

**Submission
No 83**

**INQUIRY INTO HIGH LEVEL OF FIRST NATIONS
PEOPLE IN CUSTODY AND OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW OF
DEATHS IN CUSTODY**

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Date Received: 24 August 2020

As a proud Aboriginal woman of the Eora nation in Sydney, it would be deemed “surprising” if I didn’t know it was not related to someone in prison.

This is a one way path to denigrating a entire group of people, of telling them that because of their skin and who they are - that they are no good.

If you are told often enough, and for long enough, that you don’t matter, that you provide no value to society - then you begin to believe it. We are all, after all social beings by nature, who indeed seek out the love, approval and compassion of others.

No one, not of any race or creed is born bad. It is society that teaches us these things.

The consistent over representation and mistreatment of those people in our prison system is just one way that these notions are reinforced. The neglect, and the blatant ignoring of the 1990s royal commission findings into Aboriginal deaths in custody is another. And yet another is the single fact that Don Dale, ordered closed for a multitude of reasons is still open and still negatively shaping the younger of our generation.

Kindness, acceptance and rehabilitation is what this system and country needs. But I’m unsure I will ever see such a thing change in my lifetime.

For this my heart breaks for my people and my children.

I am truly ashamed to call myself Australian.

Sincerely

Kate