resource Centre]

*I'm a rotten mother. My own husband even put my kids in the Home and I fought to get them back. And then I was in a relationship after that, and he even put my kids in the Home. I think I've tried to do the best I could but that wasn't good enough. Why? Because I didn't have a role model for a start.*

[South Australia: multiple foster placements in the 1950s and 1960s.]

The Aboriginal Legal Service of WA surveyed 483 clients who had been forcibly removed. More than one-third of those clients reported that their children had been taken away in turn.

## **Violence**

Professor Ernest Hunter has noted the very high rates of self-harm including suicide and domestic violence among young men in many Indigenous communities (1996). His research has led him to identify the root cause as the inappropriate construction of male identity in Indigenous families due to the fact that male role models were either absent or had been undermined (page 10). Professor Hunter looked beyond the contemporary Indigenous family to explain the reasons for the absence of effective male role models.

*I believe that violence to significant others and self-harm are related and represent the enactment, at the centre of Aboriginal societies, that is, within the family, of the consequences of the protracted and damaging intrusion into family life that accompanied and followed colonisation. I contend that the destabilisation continues as a result of the poor social circumstances and disadvantage of contemporary Aboriginal societies (Hunter 1996 page 11).*

Maggie Brady's findings on petrol sniffing strongly support Professor Hunter's conclusion that self-destructive behaviour among young Indigenous men is a consequence of the undermining of family roles and, in particular, of male role models. Brady found that petrol sniffing was rare in communities which had not experienced missionary or government intrusion into family life. These communities had been engaged in the pastoral industry. Pastoralists not only did not intrude into Indigenous families, at least not nearly to the extent experienced on missions and government stations, but they valued Indigenous families living on their traditional lands. The reasons may have been self-interested – the adult workers knew the country intimately and the children were a convenient current and future workforce – but the consequences include stronger Indigenous families and communities (Brady 1992 pages 183-190).

## **Unresolved grief and trauma**

Ways of relating and ways of nurturing are passed from generation to generation.

*There is no doubt that children who have been traumatised become a lot more anxious and fearful of the world and one of the things that impact has is that they don't explore the world as much. Second, a certain amount of abuse over time certainly causes a phenomenon of what we call emotional numbing where, because of the lack of trust in the outside world, children learn to blunt their emotions and in that way restrict their spontaneity and responsiveness. That can become an ingrained pattern that becomes then lifelong really .. and it becomes far more difficult for them as parents to be spontaneous and open and trusting and*

*loving in terms of their own emotional availability and responsiveness to their children (Dr Nick Kowalenko).*

Unresolved grief and trauma are also inherited by subsequent generations. Parents 'convey anxiety and distress' to their children (Professor Beverley Raphael).

*I've come to realise that because of Dad being taken away, grief and all that's been carried down to us. We're not organised. We don't know where we're heading.*

[Queensland: speaker's father was removed at the age of 18 months to The Bungalow, Northern Territory.]

*I have six children. My kids have been through what I went through. They've been placed. The psychological effects that it had on me as a young child also affected me as a mother with my children. I've put my children in Bomaderry Children's Home when they were little. History repeating itself.*

[ New South Wales: woman removed at 4 years and suffering sexual abuse in one foster home and emotional abuse in the other.]

## **Depression and mental illness**

There are high rates of depression among people who experienced forcible removal in childhood. The children of these parents are also known to be at risk. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Inquiry into Mental Illness reported that,

*Other recent research indicates that children of depressed parents demonstrate significantly greater levels of anxiety, depressive symptoms and physical illnesses than children of non-depressed parents. They have more difficulty in school, with discipline, and in relating to their peers (pages 498-499 citing Gross 1989, Silverman 1989).*

That Inquiry found that the children of parents with mental illness are at greater risk of being taken into care and this is done more swiftly and with less consideration of the alternatives.

### ***James Family***

Related by a psychotherapist and her colleagues at the Victorian Koori Kids Mental Health Network.

**Grandmother Helen:**

Helen was removed from her family at the age of four and placed in a white institution. She was not allowed contact with her parents and left the institution at seventeen to work as a cook in the city. She had no family to support her and no idea of where she came from. She became pregnant very young and was unable to care adequately for any of her children as she had severe socio-economic problems and was also unable to cope because she had no model from which to develop her own parenting skills. Her partner was alcoholic and violent and she became very depressed and began to drink. As her own ability to trust and form close relationships was damaged due to her traumatic removal from her parents at such a young age with no substitute attachment figures provided, she was unable to maintain intimate long-term relationships, her marriage broke down and all her children were placed in care by 'the welfare'.

**Mother Jenny:**

Jenny grew up in a chaotic family experiencing violence, alcoholism and sexual abuse from her father. At three and a half years she was placed in foster care.

There were periods of time when she was returned to her mother and then removed again. Like her mother she also received no adequate model on which to base her future parenting and due to her deprivation and abuse her ability to trust and form close relationships was damaged. In addition, she also had to cope with a history of violence, alcoholism and sexual abuse that left her depressed and only just able to cope with life on a day to day basis. She could not hold down a regular job, abused alcohol, was attracted to violent, abusive men and tried to meet her needs for care and nurturing by having one child after another. While her children's basic needs were met, the family was chaotic and there were numerous times when Jenny was clearly not coping and needed to have respite from her children.

However, she was not able to avail herself of this support for fear that 'the welfare' would become involved and the children would be removed as she had been. Needless to say children brought up under these circumstances would inevitably have a lot of emotional and behavioural problems thereby continuing the cycle into the next generation.

**Baby Mary (3 months):**

Mary was born at full-term and considered to be a normal, healthy baby. However, due to her mother Jenny's depression and high level of stress she was emotionally unavailable to mother her child. Breast milk failed and she had difficulty organising regular bottle feeds. Mary lost

weight and became listless and pale, i.e. failed to thrive. Mary cried constantly which stressed mother Jenny further and reduced her ability to cope even more. Such severe deprivation in the first year of life can lead to disturbances in attachment process and the development of trust and does not bode well for this child's future development.

**Son Stephen (7 years):**

Stephen presented as a physically healthy though overweight little boy. He was depressed and talked of feeling that life was not worth living – he had in fact attempted to kill himself by cutting his wrists.

Although a very intelligent boy he was failing at school, had no friends and was frequently placing himself at serious risk of physical damage. His behaviour also included sexual acting out which indicated possible sexual abuse, however this could not be substantiated. Due to his aggressive, out of control behaviour he was suspended from school and subsequently moved to another school where after a short period the behaviour continued. Although the school was prepared to try to manage his behaviour his mother could not manage and he was eventually sent to live with his grandmother. Thus at 7 years this boy is unable to learn and has had to be removed from his mother, sister and brother. His future in relation to being able to form relationships, get a job and live a satisfying life are at serious risk and it is very likely that he will end up as a 'street kid'.

**Son Jo (14 years):**

Jo presented as a physically stocky 14 year old who was dressed neatly. He related initially in a hostile manner saying his problem was that his 'mum was hopeless' and made him feel angry all the time. Jo believed he should be allowed to do what he wanted and gave a history of school truancy, staying out for nights at a time and mixing with an older Aboriginal group of boys where alcohol abuse, smoking marijuana and taking pills was a regular event. Jo felt he belonged with this group of friends whereas at school he was the only Aboriginal student and the butt of racial taunts. Issues of identity were also a major contribution to his distress.

Behind the anger emerged a significant degree of depression with Jo describing himself as feeling hopeless and helpless about his life changing and believing he would be better off dead. He in fact identified his risk-taking behaviour as a 'Russian roulette' of possible death from taking too many pills. He also saw getting stoned as a way to escape his worries.

Jo's feelings of hopelessness were connected to his desire to look after his siblings and mum, but he also felt unable to do anything that prevented family breakdown. He often thinks about his father and wonders if life up north would be better. He has an idealised image of his father as his parents separated when he was very young. He wants to learn more about Aboriginal culture and feels saddened and fatalistic

about the lives of the young people around him in Melbourne.

As far as his own life is concerned, unless some changes occur Jo is likely to become more depressed and drop out of the education system carrying again this cycle on to the next generation. In addition his risk taking behaviour was escalating with the potential for suicide in the future.

Sue Wasterval and colleagues, Victorian Koori Kids Mental Health Network/

*He was about 6 month because he was just sitting up. And we loved him very much. And my sister use to visit him on the veranda sitting in a cot but when I use to visit him they told me that he was not my brother because I was a half cast child and because of that they wouldn't let me see him because he was a dark child same as my sister.*

[Tasmania: child fostered at 2 months in 1936.

