

**INQUIRY INTO REPARATIONS FOR THE STOLEN  
GENERATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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Partially Confidential

## **Report to the Parliament Committee**

### **The Reparations for the Stolen Generations in NSW**

Hi I'm Margaret Roberts and this is my story.

My mother's name was \_\_\_\_\_ born on the \_\_\_\_\_ 1936. Her parents' where \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. My mother was born at Brewarrina Mission, also known as Dodge City. \_\_\_\_\_ was taken from Brewarrina Mission and put into Cootamundra Girls home.

She was in the Cootamundra Girls home until 1952.

In 1952 she left Cootamundra Girls home to work in the care of a \_\_\_\_\_ at Wave Hill, Muttama, which was her postal address also in 1953.

In 1954 my mother was working at the Australia Hotel in Lake Cargelligo. She was living at the Mission in Lake Cargelligo called Murrin Bridge.

In 1955 my mother gave birth to her first born \_\_\_\_\_ at Murrin Bridge Mission. I am unaware who the father was.

From there, Murrin Bridge, my mother began to walk with \_\_\_\_\_ towards Brewarrina Mission from which she was originally stolen from. I remember at her funeral on the March 2011, \_\_\_\_\_ recalled a letter from \_\_\_\_\_ that she would stop at houses and knock on doors begging for food to feed her son and a roof over their heads when it rained, (under the veranda), my mother walked 691.8km from Lake Cargelligo to Moree with \_\_\_\_\_ not even one years old looking for her parents and heard that they were at Moree.

In 1956 my mother gave birth to \_\_\_\_\_ at Moree. \_\_\_\_\_ was the father. My mother had three more children to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ was a very cruel man to my mother and badly beat her, until the Mission Manager told her to leave otherwise he is going to kill you!

My mother left and went to the other mission in Brewarrina. Shortly afterwards apparently \_\_\_\_\_ died when \_\_\_\_\_ was very young.

My mother then became involved with \_\_\_\_\_ and they had a daughter called \_\_\_\_\_ in 1964. She was committed to the care of the Minister in 1966. She was later renamed by her foster parents. \_\_\_\_\_ She was never adopted. The foster family went to America and put her back into an orphanage in Burwood. \_\_\_\_\_ passed away in February 2016.

In 1967 on 26 December 1967 I was born Margaret Anne Cruse. My father is \_\_\_\_\_ I was born in Moruya District Hospital and lived on Wallaga Lake Mission. In my file it is noted that my birth mother was living at this time with my birth father. It was reported that my parents were quite “transient” in their life styles and were “drinking heavily”

I was committed into the care of the Minister on the 21 March 1968, on the complaint of being a neglected child. I was told that I was found in a gutter on Wallaga, naked and malnourished. I was 4 months of age.

I was then placed with my foster family the \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ 1968. My mother consented to my adoption on the \_\_\_\_\_ 1970. An order of adoption was made in the Supreme Court of NSW on \_\_\_\_\_ 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_ was born in 1969 to my mother and father and was committed into the care of the Minister in 1969 and legally adopted by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ 1972.

In 1971 the youngest son was born. He was the last child of my mother and father. He was the only one that was not adopted. The Department had regular contact with my birth parents to help them with \_\_\_\_\_ the youngest son.

In a file note dated \_\_\_\_\_ 1970 reports that my birth mother \_\_\_\_\_ was hoping that my brothers would visit her during their school holidays and was hoping that \_\_\_\_\_ was to be returned to them. Also they were hoping that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were returned into their care. She forgot that she consented to my adoption. She failed to register the birth of the child

Because she was taken at young age herself there was a discrepancy in her spelling of her name, whether it was \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ The registrar General's Department and it has been verified that the mother's correct name is “

”! When she passed away she had always been known as

This is the history of my family that I have been able to source through my adoption file and through talking to relatives.

### Trying to find my family

My partner's nephew went working down south coast of NSW, Moruya and he meet a bloke called . He told him he knew my birth name was . From then on we started talking. In this time I managed to secure a job at Correctional Centre in 2008. I told and he informed me that our brother was in there.

I wasn't until I was in my first year after training at Correctional Centre that I was on visits (2009) and my mother, came to visit . I went out to meet her and said that next time she can come and stay at my place as she was quite frail and was traveling from Canberra. By then I still had not said a word to even though I had seen in in one of the pods.

So the next visit , my brother brought my mother and , my father as well to Wagga Wagga to stay. I asked her questions about her life but she said that there was too much to tell and too little time. But she did say to my friend that she didn't sign any of her children away to be adopted!

Shortly afterwards my mother had a stroke in 2010 and she was put into palliative care home in Dalmeny NSW. I went down to visit her in the home and had lunch with (my brothers) and , my father. It would have been the first time in a very long time that my mother ever had lunch with some many of her children at the one time. I left my details at the home if anything happened.

I received a phone call on the 10 March from the home saying that my mother had another stroke and it was bad. They were trying to get in contact with as I was in Wagga Wagga. Within an hour they rang back informing me that had passed away.

I went down for the funeral and there was only three of her children there, , and I. was not allowed to come as the jail did not allow it. The other children we couldn't find. I was aware the knew but didn't come, , didn't know, doesn't want to know her family. I had a break down after her funeral because of the life I heard she had.

My mother was constantly looking for where she belonged, looking for her parents and walking for miles to find them.

Colonization legislation and the stolen generation have had a devastating impact on the social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Experiences such as relocation, dispossession of land, marginalization, racism, genocide, and displacement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could be included in the causal factors of acute grief and trauma. The areas of need that are seen to be of particular priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include:

- Continued grief and loss in the Aboriginal community
- Living in continual poverty
- Chronic disease
- Low self-esteem and self-worth



- Incarceration
- Premature death
- Overcrowding in the family homes
- Substance use problems

My biological family is affected by all or most of these needs, for example:

My whole family is in continual grief and loss over losing each other. We are all walking around in society lost and trying to find ourselves let alone finding where we belong.

And I have always felt that I do not belong in either world, black or white. I will not be fully accepted, whether people believe that or not it is how we, especially me feel. My brother had being in and out of jail as a result of what happened (the abuse) to him in the home at Tumbarumba which happened to the other brothers also.

We have all being wondering, travelling trying to find where we belong. I have not had children in fear of what I would be like as a mother. My brother has a bad relationship with his children because of the result of being taken away.

My father, who was not taken away, was very affected by my mother leaving me at the hospital when I was 4 months old, that he started drinking heavily with my mother. My mother had been badly abused in Moree from her other children's father that by the time she ended up down south she was a heavy drinker. They both lived in continual poverty and very transient in their life styles and were "drinking heavily"

Because of my mother's heavy drinking she didn't remember signing the consent to my adoption, although it was decided by the court that it was in the best interests of my siblings to have their care order extended until they were aged 16 years.

What is sad that we as siblings will never be that, siblings? We will never get to know each other like that or even see each other as that because I know that I don't see my brothers as my brothers. I know that my eldest brother has got a lot of hurt and grief because of what had happened to him. He never found out who his father was. When my mother died, my brother saw this loss as the only parent he had ever known. He is very angry with his younger brother as he didn't get a head stone with the rest of funeral money. ended up drinking quite heavily after died and he didn't know how to live without her. His grief was so great that I thought for sure he will end up dying at the end of the bottle.

He did end up in hospital as he was not eating but only drinking. Now he looks after our father who goes and gets his kidney dialysis every second day.

There is such low self-esteem from all levels in our family. I know that I have struggled with this all my life and contemplated suicide many times, as I thought I was not good enough to be alive. I think that I will always be looking to belong whether it be my white family or my black family or my friend's family. I watch and listen to my friends talking to their siblings and I don't have that connection. We don't think to ring each other and ask "how you going", like they do. It's not like that and it will never be.

Now I just heard my sister, has passed February 2016 and the trouble her Auntie's are having with her white side of the family, it is very sad. was also an alcoholic. The white father had no respect for wishes to NOT be cremated he did it any way!!! Talking to her Aunties it is so sad, so and I are trying to get the ashes and take her back home to Moree, her father's country. It is a matter of money.

I am trying to put some money aside for my father's funeral when he passes and he is only a pensioner and also trying to save some money to put a headstone on my mother's grave as she can't be just a hole in the ground. So if there is any money to had especially for my mother and the loss of her first family and then all of her children, it would be a God send so we could finally put a tombstone on her grave and set up a funeral fund for my father.

Within this family there are three generations that are effected by the stolen policy. Her parents as they lost her, my mother and her sister, . Also both sets of grandparents of both sides lost their grandchildren, traditionally grandchildren are quite significant to the grandparents. So much history has been lost on both sides, but especially on my mother's side that we will never get back. Then my mother lost her children, my father lost his children, and now my nieces and nephews who have suffered from their parents not really being there for them or abandoning them as well. There is a lot of transgenerational grief and loss here in one family. Imagine how many more families have suffered as mine.

There are also barriers to obtaining records. I cannot obtain my mother's file as I need her birth certificate and I cannot prove that I am her daughter, or I am not the next of kin. I am interested in getting them to know who my family is/was as it is my identity. And I would also like to find out where my mother was born as that is where my tribe/clan is from not Yuin as I have always thought, it goes on where your mother was born as NSW is matriarchal in Indigenous culture.

Also the last name was spelt differently for me. On my adoption certificate is was Because the nurses at the hospital filled in the naming certificates for me as my mother had just left me at the hospital in Nowra. So when it came to looking for my family I thought that the family that I saw were not my family as the spelling was not the same.

I have attached a photo of my mother's grave at Bodalla cemetery. It has been like this since 16 of March 2011. Maybe there could be some funding allocated for such important closure rituals!

Thank you for allowing me to tell my story



