

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

FOR THE INQUIRY INTO REPARATIONS FOR THE STOLEN GENERATION IN NSW 2016

My name is _____ From 1974 to 1987, I lived in various orphanages and group homes in Sydney.

In 1978, I went to a foster home in Temora for a school holiday. The family was a white Anglo saxon family. Instead of being shown love, care and kindness by the foster parents, I was subjected to humiliation and pain. One day, the foster mother decided to tie me up with a piece of rope and tether me to a tree in the back yard like a dog, she left me tied up to this tree for a long time. She had tied the rope around my neck very hard and I found it very hard to breathe properly. I became terrified of these two foster parents.

I managed to escape by stealing the family bike and riding as far away as possible to the nearest neighbour who then called the Temora police.

That foster mother and father should have been charged with abuse and neglect of a foster child under their care and a recommendation from DOCS should have been given stating that those two adults should never be allowed to look after foster children again, but instead nothing was done and those two people have never paid the penalty for their wrongs. It upsets me that I never got justice. Justice was not given to me and I will always be in grief about this.

At a different foster home I was racially vilified on a regular basis by that foster mother who called me terrible names when I was a very young girl. I cannot repeat the terrible names she called me, but it was all to do with my aboriginality.

This foster mother also racially vilified my biological mother on a regular basis. The white foster mother used to tell me that my real mum was a no hoper and that my mum "was nothing but a hopeless drunk" and "my mother was a stinkin' abo". Every time this woman put my real mother down, I cried inside. I thus grew up believing all the terrible things the white foster mother had said about my real mother. I have never forgotten what was said about my real mother.

I was also physically abused by the foster father and the mother. The foster father belted me and swung me round like a rag doll when he punished me and the foster mother stood by and watched everything and encouraged her husband to keep belting me and hitting me. My sister was made to stand by and watch as well. I felt very scared and very frightened and every time he did this, I became even more frightened of him.

I am very glad that finally, the law was changed. Parents are no longer allowed to hit their children any more. It is far better to reason with a child than to physically abuse.

One day the father molested me in the family car. There was only me and him in the car and as we were driving along, suddenly the man reached over and touched my breast and fondled it. Then he leaned over and forced his tongue into my throat. I was only fifteen years old. He made me feel dirty. I was heartbroken. I felt terrified. I felt outrage. I was terrified. Nobody else was there to protect me. Who could I tell??? the foster mother did not know and my older sister did not even know for a long time afterwards. I told nobody about this matter at the time.

One day on my way to Tafe, I was accosted and raped by two men. I felt outraged and scared again but once again nobody was around to help me. My sister was not there with me. I never received any counselling over this matter way back then in 1988. I have since received some counselling about this matter.

The rural city of Griffith has a severe mental health services problem. There is just not enough free counselling services. At the moment, a government psychiatrist visits Griffith twice a month and sometimes a patient has to wait three more months before he/she can get the next appointment. Griffith Base Hospital only has one mental health allocated bed in a population of over 50 000 people. It would also be advantageous to the koori community to see Griffith employ an aboriginal mental health nurse/liason officer on call 24/7.

RECOMMENDATION

I was separated by DOCS from my older sister when I was only seven years old. In hindsight this should never have happened. DOCS should never have separated me and my sister. When I was young I missed out on growing up and sharing my childhood with my sister and my sister never really knew me and she too missed out on growing up and sharing her childhood with me. I used to look up to my older sister and I used to look to her for help, but when we separated I had no kin to grow up with and no sister to look up to. My sister and I do not have a lot of childhood memories to share. It takes too long to build bridges and develop a strong meaningful relationship all over again later on

in life. To know your sister for all of your life is a right and not a privilege and unfortunately I was never given this most basic of rights.

DOCS should never separate aboriginal brothers and sisters. What is left of the family should remain as a family and not re - separated and re-split again.

Growing up in institutions such as group homes and orphanages, never gave me the opportunity to be who I really was. There was nothing to show me that I was aboriginal. I grew up in a white environment looked after by white staff and house parents. There was no aboriginal artwork upon the walls of the homes. There was no aboriginal culture at all to be looked at or listened to. There was no aboriginal education at school about indigenous culture. All of my friends at school were white. The teachers were white. There were no aboriginal role models of the time to aspire to or emulate. I was the only koori girl at school and I felt truly alone in a disillusioned world. Cathy Freeman was not around, nor was Stan Grant or any other popular figures of the time. There was no Koori television or Koori radio I could listen to. Back then there was no Sorry day, no Harmony day and no Naidoc week. I was not encouraged to be proud of my aboriginality.

RECOMMENDATION

DOCS should encourage all aboriginal children and foster parents under their care, to be involved in community and national organisations such as Naidoc week, Harmony Day and other aboriginal based community activities and services.

Only once was I allowed to visit my biological koori family in Condobolin. I was never encouraged nor taken to see my family. I have not seen my real father since 1974. DOCS should have taken me to visit my dad. I never had regular contact with any of my extended family such as sister, brother, grandmother, mother, aunties, uncles and cousins. To this day I still do not know the other half of my relatives and they in turn do not know me.

RECOMMENDATION

Back then in the 1970s DOCS made the first crucial mistake by allowing the white foster parents a say in this matter. The foster parents were asked if they would allow visits to the biological family between the child and the family. IN 1974, THE FOSTER FAMILY SAID "NO". This meant I was therefore not allowed to visit my real family. DOCS should have overridden this decision and allowed regular contact with my relatives.

Aboriginal children should never lose contact with their biological family and cousins and extended family. There has been too much taken away from us people already. We all need to hear the stories passed down through the generations from old people. My biological grandmother never had the chance to tell me stories from the past.

OPINION

Some of the attitudes and mindset of white Australia from the 1940s, 1950s, 60s and 70s regarding black Australia still prevail today in the current generations of today. Attitudes and mindsets get passed down from generation to generation to the children and grandchildren and so for this reason, it is not a good idea for aboriginal children to be put with white or non-aboriginal families.

ALL OF THE ABOVE WRITTEN AND TYPED BY MY SISTER,

WITH MY PERMISSION.

Thankyou.