

THE STOLEN GENERATIONS: A DOCUMENTARY COLLECTION

This documentary collection was assembled before the debate at the Melbourne Writers' Festival on September 3 2006 on the question of the stolen generations.

For several years Andrew Bolt has been informing his readers in the Melbourne *Herald Sun* that the claim that between 1900 and 1970 thousands of mixed descent aboriginal children were removed from their mothers, families and communities involuntarily and without justifiable cause for racist reasons is an un-Australian, left-wing myth.

This collection is based on a selection of documents in government archives and some representative testimonies from those who experienced the removals directly. Its purpose is to allow those attending the debate to assess Bolt's claim.

Robert Manne, September 3 2006

CONTENTS:

A. How Many Separations?	1
How Many were Separated from Natural Family, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994.....	2
B. Queensland.....	6
Extracts from Dr W E Roth’s “Progress Reports” (Aboriginal Protector, North Queensland)	7
Case of Walter.....	14
(i) Dr Walter E Roth, Northern Protector of Aboriginals, Queensland, to D. Graham, Protector, Townsville, February 17, 1903.....	14
(ii) Dr Walter E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, Queensland to Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, June 8 1903	15
(iii) William Craig, Cardwell, to Home Secretary, Brisbane, August 18 1903..	16
(iv) M. Matthews, Cardwell to Dr. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, November 27, 1903.....	17
(v) William Craig, Cardwell, to Home Secretary, Queensland Government, 18 July 1904.....	18
(vi) William Craig, Cardwell, to Chief Inspector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 6th September, 1904.	21
From Annual Report to the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Dr Walter E. Roth, 1905.....	24
The Problem of the Half-Caste	29
(i) Gall Memorandum	29
(ii) Letter to W J Gall.....	33
From Ruth Hegarty, Is That You Ruthie, University of Queensland Press, 1999...	35
C. Northern Territory	43
Northern Territory Removals Policy and Practice.....	44
(i) Letter from S J Mitchell	44
(ii) 1918 Ordinance	46
(iii) Extract of letter from Dr Cecil Cook, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Northern Territory, to Rev. W. Morley, April 28, 1931	48
(iv) From N T Administrator, Telegram to Department of Interior, Canberra, 26 October 1932.....	50
(v) Common Law Office to Mr S Irvine, Mail Contractor, Newcastle Waters, 14 February 1933.....	51
(vi) Extract of letter from Aborigines’ Friends Association, Adelaide	53
* Lettergram from J. A. Carrodus, May 18, 1933.....	55
* Deputy Administrator of the Northern Territory, V. G. Carrington, to the Secretary, Department of the Interior, Canberra, 22 May 1933	56
(vii) From a correspondent in the Territory, 23 July 1933	57
(viii) Letter to J. A. Perkins, Minister of Interior, from Mrs Griffiths, Cherry Cot, Croydon, Victoria, 20 July 1934.....	59
(ix) Report on the Northern Territory by J. A. Carrodus	61
Breeding Out the Colour	64
(i) Letter from C. E. Cook.....	64
(ii) Memorandum from J. A. Carrodus	66
(iii) Memorandum from J. A. Carrodus	67

His Honour the Administrator, Northern Territory, Memorandum, January 4, 1950	69
From Bob Randall, Songman, ABC Books (2003)	73
From John Moriarty, Saltwater Fella, Viking, 2000.....	80
D. Western Australia	84
Western Australian Removals Policy and Practice.....	85
(i) James Isdell, Travelling Protector, Kimberleys, to Charles F. Gale, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Western Australia, 1909.....	85
(ii) Chief Protector of Aborigines, Western Australia, Charles F. Gale, to the Commissioner of Police, May 10 1909.....	86
(iii) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A. O. Neville, to Secretary, Department of Aborigines and Fisheries, 27 June 1916.	87
(iv) Commissioner of Police to Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, May 16 1919.	88
(v) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, to the Commissioner of Police, May 22 1919.	88
(vi) Inspector Drewry, District Police Office, Broome, to Officer in Charge of Police, Derby, 23 July 1919.....	89
(vii) Inspector O. Drewry, Derby, to the Commissioner of Police, Perth, August 14 1919.....	89
* R. Connell, Commissioner of Police, to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, A. O. Neville, September 26 1919.....	90
* Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, to R. Connell, Commissioner of Police, October 9 1919.	90
(viii) Constable John McClay to Sergeant Crowe, Derby (W.A.), December 26 1919.....	91
(ix) Sergeant Crowe to Inspector Drewry, December 27, 1919.	92
(x) Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines to The Superintendent, Moore River Native Settlement, Mogumber, February 25 1920.....	92
(xi) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, to the Commissioner of Police, July 14 1921.....	93
(xii) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O.Neville, to the Commissioner of Police, December 13 1922.	94
Speech to the Legislative Assembly, WA, 1934.....	95
J. D. Moseley, Royal Commissioner into Aborigines in Western Australia to His Excellency the Honourable Sir James Mitchell, K.C.M.G., Lieutenant-Governor in and over the State of Western Australia and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia, April 19, 1934.....	102
Statement by Mrs Mary Bennett to the Moseley Royal Commission, 19 March 1934.....	105
From speech delivered by A. O. Neville, the Western Australian Administrator, to the Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Administrators, held in Canberra in April 1937.	110
From Margaret Morgan, Mt. Margaret: A Drop in a Bucket, Murundoo, 1986... 114	
From Doris Pilkington, Rabbit Proof Fence, University of Queensland Press, 1996	123
E. South Australia.....	134
South Australian Removals Policy and Practice.....	135
(i) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, November 30 1910.....	135

(ii) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, August 7 1911.....	137
(iii) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, May 13 1913.....	138
(iv) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, June 27 1915.....	138
The Case of Willie and Paddy Robinson.....	140
(i) A. S. Taylor, Renmark, to W. G. South Esq, Protector of Aborigines, Adelaide, September 23 1910.....	140
(ii) W. G. South, Protector of Aborigines, Adelaide, to A. S, Taylor, Renmark, October 4 1910.....	142
(iii) Mrs W Robinson to Mr W South Esq, Protector of Aborigines, Renmark, October 14, 1910.....	142
The Case of Priscilla and Manuel.....	144
(i) J. B. Steer, Superintendent, Point Macleay Station, to Chief Protector of Aborigines, Adelaide, March 20 1924.....	144
(ii) Chief Protector of Aborigines to J. B. Steer, Superintendent, Point Macleay Station, April 10 1924.....	144
(iii) J. B. Steer, Superintendent, Point McLeay Station to Chief Protector of Aborigines, April 11 1924.....	145
(iv) C. E. Taplin, Honorary Protector of Aborigines to Chief Protector of Aborigines, Flinders Street, Adelaide, April 21 1924.....	146
From Doris Kartinyeri, Kick The Tin, Spinifex, 2000.....	149
F. New South Wales.....	154
New South Wales Removals Policy and Practice.....	155
(i) From Report to the NSW Board for Protection of Aborigines, 1907.....	155
(ii) From Report of the NSW Board for Protection of Aborigines, 1911.....	155
Lang Dean, Letter to the Editor, The Age, 1997.....	158
From Margaret Tucker, If Everyone Cared, Ure Smith, 1977.....	160
From Evelyn Crawford, Over My Tracks, Penguin Books, 1993. (Set in Brewarrina, New South Wales. The time is late 1930s).....	166
From Donna Meehan, It is no secret: the story of a stolen child, Random House, Australia, 2000.....	172

A. How Many Separations?

How Many were Separated from Natural Family, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994

(1)

ALL PERSONS TAKEN AWAY FROM NATURAL FAMILY BY AGE
AUSTRALIA, 1994

<i>Whether taken away from natural family</i>	<i>0-14</i>	<i>15-24</i>	<i>25-44</i>	<i>45 and over</i>	<i>Total</i>
			per cent		
Taken away	1.6	4.6	10.1	10.7	5.7
Not taken away	98.0	94.1	87.0	87.2	93.0
No answer	0.5	1.3	2.0	2.1	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	118.6	62.5	85.1	37.1	303.3

(2)

ALL PERSONS WHETHER TAKEN AWAY FROM NATURAL FAMILY BY AGE
NORTHERN TERRITORY, 1994

<i>Whether taken away from natural family</i>	<i>0-14</i>	<i>15-24</i>	<i>25-44</i>	<i>45 and over</i>	<i>Total</i>
			per cent		
Taken away	1.6	3.0	5.7	9.6	4.0
Not taken away	98.0	95.4	93.4	89.2	95.1
No answer	0.4	1.6	0.9	1.2	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	17.6	9.6	13.2	5.6	46.0

(3)

ALL PERSONS WHETHER TAKEN AWAY FROM NATURAL FAMILY BY AGE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1994

<i>Whether taken away from natural family</i>	<i>0-14</i>	<i>15-24</i>	<i>25-44</i>	<i>45 and over</i>	<i>Total</i>
			per cent		
Taken away	1.6	6.6	16.4	17.8	8.6
Not taken away	98.2	92.5	82.8	80.2	90.7
No answer	0.2	0.9	0.8	2.0	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	19.0	9.5	13.1	5.7	47.3

(4)

ALL PERSONS WHETHER TAKEN AWAY FROM NATURAL FAMILY BY AGE
VICTORIA, 1994

<i>Whether taken away from natural family</i>	<i>0-24</i>	<i>25-44</i>	<i>45 and over</i>	<i>Total</i>
			per cent	
Taken away	4.5	13.3	3.3	7.0
Not taken away	92.3	83.0	96.7	90.0
No answer	3.2	3.7	0.0	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	11.2	5.7	2.3	19.2

(7)

ALL PERSONS WHETHER TAKEN AWAY FROM NATURAL FAMILY BY AGE
NEW SOUTH WALES, 1994

<i>Whether taken away from natural family</i>	<i>0-14</i>	<i>15-24</i>	<i>25-44</i>	<i>45 and over</i>	<i>Total</i>
			per cent		
Taken away	1.2	3.9	8.7	6.9	4.6
Not taken away	98.6	94.7	87.0	89.4	93.4
No answer	0.2	1.4	4.2	3.7	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	31.7	16.2	22.5	10.1	80.5

B. Queensland

Extracts from Dr W E Roth's "Progress Reports" (Aboriginal Protector, North Queensland)

(i) October 1900

Removals: the following removals of half-caste children to Mission Stations have been authorised.

- (1) Several young children (according to Sub-Inspector Garraway's return of 31st August 1900) from the Cook District.
- (2) Nellie, an aboriginal-Kanaka child, between 11 and 12 years of age, from the Cardwell Scrubs.
- (3) Willie Ah Dack, an aboriginal-chinese child, about 3 years of age, from the Mossman.

I have suggested the proclamation of regulations for carrying out the necessary removals of aboriginals from one district to another.

(ii) November 1900

Half-caste Children etc.

I have drawn up a short report (12.11.00) on the general principles which are guiding me in dealing with the question of removing any such to the different Mission Stations and Reformatories. Some proposed Regulations under the Aboriginals Act have also been suggested (30.11.00) for the consideration of the Minister.

In the course of a Report furnished me by Mr. Wells, the P.M. at Burketown, relative to the half-caste girl with the Bradleys – and in continuation of his wire, the substance of which I forwarded you – he says “It is, I think, to be regretted that the parents of these half-castes cannot be traced and made to support them, instead of their being a tax on the state. If the fathers of these half-caste knew that they would be called upon to support their progeny, they would, I think, seek women of their own colour to gratify their sexual cravings, and if children were born, they would be white and not the pie-bald specimens we meet roaming about the country at present.”

(iii) March 1901

CHILDREN: AB AND H-CASTE. I have referred to the action of Rev. Britten, a N.S.W. clergyman having removed a native child from Geraldton out of the colony, and asked what action (if any) can be taken to get the boy back again. Instructions have been given for the removal to an orphanage of a little quadroon boy (the 4-year old son of a H.C. woman by a white man) originally sent by the Police from Ayr to Yarrabah where he at present is. Owing to the death of Underwood, an old beche-de-mer hand, his aboriginal paramour with her 4 H.C. children, and 3 full-blooded infants were stranded in Cooktown -: 7 youngsters were all brought up before the local Bench under the Reformatories Act and forwarded to Yarrabah. I cannot help giving expression to the opinion that this Yarrabah Aboriginal Reformatory is a real God-send to the many little waifs and strays that are continually being brought under notice. Information having reached me that there is an increase in the influx of small children from outside districts and from up the coast-line, into Cooktown for employment with Europeans and aliens, I have taken measures to stop the practice, and instructed the local Protector accordingly.

(iv) July 1901

Children. “Topsy”, on the Minister’s instructions, has been sent from Grenada (via Cloncurry) to Yarrabah: she is a h.c. about 13 years of age. I took the opportunity of sending with her another little h.c. girl, “Edie”, about 9 or 10 years of age whom I found wandering in the Winton camp: it would seem that application had been made about this child to Brisbane by Sub-Inspector Gerahty a twelvemonth ago, but no reply had been received. A half-caste boy “Arthur” found with a Cingalee on the Mossman has been brought before the local Bench as a neglected child, and sent to the Cairns Reformatory.

(v) September 1901

Women and children. 6 adult females together with 17 half-caste (mostly Kanaka) children have been forwarded to the Yarrabah Mission Station. To the same place have also been sent 7 half-caste young girls (including Clarke’s and Hogarth’s) from Cloncurry. The Minister has also authorised the removal to Mapoon of Lucy a half-caste about 12 years of age running wild in the Charleston camp.

(vi) March 1902

Sickness... Some interesting reports have come in from Rev. E. Gribble with regard to the prevalence of the earth-eating disease amongst certain of the children brought from particular districts: he has been instructed as how best to cope with the evil, and suggestions have been offered him with regard to proper disposal of the sewage, one of the main agencies by which the worm (anchylostoma) is supposed to be carried. ...

Reformatories etc. The Home Secretary has instructed the removal of the following:-

- (1) “Tommy”, half-caste female, apparently about sixteen years of age, who has been travelling over the country, dressed as a boy, in the company of a stockman, William John Smith, for eight years past. In her evidence before the Police Court, where Smith was charged for harbouring, she admitted camping at night with defendant. (Yarrabah).
- (2) Half-caste girl about ten years of age amongst the McIvor blacks. The authorities at Cape Bedford Mission wrote concerning her as follows:- “Her relations do not want to leave her here, but it is a pity to see her grow up in a camp. Could you not have her removed to Yarrabah? I think it would be good for her if she could be taken away soon. Her mother’s husband is Matji, the rain-maker amongst the McIvor blacks”. (Yarrabah).
- (3) Half-caste “Lily” about five years of age, in good health and condition, living with her mother in the McKinlay camp. “She is fairly well looked after: but of late is inclined to visit the Chinese camps”. (Yarrabah).
- (4) Half-caste “Flora” about eight years of age. Given to Mr. Walsh, Telegraph Master, Donor’s Hill, about twelve months ago by Murdock of Neumayer Station. She has lately become “unmanageable” by her employers. (Mapoon).

The death of “Larry” has been reported from Yarrabah Reformatory. This child was sentenced in Cooktown in 1900, when only 13 years of age, after three convictions for larceny. He died apparently from Earth-eating.

(vii) April 1902

REFORMATORIES &c. The Home Secretary has authorised the following:-

- (1) Lucy, h.c. 11 years of age has been living with the Etheridge blacks up to a month or two ago, when a Mrs Schaffert of Georgetown applied for permission to employ her. The child was then stolen by the blacks, and so got into the hands of the Police (Mapoon).
- (2) Rosie Murray h.c. from Maytown, charged with being a neglected child, was sentenced to Yarrabah Reformatory for seven years.

(viii) October 1902

Half-caste and other children. The h.c. "Dora", whose removal from C. Wallace, McIvor R., had been authorised by the Minister, has been brought by the blacks to the Cape Bedford Mission Station where she will now remain. A h.c. boy "Sammy" whose mother "Alice" died at Sweers Island last year has been sent to Mapoon. Rev. E. R. Gribble has drawn my attention to, and wishes to consult with me on, the numerous waifs and strays in the Chinese infested districts around Redlynche and Kuranda.

(ix) June 1903

H.C. and other Children: Unprotected women:-

Charlie, a bright intelligent h.c. lad, living with Coates in the Cooktown 8-mile district, is being sent to Yarrabah on the Minister's authority. ...

Mission Stations and Reformatories:- Owing to want of funds, Yarrabah is barely able to take any more inmates at present; being proclaimed a Reformatory, I have suggested that perhaps some special grant could be given to it by the Department controlling such institutions.

(x) March 1904

The Taroom police have been instructed to see that a poor young half-caste woman, Lucy Holton, lately confined, goes to Hornett Bank Station as soon as possible, and that if Quigley (who is believed to have wronged her) be found employing or harbouring her, he be prosecuted. Little Arthur from Yaamba has been sent to Deebing Creek. Sarah Dodd and her children, on the Minister's orders, have been returned to Redcliffe: her child Daisy Dodd, under the Home Secretary's order, has been released from restraint as a reformatory child. Half-caste Alice lately with Mrs. Patching of Cooktown, whose agreement shortly expires, will be sent to Yarrabah. The Minister has approved of several children in the Cooktown and Laura Districts, being charged as neglected children under the Reformatory Act.

(xi) April 1904

- (a) Deebing Creek. This reserve has been reproclaimed and Mr. Irvin gazetted Superintendent. Three quadron children are being sent to Westbrook Reformatory (Bertie Bundi) and to the Orphanage (the two Walsh boys): it was not considered desirable that they should be associating any longer with aboriginals.
- (b) Barambah. Has also been reproclaimed: Mr. Thompson is now gazetted Superintendent. Complaint was received from Messrs. Moore Bros re the alleged assault committed by him on a half-caste (John Hazel) in their employ, who had come to the Settlement and taken a little boy away.

(xii) July 1904

CHILDREN AND UNPROTECTED WOMEN: 15 h.c. women and children (Polly, Alice etc.) were committed at Roma to Deebing Creek Reformatory. Enquiries are being made relative to another batch of h.c. women and children loafing around Taroom. Action is being postponed in the case of h.c. Cissie Collins and her illegitimate children at Miriam Vale, until the reputed father comes to see me. "Billy" was sentenced at Normanton (23.6.4) to the Mapoon Reformatory as a neglected child.

(xiii) August 1904

CHILDREN AND UNPROTECTED WOMEN. Arrangements have been made by the father of 3 children of Cissy Collins for the children to be admitted to the Anglican Home at Nundah. Application for return of h.c. Walter (Cardwell) to his mother was declined, the boy being under lawful detention at Yarrabah, where it was suggested that the mother might go. Minnie, h.c., (lately with Mrs. Ryan, has been sent to Mapoon. Cissy (h.c.) from Cooktown has been sent to Yarrabah. Half-caste Charlie (Wrotham Park) has been committed to Yarrabah for 7 years, and Dinah and h.c. Alex (Wrotham Park) have also been sent to Yarrabah. Half-castes Maud, Matilda and Rose (Willams family – Cooyar) have been committed to Deebing Creek, and Minnie (same family) accompanied them at her own request. Half-caste George (Thursday Island – 15.7.4) was committed to Mapoon as a neglected child.

Case of Walter

(i) Dr Walter E Roth, Northern Protector of Aboriginals, Queensland, to D. Graham, Protector, Townsville, February 17, 1903.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that my attention has been drawn to the following h-c children roaming about the blacks' camps in the neighbourhood of Cardwell, and that I would be very grateful by your kindly causing enquiries to be made concerning them.

	Child's name	Aged about	Mother's name
(1)	Walter Peter	14 years	Nellie Bliss
(2)	Fred	5 "	"
(3)	Dorothy	12 mos	Minnie
(4)	Dickie	2 ½ years	Lizzie
(5)	Eileen	4 "	Polly
(6)	Martin	4 "	"

(2) (4) (5) (6) are reputed to be the progeny of a man now resident in Cardwell – kindly cause cautious enquiry to be made into this.

(3) is said to be the child of a man now resident on the Murray.

When you receive the reports from the local police will you kindly place on record any recommendations you may care to make. For instance it seems to me a great pity to see the lad “Walter Peter” loafing around the camp instead of learning a trade at the Industrial School.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obed. servant

Walter E Roth, N.P.A.

(ii) Dr Walter E. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, Queensland to Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, June 8 1903

Half-caste Children in Cardwell District

Sir,

With regard to the attached correspondence I have the honour to recommend that – owing to the extreme youth of the other children, and the difficulties under which the Yarrabah Reformatory is at present labouring – action be taken in the cases of “Walter” and “Eleanor” only.

I would accordingly suggest that

(1) “Walter” be brought up under the Industrial Schools Act of 1865, Sect 6, Subsect 7, being a “child born of an aboriginal or half-caste mother”.

(2) “Eleanor” be put under agreement and wage to her alleged father, unless the latter of his own free will comes to make a statement on oath that he is the father. Provided

this be done, and it should ultimately become desirable to maintain the girl at the cost of the State, he could be made to contribute to its support (under Sect. 19 of the 1901 Act).

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant, Walter E. Roth

(iii) William Craig, Cardwell, to Home Secretary, Brisbane, August 18 1903.

Re the deportation of the half caste boy Walter the mother Nelly Bliss has begged me to write to you on her behalf and it is only in the interests of the unfortunates who cannot afford counsel that I have ventured to do so: therefore I will try to state her case as she herself would do so if she could express herself in English, or as her counsel would if she had the means to employ one. First—it is an unanswerable and incontestable fact that aboriginals universally treat all children half caste or full blooded or white children they come in contact with or nurse with universal kindness, and the mother and her aboriginal husband are endeared to the half caste child equally as to the full blooded, briefly because it is the child of the mother and the family group, therefore it is an act of impossibility to prove ill-treatment in this case or in any similar case as their children are always well fed if they have food, and the beating of children is unknown...Secondly Nellie Bliss reared this child as her ancestors reared children for untold centuries (and under those conditions she can scarcely be charged with neglect) to comfort and support her in her old age, and now after all the twelve years of trouble, carrying him for miles herself and husband, just when he is able to support himself and her, and she is old and sickly she is to be deprived of him and suffer the mental agony of separation, evidently forever..

I have the honour to be Sir, W. Craig

(iv) M. Matthews, Cardwell to Dr. Roth, Northern Protector of Aborigines, November 27, 1903.

Sir,

I would like to draw your attention to the way which “Walter” was kidnapped from here last Monday night – and sent away to Cairns to the Missionary Station. I presume the parents were informed by the police that he was to be let go on Tuesday morning but by that time he was well on his way to Cairns. He was coaxed to the steamer by telling him that the Inspector was on board and wanted to see him and he could go to his parents again on Tuesday morning. As I have known him since he was born, I know he had never been neglected in any way, was always well clothed and always had plenty to eat and now that he is over fifteen years of age and can earn “his own living” he is disgracefully taken away from his parents by the police.

His mother is crying after him and partly blames me for taking him to the boat.

If other police left the blacks alone and looked after some of the neglected “whites” it would be much more to their credit as you know yourself the “blacks” here are not neglected and I consider it is about time it was put a stop to; even if Walter is a half-caste why should he be kidnapped away from his parents.

I would kindly ask you to give me a reply to this so as to know if there is any chance of his coming back to his parents.

I think it is one of the most disgraceful things that I have ever seen that the boy should be decoyed away from his parents in such a manner.

Trusting for a favourable reply,

I remain, Yours faithfully

(v) William Craig, Cardwell, to Home Secretary, Queensland Government, 18 July 1904

Sir,

This morning Nelly Bliss the mother of the half caste boy Walter sought and addressed me as follows “Master you write in letter longa Govt. and tell im me too much cross (sorrowful) me cry all day longa my boy, you tell him quick fellow send im back longa me, me too much poor fellow”. After my former telegrams and letter having no effect with the Govt. I had determined to give up trying to get her wrongs righted, but the sight of this helpless old gin with tears in her eyes on the one side, pleading for her child, and the powerful Qld. Govt. or its officials, acting the part of a kidnapper of children on the other, has induced me to take my pen up again on her behalf, although to do so may cause my pecuniary loss.

When this boy was seized in the first instance and put into a cell, he would probably have died, if kept there, as after two days continuous crying he was in hysterical and high fever and the police asked me to do something for him as I have some knowledge of medicine. I did so and induced the sergeant to allow his mother to stay in the cell with him, which the poor creature was only too glad to do, and her nursing brought him round. I have never been in a slave country outside Queensland, but I have read books about them and I never saw described such a heart-rending picture as I witnessed then. It was then I sent the telegram to the Home Secretary, on the day that two J.P.s were to try the case. I then asked these gentlemen to adjourn the case

until I got a reply to the wire, but they seemed to think that the Home Sec. would not interfere as the Protector had instituted the proceedings; and they proceeded with the case; I asked them to let me speak on behalf of the mother who was not admitted to the Court, but was crying on the road outside, which they did, but said they were powerless to dismiss the case, as the Protector had drawn their attention to a clause in the Statutes which stated "that every aboriginal child was a neglected child". They then sentenced him to two years to Westbrook, which was afterwards altered to Yarrabah. Previous to this I had begged the sergeant on the mother's behalf to try and get the P.M. at Ingham to sit, but it appears this official could not attend. A telegram was received by the Police to act as they thought best in the matter and not to deport the boy, but to keep him about, they asked me there to use my influence with the boy, and his relations, not to let him run-away, and they would give him his liberty, and that it was only a matter of form and he would never be sent away. I did this and induced his father to bring him back, after he had taken him to the mountains saying "the Government too much gammon, too much tell im lie, he all day want to steal im blackfellow piccaninny". I must now say I consider myself one of the meanest men on Earth for doing such a thing, and that the old blackfellow knew the character of Govt. officials better than I did. The final climax of the kidnapping would make the father of lies himself blank at the deceit used to accomplish it. Dr. Roth called in in his Yacht, then a week or so afterwards I was told by the police that a lettergram had come up saying they were to let Walter go back to his mother, and relations, and himself, that the sergeant wanted him to work about the place for a week. I have met some liars in my time but I never expected such duplicity from the powerful Qld. Government in dealing with a heart-broken sick old gin. His mother was not allowed to bid him farewell, and I hope I will be struck by lightning if I am ever placed in such

a position again. Like a scoundrel I had told this old gin her boy was free, and raised her hopes to the highest, she was to have her boy again in a few days, and now he was sneaked away in a manner that would do credit to an Arab Slaver. The little fellow was being taken to a Mission Station, and he was decoyed on to the Steamer by foul lies, that a fellow Govt. master wanted to see him on the Steamer, by so-called Christian man, in the pay of a Christian Govt. and then he could go altogether long a Mother, and when he found out the deceit, the black trooper had to hold him fast, as he attempted to jump into the sea to chance alligators and sharks in a long swim rather than the mercy of the Qld. Govt., and he will be told at the Mission Station that it is a sin to tell lies – and what is this Yarrabah mixture of Mission and Prison, in unholy alliance anyhow? I have received information from an escapee from there (your protection for who I pray) who is hiding in the scrub like a hunted bushranger, trying to make back to his country. He states house and blankets look first rate, but tucker no good. That the blacks are always in a state of chronic starvation, that their food is corn which they have to grind up themselves, this is provided by the Missionaries from the sale of all the big fish they catch. They never have much and there is no game there, that all day blackfellow hungry and want to run away, but they make for Cairns and are brought back. That white men watch them all night and day. He states that Walter stole a bit of bread he was that hungry, and they punished and locked him up in solitary confinement, and it was to get treatment like this that the Qld Govt. stole him from his mother and relations. He states that he himself nearly perished from starvation in making his escape, as he was several days without food, and can anyone tell how many do perish in their dash for liberty from such a place? If this same little boy runs away and perishes in the attempt to get to his mother, who will be responsible for his death? I would ask you if this mixture of Mission and Prison, is

not purely an Inquisition, and if Dr. Roth in his mistaken zeal, is not abusing the powers of the Aboriginal Protection Act in furthering its end. And that you will inquire and ascertain if Dr. Roth did not privately and surreptitiously ask the police to report on this case in a manner that would be inappropriate to the mother, and further his own ends whatever they may be. There is one more point I may draw your attention to and that is, that this boy can be found to be fifteen years of age, the age limit to which I understand he can be kept in an industrial school. Trusting you will consider formally the mother's prayer to return her boy to her as soon as possible, as she is utterly dependent on your mercy.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obdt. Servt.

W. Craig.

PS Can I assure the escapee that he may proceed to his country without fear of being taken back to Yarrabah against his will. W.C.

(vi) William Craig, Cardwell, to Chief Inspector of Aboriginals, Brisbane, 6th September, 1904.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 8th August last, in reply thereto I have the honor to inform you that I am sorry that the Hon. the Home Secretary should have thought fit to have forwarded the mother's prayer for mercy to you, the lamb does not expect mercy from the wolf. I am well aware of the legal sliming (?) resorted to to cover the act, but all the sophistry you can bring to bear

upon it, cannot alter it from what it is viz. a barefaced case of kidnapping, dare you assert that under English law you have a better right to this boy than the mother who reared and fed him well through the troubles of infancy up to fourteen years of age, you who never gave him a meal and have induced the Government to deprive him and his relations of the Kings bounty of blankets which they were pledged to maintain when they took over representative Government and were appointed to protect the blacks, and yet the mother was not protected by you, and as far as she is concerned you are just the ordinary kidnapper that she has been hiding and protecting her boy from for years, only you are rather wise, as you wrap it in an appearance of legality and send him to what is practically a jail without proper supervision – she is an aboriginal and requires protection in the sacred right as a mother, yet you instruct a prosecution on a clause of the Statutes that you wrote (??) and you provide no defender, nor is she allowed to make a defence or provided with the means of doing so, you appear to forget that the Act you are administering is a Protection Act and cannot be run on the lines and sophistical arguments of the Slaver... If this is your and the Government's view of how the Act should be administered it would be well for the Govt. to relieve the taxpayers of the expenses of your office, and sell or assign the aboriginals straight out either to its own citizens or a foreign country, in the latter case there is money in it, and the aboriginals in many cases would be far better off and certainly could not be worse off then they are, when forcibly deported to your unholy combination of mission, prison and chronic starvation, with death hanging over them, if their divine and inherited love of home and liberty should impel them in spite of consequences to escape therefrom. If you are serious when you invite the mother to follow the son such a cold blooded request can only be compared to the effrontery of the Alligator who after seizing the calf would very much like the cow to follow.

As for your remarks about the escapee they are thoroughly in keeping with your whole actions towards the Aborigines, and to round it off properly, a pack of bloodhounds would apparently be an acquisition of a desirable nature to the Aboriginal Dept.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obdt. servt. W Craig.

*From Annual Report to the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Dr Walter E. Roth,
1905*

THE PRESENT POSITION OF HALF-CASTES AND QUADROONS

Since my appointment as Chief Protector, when I first came to have better opportunities of acquainting my self with the conditions of life existing amongst half-castes in the Southern part of the State – conditions which I regret do not compare favourably with the North – I have become more and more convinced that: (a) the administrative legislation dealing with these people is inadequate; (b) the social ostracism to which they are subject is tending to the development of a very undesirable element in the community; (c) the rearing of half-caste children amongst aboriginal children is a mistake, and tends to retrogression rather than to progress, and that, consequently (d) a valuable asset is being lost to the State. ...

A half-caste under sixteen, whether male or female is legally a “neglected” child, and as such can be sentenced to an industrial school (sec.6, subsec. 7, of the “*Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act of 1865*”), most of the aboriginal missions being now so proclaimed. After sixteen years of age, unless he or she is habitually living or associating with aboriginals, the half-caste cannot be removed to a reserve under the order of the Minister.

Acting under these powers, at least 126 half-caste nomads under sixteen years of age – 45 boys and 81 girls – have been brought under the controlling influences of the Northern missions during the quinquennium ending June, 1905. Another 41 half-caste children – 13 boys and 23 girls – have been similarly dealt with in the Southern districts during the eighteen months immediately preceding the same date. The

Aboriginals Department has, so far, borne the cost of removing these waifs and strays from the degradation of camp life, and in the case of reformatory children, paid from 2s. 6d. to 5s. 10d. each weekly for their keep. The degradation referred to is their ultimate development into prostitutes and stock thieves. Through the action of the churches in allowing their missions to be proclaimed reformatories, the Executive has been saved a very large expenditure and responsibility. Again, on their own initiative, the missionaries have themselves collected numbers of half-caste children. ...

There does not appear to be any marked tendency for the half-castes on the Northern missions to return to centres of European civilisation: their ignorance of the outside world, their almost complete isolation from the whites, the comparatively large areas comprising the reserves over which they have a free run, their training for settled agricultural work, and a school education of purposely not too high a standard, are all of them factors which are concurrently bringing about this desirable state of affairs. So far, they are apparently content to live, marry and die there; their life is simple, happy, useful, and God-fearing: they marry amongst themselves and with the full-bloods, though I understand that the latter unions are not encouraged. ...

Each year we have cases reported of young half-caste girls being seduced by Europeans, but no corroborative evidence forthcoming to warrant taking further action. Once fallen, and unable consequently to obtain regular employment, she refuses, as a rule, to consort with full-bloods in the camp, and is thus forced into prostitution. The police cannot deal with her, as she is legally not a "vagrant", and so, like a pariah, she is to be pitied and not blamed. It might be just as well to mention here that all the labour, anxiety, and expenditure entailed on looking after these half-castes and quadroon girls is entirely a work of supererogation on the part of the

Aboriginal Department. This picture of the life-history of these half-caste women (other than those sinking direct into the scum of camp life) has been drawn from official records during the past five years.

It appears to me a matter of urgency that more stringent measures should be insisted on with a view to raising the social status of the half-caste children (both male and female) and with this object in view I can recognise no better plan than that, *in the future*, all such infants taken from the camps should be brought up as white children, and not in the aboriginal mission reformatories as black ones. Legislation should be on the lines of raising, and not of lowering, their positions: and especially so, with a view of preventing the inbreeding of half-castes with full-bloods. What should be aimed at is the opportunity of getting half-castes to marry either half-castes or Europeans. ...

I am well aware that the Aboriginal Department is responsible for the admission of a large proportion of these children into the aboriginal missions, &c, but had I not taken action in the matter in raising them to at least one step above ordinary camp life, apparently no one else would have. Surely there must be remissness somewhere, when cases like that at St. George come under notice, where it was reported last May that there were 10 half-caste children (7 boys and 3 girls) varying from seven to fourteen years of age, in the local camp: these, like others, have since been sent to an aboriginal mission reformatory. A still more disgraceful state of affairs is reported from Beaudesert, where 38 half-caste children under sixteen are to be found in the surrounding camps. I am helpless to remedy their condition. ...

Application has been made to the same department in vain for the admission into some orphanage of four quadroons (Mavis Embry, Clara and Ruby Conlan, Ruby

Law), at the Barambah Aboriginal Settlement, and some others at the Deebing Creek Mission: these quadroons most certainly should not be brought up as black children. The Inspector of Orphanages wrote (18th July, 1903) that “the question opened up by their admission is too wide a one to be dealt with under any existing orphanage arrangements.” Another sad case was that of a little girl in the blacks’ camp at Wonga via Dalby: “she is quite white, and has white hair, and the senior sergeant believes she has blue eyes. She is the daughter of Clara, who is a half-caste. It is a pity to see a child like her in the blacks’ camp whereas if she was taken away now she might be brought up and trained to be a good serviceable girl...

What I cannot help venturing to note as a very unhealthy sign of the times is the spread of a false “White Australia” policy throughout the community, which has found expression in rather unexpected quarters – *e.g.* objections by a State school committee and the authorities of a charitable institution to the admission of half-castes. In this opinion I am borne out by the Inspector of Orphanages, who expresses himself as follows:- “I wish to point out that, in cases of this kind [half-castes, quadroons, &c.] institutions decline to take in such children; and, with regard to boarding out, foster-mothers entertain a similar feeling of repugnance to taking them into their families; so that I am left with no adequate means for dealing with the children. As a matter of fact, there is an increasing indisposition on all sides to take in coloured children as members of families; and in this connection I last week lost what has long been an excellent foster-home through this same repugnance to taking in two nice and well-behaved (slightly coloured) children that I wished to place there. ...

Fortunately for all such half-caste and quadroon children, the Salvation Army authorities have offered to bring them up as white children at 5s. 10d. per week, but

on the distinct understanding that, in consequence of their accepting such reduced fees, the Government will not curtail the present rate of capitation granted them for the white children placed under their supervision. From what I have already seen of the Salvation Army, both here, at home, and abroad, I am perfectly satisfied that the work once undertaken, will be conscientiously carried out. Brought up as European children, these half-caste waifs and strays will be the better enabled to battle for themselves in their journey through life, they will have greater chances of improving their condition, raising their status in the community, and so becoming more useful to the State. I sincerely pray that the Salvation Army's offer be accepted.

The Problem of the Half-Caste

(i) *Gall Memorandum*

MEMORANDUM

ABORIGINAL PROTECTION ACTS QUEENSLAND (EXTRACT)

GENERAL REMARKS

The aboriginal population may be stated to be roughly 17,000.

It must be admitted that the full-blood aboriginal is a member of an inferior race, which in the onward march of civilization must eventually succumb to the white race. This will become more noticeable as the lands, on which those aboriginals, not in Settlements or Missions, at present live by hunting &c, are taken over for settlement by the whites. It must also be admitted that the half-caste side by side with a white population is an undesirable.

I believe also that both will, perforce, become inmates of our Settlements or Mission Stations.

What then is to become of –

- (a) the half-castes
- (b) the quadroons
- (c) the all blacks

Are they to earn their own living or be a permanent charge on the State?

I do not think we need concern ourselves very much about the quadroons, because they are a negligible quantity and have some chance of being absorbed by marriage in the white population.

I think, however, the time is not far distant when the "all blacks" will have to give way to the whites when the lands on which they live at present by hunting &c. come under occupation by white settlers. When that time comes the blacks will either have disappeared through sickness spread by the whites or been brought into different Settlements either under the control of the State or Missions. Before that time comes, however, it is safe to assume that there will be a good many more half-castes. The problem then is, what is to become of the half-castes on the different Settlements, more especially as it must be admitted that side by side with the white race they will be undesirables.

I have heard of two suggested ways of dealing with them, viz., marrying "all blacks" or marrying whites, and, in my opinion, neither proposition is a suitable solution, although the latter if it could be brought about would be the more suitable.

In the first glance, the half-caste male or female does not show much desire to marry a "full blood" whilst the full blood, unconsciously perhaps, has some regard for racial purity, and often looks upon the half-caste with contempt. If, however, such marriages took place the result could only be the breeding up of an inferior race.

With regard to the second proposition, it will be recognised that there is not likely to be many marriages of whites and half-castes, and such as did take place

would only be with inferior whites and the results again would be the breeding of an inferior people.

The final position would probably be the marriage of half-castes to half-castes, and that again would only produce an inferior people.

In each of the above cases the results would be undesirable.

Are they to earn their own living or be a permanent charge on the State?

In answer to the first part of the question it appears to me that they will be allowed to earn their own living when they do not unduly enter into competition with the white worker. This is abundantly evident in connection with the pastoral and grazing industries in connection with which most of them are employed. At the present time such employers are working under a scale of wages approved by the A.W.U. This agreement really has the effect of an Award.

In my opinion half-castes and all blacks will become a permanent charge on the State to the extent to which the different Settlements and Missions are short of being self-supporting.....

The mainlanders, including the half-caste will, as I have previously pointed out, drift in to the Missions or our Settlements and be to a large extent a drain on Consolidated Revenue.

At the present time there is no doubt that many of them are in a better position than many of our white relief workers, and this position will be accentuated if the half-caste population increases.

I can remember over fifty years ago seeing blankets distributed to the blacks on 24th May, the then Queen's Birthday.

We caught up to that year in respect of some of the white population.

Inferior races will have to go and, in my opinion, Governments, sooner or later, will have seriously to consider the question of sterilization of the half-caste.

W.J.Gall, Under-Secretary, Home Department, Government of Queensland,

7.8.34

(ii) Letter to W J Gall

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

BRISBANE.

August 13th, 1934.

Personal

Dear Mr Gall

I am really very grateful to you for the copy of the memorandum on Aboriginals, which you have sent me, and which I have read with really great interest.

It is a most difficult question, and one to which it seems almost impossible to find any solution, except the one mentioned in the last paragraph of your memorandum, and I cannot believe that any Government would be brave enough to legislate in that direction.

I note on page 3 that you give as your opinion that the half castes and all blacks will become a permanent charge on the State, to the extent to which the different Settlements and Missions are short of being self-supporting. I am rather of opinion myself that a great deal more could be done with these Settlements and Missions to make them, at any rate, a great deal more self-supporting than they are, and the first step towards this would be to insist on all the children being taught to use their hands at skilled trades – much more useful for them than learning the date of Captain Cook's landing in Australia!

Again with many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Leonard Wilson

W.J.Gall, Esq., C.M.G.,

Under Secretary,

Home Department,

Treasury Building,

BRISBANE.

From Ruth Hegarty, Is That You Ruthie, University of Queensland Press, 1999

My story really begins way back in 1930. That was the year my family moved to Barambah Aboriginal Settlement. I was just six months old at the time, a very fair-haired, fair-skinned child. Not even old enough to know what was happening. I left the west with my mother Ruby, her brothers and sisters, and her parents, George and Lizzie Duncan. My mother was the eldest of eight children. She was nineteen at the time and remembers quite vividly everything that led to her family's decision to leave the west, a hard decision but a very necessary one for the immediate survival of the family. So the first part of this story is Ruby's as well as mine. ...

In 1930 Australia was well into the Depression and station owners were cutting back on employment. Generally, Aboriginal people were the first to lose their jobs. They were hard times, and heartbreak could be seen everywhere. People, Aboriginal and white, were beginning to feel the depths of poverty caused by the Great Depression. Aboriginal families whose livelihood depended on work provided by sheep and cattle stations were now having to make hard decisions. Many moved to the outskirts of Mitchell or other towns and made their homes at the yumbas there. My grandfather was finding it difficult to support his family. His family was his life, and he felt it was up to him to decide what was best for them. The type of work he was used to was no longer available, and there was little work of any kind around at the time. So he decided to go to the local police sergeant (who was also the local Protector of Aboriginals) for advice, or to see if work was available in other areas. The family waited, hoping that Grandfather would come back with some encouraging news – news that would lift the cloud that cast a shadow of uncertainty over us.

The boys were a bit young to be overly concerned but Mum had some troubling thoughts going through her mind. She was nineteen and I was six months old. Living with her parents was a temporary arrangement. Frank, my father, had taken a job droving cattle, and was not expected to return home for some months. So Mum was hoping for some good news and that the family would not have to move anywhere, at least until Frank came back because they planned to marry on his return. But the news Grandfather came back with was to change all our lives. For Ruby, there would be no going back, no marriage to Frank.

Years later a family friend told Mum that Frank had returned to the yumba not long after we left. But because most of the yumba people thought that we were coming back, Frank may have decided to wait for our return. But even if he had followed us to Barambah, the officials there may not have let him see us.

When Grandfather came back from seeing the policeman he told us, “The Sergeant suggested a move to Barambah may be a good idea. He said we’d be looked after. The government people will help us out. We could camp there until the hard times are over, just a few months, just a little while.”

My grandfather had no idea that when he made the decision to go it would mean a loss of everything that was dear to him and his family. ...

FOUR YEARS LATER

I was four-and-a-half years old. It was towards the end of 1933. My mother was told that Matron wanted to see her. She was not very concerned because you could be called before Matron for many trivial things. She didn’t know that the day she most dreaded had finally arrived.

“Ruby,” Matron said, “Ruth will start school next week.” My fifth birthday was not until 14th July the following year, that was the proper time for me to enter school. My mother was devastated. This was too soon, there should have been another six months that we could be together.

“Ruth is too young,” Mum replied. (Much later I asked Mum why didn’t she tell Matron we were not supposed to be here and that we were waiting to go back to Mitchell. She said she realised it was already too late, and there was still no word from Frank.)

“Ruth is ready for school,” Matron stated, “her constant running away each day to school has helped me to make up her mind about enrolling her.” She certainly had the power to do this to us. The extent to which the government wanted to control, manage and “reform” inmates of the dormitory can only be described as barbaric. There was never any consideration for the mother’s feelings when her child was removed.

My mother was a very shy and modest person, not given to arguments or disagreements. The situation was not of her choosing. She had become a victim of circumstances beyond her control. It appeared she had no resistance to this power. The authority of Matron was something to be feared. My mother had seen what had happened to those who spoke out against the system. They were locked in the gaol or, worse, sent to Palm Island. This put great fear into the hearts of Mission people. Palm Island was a penal settlement far to the north. Not too many people came back from there. Mum had by now realised her most fundamental rights had been taken away from her the moment she entered the Mission with her family. “Just a little

while” had become a life-time. She was trapped with no way out. There was nothing more to do but wait for our final night together.

When it finally came, Mum was not ready for the separation. How could she be? No mother would willingly give up her child, but mothers were powerless when Matron made these decisions. I was anxious to start school so I’d be with my friends. I did not know that this would also mean I would be taken away from my mother. Mum said I could barely get to sleep that night I was so excited. She told me I was up bright and early for school. She dressed me in a uniform and blouse she had made herself in the sewing room where the single mothers worked. She pinned a tiny handkerchief to the royal blue uniform.

“What’s this for?” I asked.

“It’s in case you have a runny nose, you have to keep your nose clean at school,” she whispered to me.

I was not aware of my mother’s thoughts and feelings as I skipped off to the school inspection line. It is only when I look back that I can see Mum’s continuing love in not allowing me to suspect how sorrowful she felt at that time. All I knew was that I was going to school with my friends.

I had no idea that this day was going to be the beginning of a long and sad separation. This day was to rob me of the natural bonding that existed between my mum and me, and would place me under the “care and protection” of the Queensland government, which now classified me as a neglected child.

I remember arriving home from school that afternoon, tired and hungry. I had lots to talk to Mum about. Up the stairs I ran calling out, “Mum, I’m home.” I was met by

one of the other mums who told me, “You’re not allowed on this side of the dorm any more. You’re a school girl now. You’d better go. If you’re caught here you’ll get into trouble.”

So now I was a big girl. That morning I was my mum’s baby, that afternoon I was a big girl. I was expected to take responsibility for my actions. I wasn’t at all prepared for his parting from Mum. Even though she slept in the same building I was not allowed to see her or even say goodnight. I remember very vividly my first night without her. Even though the ward was filled with other little girls I could not be comforted. I cried most of the night. My Aunty Jean, a year older than me and now separated from Granny, was one of those little girls. I was put into her bed, she became my surrogate mother. Even now our relationship is a close one.

A single piece of timber lattice separated the women’s section of the dormitory from the small girls’ ward. I sat at the lattice that night waiting, my face pressed firmly against it, trying to catch a glimpse of my mother. Even when I was ordered to bed I’d sneak back out, only to run back to bed when I heard Granny Nancy’s voice, “Is that you, Ruthie?”

Many years later Mum spoke of these times with great pain. The more questions I asked the more I realised I was opening up old wounds. We are now two mature women, both mothers, reliving our past, and talking about painful times we had not really discussed before. I asked her what her feelings were at the time of this separation. Not waiting for her reply, wanting her to know what I’d felt, I told her: “I waited and waited by the lattice-work door, trying to catch a glimpse of you, but you didn’t come.” Mum was surprised that I remembered that time. We were opening up a chapter in her life that had remained closed for a good many years. I think she

hoped it would remain closed. “I knew you were there,” she answered, “it was better for you not to see me.”

I was feeling the effects of this change and was not ready to surrender and let go. At night I would call out, “Goodnight, Mum!” in a loud voice, hoping she would hear me in the dorm. For weeks to come I’d catch a glimpse of her either when I walked past the sewing room or as she sat at the table across the same dining room. I thought how pretty she was, with her long jet-black hair. She always wore it braided, and neatly twisted in buns over each ear.

We all ate meals in the same large dining room. The girls occupied one side and the women the other. We ate our food in complete silence. There was no way I could call out, “Good morning, Mum, how are you this morning?” Neither could she call out to me. Already I was learning how best to conduct myself as a dormitory girl without getting into trouble. I eventually fell into the routine, but not until after a lot of problems which I will elaborate on later. I now had to accept that just to be able to look at Mum would be all I could expect.

Worse was to come. Because Mum was no longer responsible for me in the government’s eyes, she was free to go out to work. Most of the mothers who no longer had children to care for were required to go away to work. Often they would be sent such a long way off, their children would not see or hear from them for many months. This happened to us only six months after I started school, I was just five years old and already I was to experience a second separation from my mum.

One day, running home from school, I spotted Mum waiting for me. Most mums tried to stay out of sight, so as not to upset their children. There had to be something wrong. The other kids called out, “Ruthie, your mum is waiting for you.” I slowed

down a little. Mothers did not wait for their little girls at the dormitory. “What did she want?” I thought. The other girls were excited, “Your mother wants you, Ruthie.”

As I walked towards her I knew something was wrong. We rarely got to see each other socially or otherwise, and to find her waiting made me feel very nervous. As she approached me I could see the other kids watching. Mum took me aside, her arms around me. I looked at her, I had not been this close to her for what seemed like a long time.

“Ruth, I’m going to be sent out to work.” I really didn’t know what this meant. “I’ll be going away,” she said, “and you won’t see me for a while.” I had begun to grow accustomed to our being apart, but what she was saying was, “I’m going away.” I remember being very angry. Would this mean I’d never see her again? What I later discovered was that all of the mothers who were in the dormitory and separated from their children were required to go out to work to repay their “debt” to the government. I guess it was time for Mum to repay our debt.

The days leading up to Mum’s departure went too fast. I began to go back to the lattice screen to sit and watch, in case I missed seeing her go. I remember her telling me that she could buy me nice things, and if she worked for good people I might be able to have holidays with her. The waiting made me feel quite ill. I even hoped something would happen so she wouldn’t have to go. I kept most of my feelings to myself. I wasn’t able to show any sort of emotion, we were not allowed to cry. Apart from my first night away from Mum when I started school, I don’t remember crying in all the years that I was a dormitory girl. Crying always resulted in punishment.

I was not looking forward to the night Mum was to leave. But it happened. The afternoon before she left I was allowed to help her pack her port and to stay with her

until the taxi came. The afternoon dragged on until suppertime. When the supper bell rang we went together into the dining room. Even as we sat in our different sections I knew she was watching me. I was often a noisy child and got into lots of trouble which resulted in my being made to stand in the middle of the dining room until everyone else finished eating. However, I did not want to miss saying goodbye to my mother so that night I was unusually quiet.

There was great excitement when the taxi arrived. Any vehicle pulling up in front of the dormitory caused great excitement, whether it was someone going away to work or new arrivals being escorted into the Home. I remember trying to enter into the fun, it wasn't often that we were allowed outside the front gate after dusk. Certain sections of the dormitory grounds were out of bounds to us kids. The taxi arrived and we made our goodbyes without too much fuss. And then she was gone. This was our second separation. ...

In many cases our mothers were sent out of the dormitory to work as domestics on sheep and cattle properties and did not see their kids for up to twelve months at a time. As I look back I recall few children ever receiving letters or parcels from their mums, although years later we found out that many mothers had sent things to their children.

The night Mum left I had never felt so lonely, even in that room full of small girls. ...

C. Northern Territory

Northern Territory Removals Policy and Practice

(i) Letter from S J Mitchell

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

Office of the Administrator

Darwin, September 12th 1911

No 1861/11

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your telegram of the 8th instant with reference to the suggestion of the Chief Protector of Aborigines regarding the establishment of an Aboriginal settlement.

The number of aboriginal children that would be provided for in the proposed institution would depend upon the policy of the Government in regard to half caste children. In my opinion one of the first works to be undertaken is to gather in all half caste children who are living with aborigines.

The police could do most of this work. No doubt the mothers would object and there would probably be an outcry from well meaning people about depriving the mother of her child but the future of the children should I think outweigh all other considerations. It is quite impossible to state the number that would be so gathered in.

There might also be some pure blooded children obtained.

2. The period which it would take to make the institution self supporting would depend much upon the class of educational work undertaken, the amount of capital expended and the quality of labor available and employed.

I have discussed the question with Mr Campbell who will speak to you on the subject and be able to offer a clearer explanation of the position that you will get from written communications, I therefore request that the matter be held over until his return.

At present the only places available for neglected children of aborigines here are the Roman Catholic Mission at Bathurst Island to which place the late Chief Protector on my recommendation sent one aboriginal girl who had been treated at the hospital for neglected syphilis resulting in the total loss of her palate and a permanent dumbness; and School conducted by Mr Barry, a Plymouth Brother, whose work appears to me to be unsatisfactory because there is no provision made by him for teaching cultivation or any other useful work.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant

S J Mitchell

Acting Administrator

(ii) 1918 Ordinance

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

No. 9 of 1918.

AN ORDINANCE

Relating to Aborigines.

Be it ordained by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, in pursuance of the powers conferred by the *Northern Territory Acceptance Act 1910* and the *Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910*, as follows:-

...

6. (1.) The Chief Protector shall be entitled at any time to undertake the care, custody, or control of any aboriginal or half-caste, it, in his opinion it is necessary or desirable in the interests of the aboriginal or half-caste for him to do so, and for that purpose may enter any premises where the aboriginal or half-caste is or is supposed to be, and may take him into his custody.

Chief Protector to
undertake care
and control of
aboriginals and
half-castes.

(2.) Any person on whose premises any aboriginal or half-caste is, shall, on demand by the Chief Protector, or by anyone acting on behalf of the Chief Protector on production of his authority, facilitate by all reasonable means in his power the taking into custody of the aboriginal or half-caste.

(3.) The powers of the Chief Protector under this section may be exercised whether the aboriginal or half-caste is under a contract of employment or not.

7. (1.) The Chief Protector shall be the legal guardian of every aboriginal and of every half-caste child, notwithstanding that the child has a parent or other relative living, until the child attains the age of eighteen years, except while the child is a State child within the meaning of the Act of the State of South Australia in force in the Northern Territory entitled *The State Children Act 1895*, or any Act of that state or Ordinance amending or substituting for that Act.

Chief Protector to
be legal guardian
of children.

(iii) Extract of letter from Dr Cecil Cook, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Northern Territory, to Rev. W. Morley, April 28, 1931

The Halfcaste problem has received deeper consideration and more advanced and enlightened treatment in the Commonwealth Territories than in any other part of Australia. The Commonwealth which you must recognise is trustee of the White Australia Policy, has viewed this matter nationally, and has framed its policy accordingly. Difference of circumstance as between Territory and State has again required special policy. In the States, the Halfcaste is negligible as a factor of population in a white community with equal distribution of the sexes. In the Territory, however, the preponderance of coloured races, the prominence of coloured alien blood and the scarcity of white females to mate with the white male population, creates a position of incalculable future menace to purity of race in tropical Australia, and the Federal Government must so regulate its Territories that the multiplication of multicolour humanity by the mating of Halfcaste with alien coloured blood shall be reduced to a minimum. Halfcaste females in centres of population where alien races are prominent unfortunately exceed males in number. If this excess is permitted to mate with alien blood, the future of this country may very well be doomed to disaster. The Commonwealth has therefore endeavoured to elevate the Halfcaste to the standard of the white, with a view to his ultimate assimilation, encouraging the mating of white male and halfcaste female, thereby gradually eliminating colour and reducing one contributory factor in the breeding of Halfcastes.

Will you, Sir, with no knowledge of local problems, make so bold as to say that the Commonwealth is wrong?

Briefly, the Halfcaste policy in this Territory embraces the collection of all illegitimate halfcastes, male and female under the age of 16 years for housing in

institutions for educational purposes. These with predominance of white blood are placed in separate institutions where they are reared as whites, in association with white children. All receive the statutory State School Education available to white children. On completion, the girls are taught domestic arts, and dress and clothing making, to fit them for a higher station as the wives of higher grade halfcaste males, or whites. The boys are trained in the pastoral industry by allocation to Stations, who are required to train them as white apprentices until such time as they reach the age of 21 years, when they automatically attain full white citizenship. On leaving the Home, the girls are placed in specially selected private homes, where they are cared for and trained by the ladies who employ them, and who are held responsible for their moral and material welfare...

Unfortunately, the practical application of this policy has run ahead of the financial means of executing it, and much of a highly derogatory nature is heard of the Half-caste Home Darwin. Nobody recognises the necessity for certain improvements there, more acutely than the Commonwealth Government, but the disabilities existing have been very grossly exaggerated. The charge of overcrowding is the commonest to be made. It is not generally recognised that each halfcaste child has 300 cubic feet of air space on a latticed verandah permitting continuous and free ventilation in all weathers...

Meantime, the children are removed from the evil influence of the aboriginal camp with its lack of moral training and its risk of serious organic infectious disease. They are properly fed, clothed and educated as white children, they are subject to constant medical supervision and in receipt of domestic and vocational training.

(iv) From N T Administrator, Telegram to Department of Interior, Canberra, 26 October 1932.

YOURS TWENTYFIFTH PRESS REPORT CONCERNS RECENT REMOVAL
HALFCASTES BY CONSTABLE REID NEWCASTLE WATERS A GARBLED
AND INACCURATE REFERENCE HAVING APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS
STOP TWO MALES AGED FOUR YEARS AND SEVEN YEARS AND FIVE
FEMALES AGED TWO YEARS TO SIX YEARS ONLY ONE AGED TWO
YEARS WERE REMOVED FROM BLACKS CAMP STOP HALF CASTE
CHILDREN ARE NOT TOTALLY SEPERATED FROM MOTHERS UNTIL
WEANED OR AT LEAST TWO YEARS OLD THEREAFTER FOR OBVIOUS
REASONS REMOVED FROM BLACKS CAMP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE STOP
PRESENT POLICY IS TRY AND RAISE HALF CASTES TO WHITE
STANDARD WHICH IMPOSSIBLE IF ALLOWED REMAIN IN CAMPS TOO
LONG
ADMIN

*(v) Common Law Office to Mr S Irvine, Mail Contractor, Newcastle Waters,
14 February 1933.*

Dear Sir,

I have been requested to reply to the representations made by you in your letter of the 4th. January, 1933, to Dr. Cook and in your letter of the 1st. February, 1933, to the Secretary of the Tender Board in regard to your tender to carry out the removal of the half-caste boys from Birdum to Alice Springs.

The following appears in the advertisement for tenders which was published in the Gazette:-

“The work involved comprises transport and adequate feeding of the number mentioned en route from Birdum to the Half-caste Home at Alice Springs, this service to be performed before the wet season”.

Your telegram to the Tender Board dated the 5th. December, 1933, is as follows:-

“Wiring offer cartage boys Alice Springs if sent next down mail leaving Birdum 29th Will carry and feed for thirty shillings per head Will post cheque for deposit”.

It is quite clear that in stipulating the 29th December as the date for departure from Birdum, you took the risk of the wet season setting in before that date.

Since it was clearly a condition of any contract to be made that the service should be performed before the wet season, the fact that the wet season arrived before the 29th December last automatically put an end to any agreement that might have otherwise been carried out.

It is apparent, therefore, that you brought the extra truck to Birdum at your own risk, trusting that the wet season would not set in before the 29th. December.

On the 29th December, 1932, Dr. Cook telegraphed to you at Powell's Creek as follows:-

“Re your contract transfer halfcaste boys before wet season stop As wet season commenced and no prospect your leaving Birdum twentyninth carrying out of contract deferred stop Advise proposed date of transport after wet for my approval if rate hold stop About thirty to carry.”

Since you were not at Birdum in time to leave on the 29th December, there was for this reason also, no obligation to have the half-caste boys there ready to be transported, but, even if you had been ready to leave Birdum on the 29th December, the fact that the wet season had set in put an end to any agreement that might have been possible of performance if the wet season had not set in until a later date.

(vi) Extract of letter from Aborigines' Friends Association, Adelaide

The Hon. J. A. Perkins M.H.R.,

Minister for the Interior,

CANBERRA, May 11, 1933

Dear Sir,

The Superintendent of the Half Caste Home at Alice Springs has notified that he has full charge under Dr. Cook to administer the Ordinance from Charlotte Waters to the 20th Parallel and has intimated that it is the Government Policy to separate the Half Castes from the Blacks, and on this ground has approached our representative at Alice Springs raising objection to the Half Castes and Full Bloods worshipping together at the native Church, as has been their custom for many years, also to natives having freedom to come to the Mission House for sympathy, advice and help, in their difficulties.

The members of the Association are naturally perturbed over this matter, and would like to know if the freedom enjoyed hitherto, by the Association in its important work for Aborigines in Central Australia, is to be curtailed by the Government. ...

We respectfully ask for your assurance that the beneficent work of the Association for the Aborigines shall not be interfered with by officials of the Government, by seeking to prevent natives, of all colours, worshipping together, and in their having full access to the Mission House, as in the past, when seeking sympathy and help.

We would ask also that the privilege hitherto granted to the representative of the Association in visiting the Half Caste Children's Home at Alice Springs, be continued under the new arrangements. By keeping in touch with these native children our representative has been able in his long camel tours to give their mothers some welcome information about them and act as an intermediary between them. Mothers are mothers the world over, and the native women come long distances if they know Mr. Kramer is passing with his camels, to get some information about their children at the Home and it comforts them to have an assurance that they are well looked after by the Government. ...

* Lettergram from J. A. Carrodus, May 18, 1933

LETTERGRAM

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

ALICE SPRINGS, May 18 1933

DID SUPERINTENDENT HALFCASTE HOME APPROACH KRAMER AND
RAISE OBJECTION HALFCASTES AND FULL BLOODS WORSHIPPING
TOGETHER AT NATIVE CHURCH AND TO ABORIGINALS HAVING
FREEDOM COME TO MISSION HOUSE FOR ADVICE AND HELP STOP HAS
KRAMER BEEN EXCLUDED FROM TAKING RELIGIOUS SERVICES AT
HALFCASTE HOME.

J. A. Carrodus, Department of Interior

* Deputy Administrator of the Northern Territory, V. G. Carrington, to the Secretary, Department of the Interior, Canberra, 22 May 1933

In reply to your lettergram of 18th May, I have to advise that I interviewed Mr. Kramer who stated that the superintendent of the Half-caste Institution did raise an objection to Half-castes and full blooded aboriginals worshipping together at his Church and also that the Superintendent had stated that if aboriginals were not allowed to congregate at other places in the town which is a Prohibited Area they should not congregate at his Church...

The Superintendent of the Half-caste Institution has been given control of all aboriginal matters south of the 20th Parallel and receives his instructions direct from the Chief Protector. No one else has any knowledge as to what instructions he receives and, under present conditions, it is quite impossible to maintain any supervision in regard to Aboriginal affairs.

(vii) From a correspondent in the Territory, 23 July 1933

...

Dr. Cook is Chief Protector, and he is the one who mainly attends to the aboriginals, when he can get the chance, but most blacks are terrified of him, and when he goes on patrol, all who can go "bush" and stay out of reach till he is safely back in Darwin again. In the old South Australian days, Dr. Strangman, then the only medical officer in the Territory, was 'good mate' to every nigger, myall or civilised; and they came of their own accord to consult him. Today, the mere suggestion of sending for the doctor is usually sufficient to clear the blacks away from the place. Dr. Cook has always been courteous and polite to me, but he is one of the scientifically inhuman automata, to whom you are not a living personality, but merely Class --- Genera --- Record --- File --- and so on.

...

Frankly, under the latest Aboriginals Ordinance there is slavery; the Protector has the right to remove half-castes to the Compound, (quarter-castes are all classed as half-castes, and so also are eighth-castes,) and he did remove one quarter-caste without even bothering to obtain her white husband's consent, at the request of another white man. He removed two quarter-caste girls to the Compound without their half-caste mother's consent being asked; and, when one of the girls left the Compound, had her arrested and charged at the Police Court, for disobeying the order of the Protector. Yet he had not ordered her to remain at the Compound for any specified time. He sent one, if not two girls, up to Katherine to marry white men who sent down for wives, though it is alleged that the girls had never met the men before. He had one child (a half-caste fifteen months old), taken from its aboriginal mother and brought to Darwin; (the child had be fed on bread soaked in water and treacle for

part of the journey, as no arrangements had been made for suitable feeding on the way). Children are taken from their parents and placed in the Compound, or the Half-caste Home, without the parents' consent being asked; and as the average black gin is passionately devoted to her child, you can understand what it means to be deprived of her baby.

Half-castes must live where the Protector orders them, must work only at places approved of by the Protector, and have no say in their own lives. As long as a half-caste female lives, she is absolutely under the control of the Protector who can order her life for her, and she has no opportunity of protest.

...

At the Half-caste Home about eighty children are crowded into the one house, a three-roomed cottage, with a tiny bath-room and a small kitchen. It is a bungalow, with verandah all round, which is the children's school-room, dining-room, bed-room, and, in wet weather, their playroom also. They are locked in here from about sunset to sunrise, and, though I do not know what furniture is now in the place, some little time ago there were twelve single beds, for eighty two children. The only light they have at night is from a hurricane lamp, hung up high near the ceiling. The Matron does what she can, but the children are too cramped and crowded for decency, especially when it is remembered that most of them have been accustomed to the wide bush, where they could wander as they would.

...

(viii) Letter to J. A. Perkins, Minister of Interior, from Mrs Griffiths, Cherry Cot, Croydon, Victoria, 20 July 1934.

Dear Sir,

Seeing this group of half-caste and Quadroon children in tonight's Herald, I was just wondering if the Govt. intend to pay something to anyone who might take one or two of these unfortunate little girls, I would like to take one but, of course could not afford to do so without payment. I am not at all well off and am getting the Old Age Pension, I own the little cottage I live in which is situated in a beautiful spot in the country, 18 miles from Melbourne and 15 minutes walk from the Croydon Ry Station, I live alone, am healthy but lonely and often wish for the companionship of children whom I love. I will enclose references, both letters, from Drs O'Hara and Lillies. My father was a Solicitor, the late John Charles Sweet of Melbourne. I have a married son in Sydney and daughter (married) living at Armadale, Victoria. I like my own little home, but there is just the loneliness so if I could get one of these little children it would give me an interest and the companionship good.

I had a native nurse for my children and understand them, she was with me many years. Dr. Hagenamer got her for me. His office was in Bank Chambers, Collins Street, Melbourne, that was many years ago. There is a State School $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from my home, I am Church of England.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours truly,

(Mrs) M. E. Griffiths

This would be a happy refined home for a little girl, with every comfort and good well cooked food, and I would treat her as my own and she would never regret coming to me.

(Note under photo: “Homes are sought for these children”) : I like the little girl in the centre of group, but if taken by anyone else any of the others would do, as long as they are strong.

(ix) Report on the Northern Territory by J. A. Carrodus

R E P O R T

O N T H E

N O R T H E R N T E R R I T O R Y

B Y

J. A. CARRODUS.

20/11/1934.

...

Half-castes:

179. It is the policy of the Administration to collect all half-castes from the native camps at an early age and transfer them to the Government Institutions at Darwin and Alice Springs.

180. The Darwin Home contains half-caste girls only. Half-caste boys are sent to the Alice Springs Home, but girls are sent there also. The Darwin Home contains

half-castes only, quadroons and octoroons, who become a charge on the Administration, being sent to the Roman Catholic Convent. At Alice Springs quadroons and octoroons are maintained at the Home in addition to half-castes.

181. All these children are given an exemplary education by trained teachers. The girls, when old enough, also receive instruction in domestic economy, but they are not trained domestics by the time they leave the Home because, usually, they are sent out to employment shortly after they reach the age of 14 years and their subsequent training is given them by their employers.

182. It would be a boon to the women of the Territory, if they could apply for and obtain fully trained half-caste domestics whenever required. The training most desired is in cooking and laundry work.

183. An elaborate system of training in cooking would be uneconomical, unless arrangements were made to utilise the food produced. This might be possible if the Homes were run in conjunction with Government Hospitals.

184. The Home at Darwin is quite unsuitable for the purpose of giving training in domestic economy. It is too small and has no facilities for general training.

When a new Home is built, special attention might be given to the provision of training facilities. The site should be selected somewhere close to the Hospital.

185. The training of boys at Alice Springs in stock work is hampered owing to the country surrounding the Home being unsuitable for grazing either stock or horses. Training in saddlery and other useful occupations can be given.

186. The facilities for training the girls in domestic services are much better at Alice Springs than at Darwin, but the same difficulties arise in regard to the disposal of food produced by cooking classes.

187. The position at present is that all the children receive a satisfactory elementary education, but the technical and domestic training is not as satisfactory as it should be, due principally to lack of facilities and opportunities to dispose of articles of food etc. produced. The teaching of sewing is satisfactory and no difficulty is experienced in disposing of the articles manufactured.

188. With regard to half-caste boys born on cattle stations, it is problematical whether removal from the stations to the Homes is in the best interests of the children. Many of the pastoralists maintain that the boys are much better off on the stations where they can grow up in a stock-raising environment and be trained as stockmen when very young. The Chief Protector is of opinion that the boys should be removed to the Homes where they can be educated until they are about 14 years of age and then apprenticed to cattlemen, drovers etc.

Breeding Out the Colour

(i) *Letter from C. E. Cook*

His Honour,

The Administrator of the

Northern Territory

D A R W I N

PERMISSION TO MARRY ABORIGINALS.

With further reference to previous memoranda in which I have called attention to the very grave problem which has been developing in Northern Australia owing to the inter-marriage of alien coloured races with aboriginals and half-castes, it is strongly recommended that the Commonwealth take action to have the States, particularly Queensland and Western Australia, adopt a policy uniform with that of the Commonwealth.

For years it seems that Protectors of Aboriginals have regarded it as undesirable that a half-caste or quarter-caste aboriginal should be mated with a white. On the other hand mating with Japanese, South-Sea Islanders, Chinese and hybrid coloured aliens has been regarded as a very desirable solution to what was regarded as the marriage problem of white blood. The result has been the accumulation of a hybrid coloured population of very low order. I am unable to speak for Western Australia and Queensland but these coloured individuals constitute a perennial

economic and social problem in the Northern Territory and their multiplication throughout the north of the continent is likely to be attended by very grave consequences to Australia as a nation.

In the Territory the mating of aboriginals with any person other than an aboriginal is prohibited. The mating of coloured aliens with any female of part aboriginal blood is also prohibited. Every endeavour is being made to breed out the colour by elevating female half-castes to white standard with a view to their absorption by mating into the white population. The adoption of a similar policy throughout the Commonwealth is, in my opinion, a matter of vital importance.

(C.E. Cook).

Chief Protector of Aboriginals, February 7

1933

(ii) Memorandum from J. A. Carrodus

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

MEMORANDUM:

With reference to the memorandum of the 7th February, by the Chief Protector of Aborigines of the Northern Territory, the policy of mating half-castes with whites, for the purpose of breeding-out the colour, is that adopted by the Commonwealth Government on the recommendation of Dr. Cook.

The policies adopted by the State Aboriginal Departments do not all conform to the Commonwealth's ideas on the subject. In some cases, the policy is to encourage the marriage of half-castes back to the aborigines.

It is considered that it will be difficult to secure unanimity in regard to the matter, but the subject might profitably be referred for discussion at a conference of Premiers.

J. A. Carrodus

22.2.1933.

(iii) *Memorandum from J. A. Carrodus*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

CANBERRA

27th February, 1933

MEMORANDUM:

The Acting Secretary,

Prime Minister's Department

Marriage of Half-castes and Aborigines

The Chief Protector of Aborigines of the Northern Territory has reported that a grave problem is developing in Northern Australia owing to the inter-marriage of alien coloured races with aborigines and half-castes. He states that these coloured persons constitute an economic and social problem in the Northern Territory and expresses the view that their multiplication throughout the North of the continent is likely to be attended by grave consequences to Australia as a nation.

In the Northern Territory, the mating of aborigines with any person other than an aboriginal is prohibited. The mating of coloured aliens with any female of part

aboriginal blood is also prohibited. Every endeavour is being made to breed-out colour by elevating female half-castes to white standard with a view to their absorption by mating into the white population.

It is understood that, in some of the States, it is regarded as undesirable that a half-caste or quarter-caste aboriginal should be mated with a white. The mating of such females with Japanese, South Sea Islanders, Chinese and other coloured aliens is considered to be a desirable solution to the marriage problem of coloured girls. The result has been the accumulation of a coloured population of a very low order.

My Minister is of opinion that the policy adopted by the Commonwealth in the Northern Territory might, with advantage, be adopted by the States, particularly the contiguous States of Queensland and Western Australia. He realises, however, that the State Governments will have their own views on the matter and consequently suggests that the proposal be listed for consideration at the next Premiers' Conference.

J. A. Carrodus

for Secretary.

His Honour the Administrator, Northern Territory, Memorandum, January 4, 1950

In Patrol Officer Evans' report, dated 23rd December, 1949, on his patrol to the Wave Hill-Timber Creek areas, the following passages occur:-

Comment

The removal of the children from Wave Hill by MacRobertson Miller aircraft was accompanied by distressing scenes, the like of which I wish never to experience again. The engines of the plane are not stopped at Wave Hill and the noise combined with the strangeness of an aircraft only accentuated the grief and fear of the children resulting in near-hysteria in two of them. I am quite convinced that news of my actions at Wave Hill preceded me to the other stations resulting in the children being taken away prior to my arrival.

I endeavoured to assuage the grief of the mothers by taking photographs of each of the children prior to their departure and these have been distributed among them.

Also a dress length each was given the five mothers. Gifts of sweets to the children helped to break down a lot of their fear and I feel that removal by vehicle would have been affected without any fuss.

Recommendations

(1) I accordingly recommend that only in extreme cases is removal of part-aborigines affected by aircraft.

(2) That if possible the children be left with their mothers until they are at least six years of age. At this age they are beginning to free themselves of maternal ties and

are at the same time at a suitable age to begin their education. The alternative to this is that they be removed at the age of twelve months which, for obvious reasons, would involve complications beyond the scope of the Patrol Officer.

Which brings me to another point which I ask be given consideration – the appointment of an itinerant female welfare worker to assist in the gentler removal of part-aboriginal children. In my opinion native mothers would be far readier to hand over her offspring to the care of a white woman than to the mercies of a male.

This refers to what I am assured by the Acting Director of Native Affairs is the practice of removing half-caste children from their aboriginal mothers to Darwin or some other suitable centre for care and education.

I cannot imagine any practice which is more likely to involve the Government in criticism for violation of the present day conception of human rights. Apart from that aspect of the matter, I go further and say that superficially, at least, it is difficult to imagine any practice which is more likely to outrage the feeling of the average observer...

In the northern part of the Territory, such children are sent to the Garden Point Mission Station, the Croker Island Mission Station, or the Retta Dixon Home, Darwin. In the southern portion, the institution used for this purpose is Mt. Mary's Hostel.

The total number of partly coloured boys and girls in these institutions at present is:

Boys – 163 Girls – 194

I am satisfied that the practice of moving partly coloured girls and boys from native camps and nomadic conditions to institutions of the kind mentioned is in accordance with the Government's policy of assimilation and is in the best interests of the white and black communities and, subject to certain safeguards enumerated below, should be approved by the Minister.

I recommend, therefore, that future policy be based on the following principles:-

- a) Partly coloured children found in aboriginal camps and similar environment may be removed, if the Director of Native Affairs thinks it necessary in the interests of the children to a suitable institution. (Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories, marginal note: "Approved.")
- b) No such child shall be removed without the written approval of the Director of Native Affairs. (PH: "Approved.")
- c) The officer removing the child shall hold such powers delegated to him by the Director as may be necessary to effect the removal lawfully. (PH "Approved")
- d) No child under the age of 4 years shall be removed except where the child is neglected or in need of medical care or the mother expressly requests the removal. (PH: "No age limit need be stated. The younger the child is at the time of removal the better for the child.")
- e) No child shall be removed except where it is neglected or is in need of medical care or the mother expressly requests its removal, until the Director is satisfied that a painstaking attempt has been made to

explain to the mother the advantages to be gained by the removal of the child. (PH: "Approved".)

- f) The mother is to be permitted to accompany her child, if she so desires, to Darwin and Alice Springs, to satisfy herself that the child will be well cared for. (PH: "Approved.")
- g) Aircraft shall not be used for the removal of a child except where no other method of transport is available. (PH: "Approved".)
- (h) All children shall be medically examined without undue delay upon removal at Darwin and Alice Springs. (PH: "Approved".)
- (i) A report shall be made by the Director to the Administrator immediately after the 30th June in each year showing the names and ages of children removed during the year, the circumstances of removal in each case, the name of the institution to which they are to be sent ... (PH: "Approved. These reports are to be confidential and/or official use only.")

From Bob Randall, Songman, ABC Books (2003)

When Constable McKinnon put me on a camel, I was so excited that I didn't realise I was being stolen, and was being taken so far away that I would never see my mother again. My aunty was with me and I just thought we were going for a ride. But the truth was that my aunty was being arrested for participating in the eating of a stolen cow. The truth dawned on me slowly as we got further and further away from my family, and their cries and wailing began to penetrate my mind. As we travelled towards Kings Canyon, along the Basedow Ranges, the land of Angas Downs with which I was familiar receded into the distance.

It was government policy at that time to remove mixed-race children like myself from our Aboriginal mothers, and bring us up in orphanages usually run by Christian mission. They wanted to convert us to Christianity, and the government did not want us to inherit our Aboriginal culture, which they regarded as primitive and without value. We were usually taken away by police who visited all the stations to enforce government policies and ensure that the white law was being obeyed. So this removal could occur at any age, from very young babies to older children, even teenagers.

I didn't know how old I was or in what year this occurred, in the white man's system of time. The only time I knew was the play of the seasons. But looking back from what I know now, it must have been about 1937. Bill McKinnon, the policeman who took me, was known to our people. He was involved in the murder of an uncle of mine outside a cave at Uluru where he had tried to hide from the pursuing police party. On this occasion, during his routine patrolling of the different stations around Central Australia, he rode into the homestead of Angas Downs, a vast property of spinifex grasses, saltbush and mulga and acacia trees which covers hundreds of square

kilometres of Yankunytjatjara traditional land. My people were camped across from the homestead by the banks of the river that was running with water at that time, a rare occurrence. Because other children had already been stolen by police, my family usually covered my lighter skin with ash from the fire. But on that fateful day I had been swimming.

That long journey northwards to Alice Springs, the nearest government town, took many, many days. During the day it was exciting to be riding a camel into new country, but when night came I began to wonder why my mothers weren't camping with us. As the sounds of the mothers' wailing crept back into my consciousness, I became terrified. I longed for the arms that held me and made me feel safe. I cried because I was now alone, and did not know what was happening to me.

I tried to pretend I was strong, like a hunter is strong in the way he faces all the challenges of the environment to get food. Yet in my heart I knew that I wasn't prepared for what lay ahead. The only kind memory I still have about that journey is my aunty trying to comfort me, pulling me close to her around the fire to keep me warm when we settled down, in the many nights of that ride into a world of confusion, violence and struggle. My world, that had once made me feel as big and free as the universe, would now become one which made me feel small and worthless, belonging nowhere.

Our journey ended at the Bungalow that was located at the old historic Telegraph Station, a few miles from the centre of town. This is the country of the Arrernte people, and southwards, behind Alice, the MacDonnell Ranges rise as a spectacular spine of jagged rocks, in country we know as *Yeperenye*, the Caterpillar Dreaming. Children from all over Central Australia, speaking many different languages, were gathered at the Bungalow. There were some older Aboriginal women who helped to

care for all the kids, and some of the mothers of local kids were allowed to come and go, because they contributed needed assistance in running the place. But for kids like me, who had been taken from far away, there was no one ...

Later, when I was grown up and had managed to track down my family members, I found out from my sister, Junie, that when Constable Bill McKinnon took me away, the mothers began to wail and my Yankunytjatjara grandfather wanted to put a spear through that policeman. But everybody around jumped on him so that he couldn't do it. I was not the first child to be taken, and my grandfather was fed up. He was getting old and had already lost quite a few of his grandchildren. He said, 'We've lost too many kids already, and we never see them again.' Other children, my sister and a couple of brothers, had also been taken before me. Our mob loved all the children, no matter what colour they were.

At the Bungalow I was never told where I had come from, or why I had been taken from my family. They just tried to completely blot out my past. My world of the *tjukurrpa* and the sacred duty of *kanyini* which had sustained me, enveloping me and teaching me the caring responsibility of people to all things, was no longer around me. For the next many years of my life, I entered into the disconnected world of white men's 'dreaming', a terrible vision that sought to remove and 'save' mixed-race children from the Aboriginal way of life, in the name of civilisation and 'progress'. The establishment of the Aboriginal Protection Board, the work of the mission, and finally the welfare system, all took away our traditional Law of *kanyini* and recreated us as a dependent people ...

Some of the children at the Bungalow were almost fully white. They called these quarter castes. There are a lot of Aboriginal Muslims in Alice Springs, because the Afghans who were brought to Australia to work with the camel trains, used for

transport across the desert, married with our people. The Afghans were also frowned upon by the whites. It seemed the whites didn't like anyone who wasn't of English ancestry. They didn't even seem to like the Irish or Scots very much, yet they were like them, with similar ways. But they certainly didn't like the Chinese and the Afghans, and they despised the Aborigines. We mixed-race kids who were stolen away from our families found ourselves living in the atmosphere of that hatred every day. Although my people fought back, the white people had the guns, and that was that.

Instead of the wide open spaces of my desert home, we were housed in corrugated iron dormitories with rows and rows of bunk beds. After dinner we were bathed by the older women, put into clothing they called pyjamas, and then tucked into one of the iron beds between sheets. This was a horrible experience for me. I couldn't stand the feel of the cloth touching my skin. Out in the bush no one had clothes to wear and we were very happy without them. The wind and sun and rain kept us clean. We didn't waste water, and we certainly didn't spoil the sacred water by bathing in it with soap and other things. We were cleaned naturally when it rained, and if pools of water were left behind after the floods, we would swim in them.

I hated all these new things. When the lights went out I took off the pyjamas, climbed out of the bed and lay down on the cement floor, to get as close as I could get to the corrugated iron walls, so that I could listen to the familiar sounds of nature. It was the crickets singing me their lullabies that finally helped me go to sleep. At least some of my family were nearby, even if it was not my mothers and fathers.

During the day I was forced to wear clothes. I found them so uncomfortable that I kept taking them off and burying them or hiding them where no one could find them. I was constantly being smacked for getting rid of them and eventually they tied them

on me so that I couldn't take them off. I really didn't like the feel of clothes and I still don't. The only reason I wear them today is because it is against the law not to wear them. At every opportunity I will gladly get out of them and wear as little as possible.

Coming from a non-disciplinary society, where all was explained through the stories of *tjukurrpa*, to one that ran only on discipline, was very hard on all of us kids. We were hit with a stick, a strap, a hand, or whatever they could get to beat us with. It was bewildering, painful and terrifying. Being forced to wear clothes was my first experience of this kind of discipline, but I soon learned that this was the way these people controlled things ...

What I remember most about the Bungalow was the hardness and rigidity of being commanded to do things. I was punished for so many things that it felt like I could never do anything right. I kept thinking, 'What is happening to me?' When I looked around I couldn't understand why there were so many unhappy kids at this place. Lots of kids were constantly crying. Lots of kids were getting sick. Lots of kids were walking around like ghosts obeying orders and following rules and orders that were constantly being yelled at them. These people doing the yelling were not our uncles and aunties. They had no right to speak to us with such anger.

I tried to run away many times, and I would always head south like a homing pigeon. They would find me and bring me back and I would get smacked for running away. For some reason, I felt that these smacks were the price I had to pay if I was ever going to see my family again ...

One of our biggest problems at the Bungalow was that we were constantly hungry. The Arrernte kids taught us where to find local bush tucker, and we made bark boomerangs so we could catch the small birds that came to drink at the waterhole. There were lots of all different kinds of birds then, and it was quite easy to get plenty

to eat by throwing our boomerangs among them. When we caught some, we would build a fire and cook them on the spot in the way our mothers had taught us. We also supplemented our limited diet with *maku*, sugar from the gum tree leaves, pigweed and caterpillars. When the bush foods were limited, we made our way to the local dump and licked the empty jars we found there.

The Bungalow was very overcrowded and the school building was old and unsanitary. It had a very inadequate septic system with unsanitary water tanks, and it smelt really bad. Running through the water that overflowed from these tanks gave us sore feet. In spite of these deplorable conditions, the Bungalow became a tourist attraction. Visitors would come to stare at us just because we were brown. These visitors made loud comments about us as if they were looking at animals in a zoo. We would hear them say things like, 'They are much less intelligent than white children,' or 'Isn't it wonderful that they've been rescued from such a horrible existence?' They talked about us as if we had no feelings ...

Growing up 'coloured' in a world of black and white has been a constant struggle for all Aborigines of mixed descent. Those of us who were taken away from our mothers as young children were taught that we were better than our Aboriginal families, but not good enough to be equal in white society. We were not allowed to speak our language or learn about the culture of our mothers. We were given a mediocre education because the Australian government believed that we were less intelligent than whites and could only be trained for menial work, like housekeeping and cattle mustering. We were brought up with minimal survival skills in a world that has never accepted us as equal.

The traumas we members of the Stolen Generations carry in our memories, and the identity questions we still live with, have been passed on to our children, creating a deep wound in the spirits of Aboriginal families right across Australia.

From John Moriarty, Saltwater Fella, Viking, 2000

I was born on the banks of the McArthur River, across from the small outback town of Borroloola on the Northern Territory side of the Gulf of Carpentaria. I believe I was born in 1938, although the exact date of my birth isn't known. My official birthday, the one given to many Aboriginal people, is 1 April. April Fools' Day, which is indicative of the attitude of the time.

My memories of Borroloola at that time only come in fragments. Moments like being with my mother, having a drink. I'm in her arms and she's giving me a drink of water from her mouth, making sure I have water. Whether I was sick or not, I'm not sure.

I can't remember the surroundings so much, but I recall people being warm and friendly. I certainly remember having a family. My grandmother was very affectionate, and then there were all the other 'mothers' I had too. I grew up in a very, very secure environment. Boys have a lot of freedom in traditional Aboriginal society and can do virtually whatever they like. After initiation, all those carefree times come to an abrupt halt when they become part of the adult community. But as boys they are extremely spoilt – they are more than cared for, they are revered ...

Food is one of my distinct memories, food cooking on the open fire. I loved the taste of fish and goanna and lizards that were cooked on the coals and had that charcoal taste, so I could chew the burnt parts. Even singed and blackened kangaroo ears, chewing into them and enjoying the crunchy texture. It's the mingling of the charcoal with the flesh that tastes so good, whether it's fish or lizard or kangaroo. I suppose it was a tough diet, but we'd supplement it with bush fruits and berries ...

My early life was spent surrounded by women, with all those extra ‘mothers’ and the way they cart you around. Even when I was getting pretty big I still remember being breastfed – not only by my mother but by other women as well, almost up to the time I was taken away.

I can’t see individual faces; I can’t recall them now. My mum? Not a face. I don’t recall her face before I was taken away. I have no memories of my father at all. Apparently, he was there for quite some time after I was born, but then he moved away. I’ve since learned that at one time he was in the British Nave serving on the Russian front and that he could speak Russian, as well as Irish and English. I’ve been told he picked up languages like mine, Yanyuwa, fairly easily and was able to communicate with quite a wide range of people.

Borroloola was very isolated and white men and black women had ‘bush marriages’, even though it was against the law then for whites and blacks to cohabit. My being part-European made no difference to the way I was treated by the Yanyuwa, which makes the discrimination against Aborigines for all these years so ironic. If you fit into the Aboriginal community well, you’re afforded all the privileges of that community and you’re not seen as anything different.

I was about four or five when I was taken. I’m not sure exactly how old, but it was 1942, so I guess I must have been about four.

The pressure was on my mother, and on the welfare, to get rid of me to a mission, under the pretext of giving me an education. Rather than risk losing me, my mother decided to go with me to the mission at Roper River, almost 300 kilometres away. She had to leave her own land, although the people at Roper are related to us tribally and we have very strong traditional family links there under the kinship system.

I was expected to go to school, which I did, at the Anglican mission school. In those days the Northern Territory was carved up into religious spheres of influence and my region was Anglican; other parts were Methodist, Presbyterian or Catholic.

After what seemed like only a few days at Roper, I can remember getting on a truck in a yard. It was an army truck with huge wheels. I was at a building with a fence around it, a wire fence with brown poles, and I remember it was north-facing. We got in the truck and it drove away, heading westward ...

The truck went all the way down to Alice Springs. It took several days. I don't remember any stops in between, nothing like that. There was a canopy over the back of the truck, so we could only see out of the back. I seemed to be always facing the right-hand side.

In Alice Springs we went to a place called the Bungalow, which was the original Alice Springs Telegraph Station. We met more kids from other parts of the Territory, and people from Groote Eylandt and Roper River.

The Bungalow was actually a little group of buildings with open land around them. And round rocks, very round rocks. I hadn't seen rocks like those before. The trees were different, too. And it felt really strange not being near salt water. The smells were all different ...

I tried to be a man but I remember crying and crying. I can't remember a specific place for that. Not leaving Borroloola. Not leaving Roper. For years I had the feeling that I'd get back there, and I just fought and fought as hard as I could to keep hold of that.

You don't admit to being upset, especially to your peer group. You try to shield the things that are being forced out of you. That's why I still harbour most of my thoughts ...

During all this time, I can't see any individual white faces – not in the army truck or at the settlement. White faces to me were authority figures, they were bosses. You lived with that, you had to get around that as best you could. At every turn we were told, 'You must forget your language, your culture and things like that. Stop acting like an uncivilised Aborigine.'

I'm not sure exactly what they called us then. They didn't call us blacks, that was considered a really derogatory term. Yet the whites reinforced their authority at every turn, especially when we were little and they had total control over us. They dictated how we dressed, how we stood to attention. We were made to remember who we were and what our status in life was to be forever.

Years later, when I found my mother, I asked, 'Why did you let me go?' I was still angry about not being brought up by my mother, a feeling that even now makes it hard for me to be apart from my own children. My mother told me, in a very soft voice, 'My son, you were going to school. I took you to school every day.' As far as she can remember, I was going to school for about two or three weeks. She said, 'I was taking you to school for a while and then I went to pick you up this day and you were gone.'

D. Western Australia

Western Australian Removals Policy and Practice

(i) James Isdell, Travelling Protector, Kimberleys, to Charles F. Gale, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Western Australia, 1909

People who have no knowledge of the surroundings of these youngsters in native camps, are fond of writing letters to the papers detailing the cruelty and harrowing grief of the mothers, their motives in writing may be perfectly sincere, but let them visit and reside for a while in the vicinity of these haunts in the far north where these youngsters are being reared, they would soon alter their opinions on the matter. To see the open indecency, immorality and hear the vile conversations ordinarily carried on, which these children listen to and repeat would convince them that separation is absolutely necessary if the future welfare of the youngsters is to be considered.

I am convinced that the short lived grief of the parent is of little consequence compared to the children's future. The half-caste is intellectually above the aborigine, and it is the duty of the State that they be given a chance to lead a better and purer life than their brothers. I would not hesitate for one moment to separate any half-caste from its aboriginal mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief may be at the time. They soon forget their offspring.

(ii) Chief Protector of Aborigines, Western Australia, Charles F. Gale, to the Commissioner of Police, May 10 1909.

As you aware, it is my desire to send all half-caste children of tender years to institutions provided for such, in order that they may be properly cared for and educated, but my inspectors report that during their travels they come across numerous half-caste children of whom I had no knowledge, and who should have been sent to such institutions. In this respect I would be pleased if you would instruct your officers when on patrol duty in the various stations and country districts of the state, to forward me lists of any such half-caste children they may come across. The returns should show sex, age, reputed father if possible, where living, and living conditions. I have received so many courtesies from your Department in assisting me in the administration of the Aborigines Act, that I am somewhat loth to approach you further; but at the same time I feel sure that you will assist me in the direction indicated above.

(iii) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A. O. Neville, to Secretary, Department of Aborigines and Fisheries, 27 June 1916.

The following half-caste children will require removal at a later date, or when satisfactory arrangements can be made:-

MT. ANDERSON STATION – 63 miles from Derby, owned by Mr. G. C. Rose, managed by Mr. F. R. Williams – 2 half-caste girls, about 4 and 6 years.

NOONKANBAH STATION – 145 miles from Derby, owned by Mr. S. Emanuel, managed by Mr. N. W. Rae – probably 5 half-caste children, various ages.

CARTRIDGE SPRINGS STATION – on the Wyndham Road, near Turkey Creek, owned by Mr. Norton, managed by Mr. Rademy – 1 half-caste boy and 2 babies.

The father of the boy, Charlie, (who is about 6 years old), is Fred Teroney, now in Sydney; his mother – Alice, has 2 half-caste children at Beagle Bay Mission – a boy (Tommy) and a girl (Maggie).

The father of one of the babies is the Head Stockman at Cartridge Springs, a man named Griffiths, who I am informed is going to write to me about the Department taking charge of the child at his expense.

MARGARET RIVER STATION – about 50 miles South-West of Moola-Bulla, owned by Vesty Bros., managed by Jack Egan – 2 half-castes, 6 or 7 years of age.

(iv) Commissioner of Police to Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, May 16 1919.

With reference to your 973/16 of 13th instant, relative to the transfer of several half caste children from the North West portion of this State to the Moore River Settlement, I should be glad to know how it is proposed that these half castes should be sent forward. Are they to be simply put on the boat and shipped to Geraldton care of the Police there without an escort or are they to be collected and brought in to one centre and sent down with an escort.

(v) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, to the Commissioner of Police, May 22 1919.

Replying to your minute of the 16th inst., respecting the half-caste children from the North, I think it might be arranged that the Kimberley children should be collected at Derby, and that arrangements should be made with some lady travelling from thence to Fremantle, not Geraldton, to care for them on the voyage, for which service she will be remunerated by this Department. On arrival the children will be met by arrangement. Any expenses will, of course, be defrayed by us.

The child from Dalgety Downs can be placed in the charge of the stewardess of the S.S. "Bambra", who would hand her over to my officer at Fremantle.

The girl from Sandstone would of course be sent by train when a suitable opportunity occurred. She should be booked to Mogumber Station.

I might add that I should be glad to have any particulars which the Police can supply respecting the parentage of these children.

(vi) Inspector Drewry, District Police Office, Broome, to Officer in Charge of Police, Derby, 23 July 1919.

The following has been received by me from the Commissioner of Police and is forwarded to you for your attention.

“Now that the Moore River Settlement has been established there is now room to accommodate certain half-caste children in the North and North-West. We have been awaiting the erection of a dormitory before taking action to bring these children in, but it is now time that the necessary steps were taken”.

The following is a list of the children, with their whereabouts as far as it is known.

Mount Anderson Station, West Kimberley. Two Half-caste girls about 7 and 9 years of age.

When the above children are located they are to be sent in (not escorted) to Derby and forwarded to Fremantle by steamer in charge of the Stewardess, any expenses incurred will be defrayed by the Aboriginals Department. It is essential that the names of the children and parentage of same should, if possible, be furnished.

(vii) Inspector O. Drewry, Derby, to the Commissioner of Police, Perth, August 14 1919.

In submitting the attached report, I desire to submit that this seizing and removing of these children is obnoxious to the Police and I trust that some official of the Aborigines Dept. will be appointed to do it. I submit that behind the power of the Chief Protector to order such seizure lies the point “for cause shown”, yet, in these cases no cause has been shown, yet he can seize all aboriginal or half-caste children

under 16 years of age. No neglect has been shown by the mothers in these cases that would bring these children within the clauses as regards neglected children under the State Children's Act.

The Aborigines Act does not demand that the Police shall carry out duty such as the above, which I contend is not humane, the mother having cared for these children under circumstances where a white woman under similar circumstances would have found an easy solution out of the difficulty. The children have the natural love for the mother. To remove them from the tropics to the South is questionable as regards their health. The present Colonial Secretary stopped this method, I understand, when Premier and has still the power to exempt these children and their mothers from the jurisdiction of the Aborigines Act now. I await further instructions.

* R. Connell, Commissioner of Police, to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, A. O. Neville, September 26 1919.

The attached reports regarding the removal of half-caste native children from the Kimberley District to the Moore River Native Settlement, is submitted for your information and further instructions.

* Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, to R. Connell, Commissioner of Police, October 9 1919.

I ought to take strong exception to Inspector Drewry's remarks, but refrain from doing so merely because no good purpose would be served in entering into a controversy as to the merits of the case. Inspector Drewry has not yet been called upon to administer the Aborigines Department, and it is not essential for the Chief Protector of Aborigines to acquaint him with all the reasons for the action decided

upon. I take it that he is there to carry out the instructions of his Chief, and not to criticise the head of this Department.

If the duty of bringing in half-caste children is obnoxious to the Police, it is strange that this Department has not been previously advised of this, in view of the hundreds of cases that have had attention. Even in Kimberley a large number have been withdrawn from various stations and placed at Beagle Bay by the Police.

However, the case of those at Mount Anderson is thoroughly well known to me, as I inspected these two youngsters when in Kimberley in 1916. I ask, therefore, that the removal be effected as early as possible. It is inadvisable that the station should be advised beforehand of the date upon which the children are to be taken away, as this would undoubtedly lead to the mothers hiding the youngsters, and thereby causing the Police additional trouble.

I should esteem it a favour if you would kindly give the necessary instructions accordingly.

(viii) Constable John McClay to Sergeant Crowe, Derby (W.A.), December 26 1919.

I respectfully report having left Police Station at 7 a.m. on the 13th inst. for Mt. Anderson with tracker Johnnie driving Police horses 61 and 201 in a hired sulky to bring in half-castes Eletbah alias Topsy and Neulaga alias Algie – vide D. O. File 705/19 and C. O. 1867/19.

I arrived at Mt. Anderson on the evening of the 15th inst. and found that the children were not at the homestead, and that they were out assisting to muster sheep.

On the 16th inst. I found them, out on the run, at about 10.30 a.m., when I took charge of them and brought them to the Police Station, Derby, arriving there at 12 noon on the 19th instant.

(ix) Sergeant Crowe to Inspector Drewry, December 27, 1919.

The above half-castes will be forwarded to Fremantle per S. S. "Bambra" in charge of the Stewardess.

FITZROY CROSSING.

LIST OF HALF-CASTE CHILDREN TRANSFERRED FROM EAST KIMBERLEY TO MOORE RIVER NATIVE SETTLEMENT

Name.	Age.	Parents Names. Father.	Alleged Mother.	Where from.
William	9	B. A. Sadler, Fitzroy Crossing.	Kitty	Bohemia Downs
Topsy	11	C. Hansan, Broome.	Polly	Margaret Downs
Peter	7	-	Lilly	Noonkanbah
Bendy	9	Barrett	Ningley	"
Holyander	7	Major	Lulu	"

(x) Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines to The Superintendent, Moore River Native Settlement, Mogumber, February 25 1920

Further to my memo of 13th instant, the following are the names of the children recently sent to you, who came from the North-West:-

Elitbah alias Topsy)	from Mt. Anderson Station
Neulaga alias Algie)	" "

William, aged 9,	"	Bohemia Downs Station
		(mother's name Kitty).
Topsy, " 11.		from Margaret Downs.
		(mother's name Polly).
Peter, " 7.		From Nookanbah. (mother – Lily).
Bendy, " 9.	"	" (mother – Ningle)
Holyander, " 7.	"	" (mother – Lulu)
Lucy, " 6.	"	" (mother – Mungate)

(xi) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, to the Commissioner of Police, July 14 1921.

I have arranged with the Australian Board of Mission that in future they will accept the care of neglected children residing in East Kimberley, if such children are sent to their Forrest River Mission.

There are at the present time some thirteen (13) children in the vicinity of Fitzroy Crossing, some of whom should be removed to the Mission. I have not a complete list of these but they are known to your Officers. I should be very glad if something could be done to have them collected and sent along to Wyndham, where they will be taken over by the Mission Authorities.

Children under six (6) years of age should not be removed unless they are entirely neglected, nor should quarter-castes, if favoring the whites in appearance, be sent along. Girls from six (6) to fourteen (14) years of age, and boys of a like age, are subjects for removal, but girls over that age should not go the Mission, and as a rule boys over 14 are best left where they are, providing employment is available for them.

Quarter-caste children, if over six (6) years of age, should be given a chance of being brought up as white and should consequently be sent South to be placed in one of the Government Institutions.

I believe there are also some children, fit subjects for removal, in the Hall's Creek District.

I should be much obliged if steps can be taken to have this matter attended to, any expense attach thereto being, of course, defrayed by this Department. When children are removed full details respecting their condition, surroundings, age, and parentage if possible, should be forwarded to me for record purposes.

(xii) Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O.Neville, to the Commissioner of Police, December 13 1922.

I have referred the matter of the child "Dilly" to the State Children Department, as in my opinion such quarter-caste children should, if possible, be brought up as white children. The Secretary of the Department states that if this child is committed to the care of his Department as a neglected child, he will place her at one of the institutions in the metropolitan area. I should think this fact that the girl, who is only quarter-caste, is found in an aboriginal camp should be sufficient cause to treat her as a neglected child.

The child "Peggy" has already been dealt with in a similar manner.

The boys at Pyramid Station had better remain where they are, unless it is shown at any time that they are being illtreated or not properly looked after, and I shall be glad if the Police will keep an eye on them.

Speech to the Legislative Assembly, WA, 1934.

Mr. WISE: The picture is presented in a most alarming way by a contributor to the “West Australian” as recently as the 22nd July. This contributor is not at all in accord with furthering the interests of the half-caste and aboriginal in the direction of perpetuating them. This writer, in a very outspoken article, makes it plain that in his opinion, as we are responsible for his appearance, so we should be responsible for his disappearance. In the opening paragraph, the writer said:-

The half-caste is not a pretty person to have sitting round the family hearth, and no white parent can view unmoved the prospect of a piebald progeny. But the problem is that he does not view the progeny at all, for parentage when it comes to a mixing of colours does not even peep into the picture.

The next few words are most illuminating –

The scrupulous care with which millions of white and so-called white people are exercising at the present moment to prevent the appearance of their legitimate all-white off-spring is lacking in the case of the mixed union. Our black and yellow sisters are still old-fashioned enough to think that mating pre-supposed children, and their eyes would open very much wider, indeed, if a clinic for the prevention of the appearance of piebald babies were to be set up in their midst.

The writer elaborated that point particularly.

In their abysmal ignorance they would regard such an institution as an unwarrantable interference with the laws of nature; which laws of nature again in the abysmal ignorance constitute their code of morality.

But moralising aside, we have to face the fact that the half-caste is here, that he is increasing in numbers, and that it is no more possible to prevent his appearance than it is to arrest the earth in its course. A White Australia policy will not suffice to stop him, but, unfortunately, it suffices to stop quite a number of people from giving the matter their attention, with the result that they consider the matter a closed subject.

That, unfortunately, is the viewpoint of many citizens – that so long as we can ignore the subject we are getting along very well with it. That, I claim, is entirely a wrong viewpoint to present, not only to our own people, but to the people who are so vitally interested in the welfare of this race that we are breeding in our midst. The writer proceeded to say –

Why not let the lead come from this State of Western Australia? Instead of striking a blow for the principle of a White Australia by shutting half-caste children out of our white schools, and letting it stand at that, why not make it the excuse for laying down the foundation of a new system in regard to our fellow Australian of mixed blood based on the knowledge that science can supply?

The writer is advocating the ultimate extinction, by scientific means, of the half-caste.

No one wants the half-caste, though it is a slur on the Christianity and the culture of the white man that he gets more consideration from his black parents' pagan people. But, on the ground alone that he is a nuisance to us, we should hurry on his disappearance. Science has pointed a way. The union of half-caste with half-caste, urged by many, is decidedly not the way. Half-caste with half-caste unions should be actively discouraged, since they will certainly propagate a progeny who will embarrass us economically and otherwise, and as well have their lives rendered miserable by taunts about tar-brushes.

Mr. Hawke: Who was the writer?

Mr. WISE: He wrote under the name of "Physicus", using the privilege of anonymity, but he apparently wrote authoritatively. There we have the case presented in a lengthy article by one who has given the subject considerable thought.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: He goes further than that; he recommends breeding out.

Mr. WISE: Yes, he recommends the breeding out process entirely. He advocates the use of science to bring about the ultimate extinction of the half-caste. In connection

with the arresting of the half-caste in his progress and multiplication, I would say that the infliction of a fine, even up to £100, to a man who insists of cohabiting with natives is not the means to overcome the problem. It does not matter what legislation is provided in that connection. There are many instances in this State where it would be illogical, and I should say unkind, as well as unjust, to inflict a fine upon a man who was living or cohabiting with an aboriginal. I would like to mention, for the information of those who do not understand the position, that within this State are many men, who, imbued with the spirit of the pioneers, for which our nation is famous, who have done their wonderful pioneering work and have served the State in that sphere in a wonderful way; men who live in isolation, live from their point of view true to their black mates and have half-castes as children. I should like to raise the question whether the Federal policy of mustering, as is happening in the Northern Territory, the half-caste offspring of many of those pioneers, segregating them, placing them on mission stations or on stations far removed from their parents, is the right one. I would say it was a debatable point whether that was just to either party. Inclusion in the Act of any fine would merit just consideration and a lot of consideration before any conclusion could be reached that would stop the problem from that end. One suggestion made recently to the Minister by Mrs. Vallance, of the Women's Service Guild, indicates the serious position arising from the use of half-castes as domestics. A writer in the Press suggested that solution of the problem would come by training these people in domestic duties, but Mrs. Vallance was very outspoken in her opinion on the subject, and gave the following statement as proof:

At the Correlup mission station last year – I believe that station has gone out of existence since – quoting from the official report, of 80 girls who went into domestic service during the year, 30 were returned to the mission in a pregnant condition.

This is an aspect which also calls for serious deliberation.

Mr. Stubbs: Did you say Correlup.

Mr. WISE: Yes.

Mr. Stubbs: That station has been closed down for 10 years.

Mr. Latham: The hon. member means Moore River.

Mr. WISE: That, I know, has been the experience of the northern mission stations. The greatest difficulty is experienced, and no matter what trouble is taken to educate half-castes and apparently fit them to go into the white man's life, it ends in tragedy. We have amongst half-caste servants in the north quite domesticated people – girls who can sew and cook and vie with their white sisters in those directions.

The missions are now chary about allowing half-caste girls to enter the service of the white in any way. It usually ends in tragedy. Problem after problem presents itself, no matter what aspect of the situation is reviewed.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

Mr. WISE: I wish to refer to an aspect of the situation raised by Dr. Cook, of Darwin, who is an authority on native diseases, particularly leprosy, and is also a scientist. He is heartily in accord with the Federal policy of mating half-castes with white men, which, in turn, is entirely opposed to the views of the previous authority I have quoted. In the "Daily News" of the 20th July last, the following appears:-

The Commonwealth Government is alarmed at the growth of the half-caste population, and has adopted as its definite policy the encouragement of marriages of when men and half-caste women with the view of raising the standard of mixed blood to that of the whites.

Several of the States work on an exactly opposite principle, and do everything in their power to prevent the marriage of half-castes to any but other half-castes or blacks.

Pointing out that this must inevitably tend to pull down the standard of the half-castes to that of the blacks, the Commonwealth Government intends to take advantage of the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne this week to make an effort to persuade all interested States to come into line on the uniform policy of giving the half-castes a chance.

Mr. Stubbs Is that an authentic article?

Mr. WISE: Yes, it continues –

The Commonwealth policy does not contemplate the inter-marriage of white women and half-caste men, and there is little or no tendency in this direction.

Within the compound of Darwin eligible half-castes can be surveyed for the approval of any white man who is sufficiently interested to approach them on the subject of matrimony. He views them and makes his selection. It is a sort of slave market. He approvingly eyes one of them, and may be permitted to take her to the pictures or some other entertainment to see if they anything else in common with each other. If he is impressed by the woman, he is permitted to marry her. One member interjected that this was the only reasonable solution. I would ask, is it the only reasonable solution? Opinions are so diametrically opposed on the point that the whole subject is debatable. One can imagine the mentality of a white man who would desire to mate with a half-caste woman. In all probability her mentality would be better than his.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: A little while ago you were talking about the pioneers of the outback mating with the blacks.

Mr. WISE: Even in places south of Darwin, many unfortunates, human derelicts in many cases, have interested themselves in half-castes for one purpose alone. I would

say in a case of that sort it was questionable whether it was advantageous to either side. The Chief Protector of Aborigines (Mr. Neville) submitted to the "Daily News" on 8th June last a very plainly-worded article dealing with this question. He went so far as to provide a photograph of a black child and a white child. The article is set up in bold type and headed, "It is good to mate half-castes with whites. Mr. Neville says aborigines are closely related to us." The article goes on to say –

It will come rather as a surprise to the average "White Australian" to learn that the Australian aboriginal is racially related to him.

Mr. A. O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines under the State Aborigines Department, said to-day: -

"The blacks will have to go white. It is exemplified in the quarter-castes and by the gradual absorption of the native Australian black race by the white, I have noticed no throw-back in such cases hitherto."

"The decision made by the Commonwealth Government to adopt as a definite policy the encouragement of marriage of white men and half-caste women with a view to raising the standard of mixed blood to that of the whites, is nothing new in this State. I have foreseen it for years, and sponsored it as the only natural outcome of the position.

I should say that sufficient time has not elapsed to prove whether there will be a throw-back or not. Anyone who has studied the Mendelian law, whether in relation to plant breeding or cattle breeding, will know that the risk of a throw-back exists over the first seven generations. It would, perhaps, still be a dangerous thing to advocate the breeding of a white-aboriginal population. Whether the Federal policy is right or wrong, the matter is a very dangerous one to handle. Before any policy is laid down, a definite investigation should be made. I should like to refer to the attendant dangers of disease. There was an appalling case in the North-West. A bright young girl was attending a leper patient. She contracted the dreadful disease and subsequently died in isolation. In the case of all hereditary and adopted diseases associated with

aborigines, the matter must be handled with the utmost delicacy. I have endeavoured in this somewhat brief resume on a very interested but involved subject to put forward both sides. There is, no doubt, urgent necessity for immediate action so that the situation may be brought under control by means of a Government policy. Some means must be found for removing the dreadful spectacles that are to be seen in our midst.

J. D. Moseley, Royal Commissioner into Aborigines in Western Australia to His Excellency the Honourable Sir James Mitchell, K.C.M.G., Lieutenant-Governor in and over the State of Western Australia and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia, April 19, 1934.

May it please Your Excellency:

Pursuant to the Royal Commission issued to me on the 21st. February, 1934, to investigate, report, and advise upon matters in relation to the condition and treatment of Aborigines, I have the honour to submit an interim report upon this subject.

Although doubtless no report is expected of me until such time as my enquiries relative to Aborigines have been completed, I feel that I shall not be exceeding my duty if at this stage I refer to my recent visit the Native Settlement at Moore River, during which visit I was confronted with many matters which in my view call for urgent attention. Were it not for the very strong feeling I have as to the urgency of these matters, I should be well content to postpone my comments until my report on the whole question referred to me is prepared. ...

Taking the Settlement, however, as I found it, and for the time assuming that there was some good reason for selecting its location, it forms, in my view, a woeful spectacle. ...

Having spent some nine hours at the Settlement and having seen, I think, everything I should see appropriate to the object of my visit, my firm impression is that the settlement leave very much to be desired.

Constitution of the Settlement.

The settlement comprises:-

1. A compound at which are located young people sent there for a variety of causes and children taken from their parents sent to the Settlement for education and protection.
2. A camp for indigent natives and their families situated some 300 yards from the compound.

The Compound.

Accommodation. The dormitories present from the outside a dilapidated appearance. Inside at the present time there appears to be adequate room, but, remembering the numbers who, at this time of the year, sleep on the verandahs, I should say that, during the winter months, the rooms are far too crowded. Dr. Maunsell of New Norcia, who frequently visits the Settlement professionally, agrees with this.

The dormitories are vermin ridden to an extent which I suspect makes eradication impossible. Assuming that the settlement remains on its present site, the sooner new dormitories are constructed, and constructed of some material which will offer less scope for vermin, the better for the health and comfort of the inmates and for the reputation of the Department.

There are no means of keeping in the inmates in the dormitories at night. The doors are locked, but latticed walls are easily broken and many cases are on record of the girls visiting the camp, a few hundred yards from the compound, after they are placed in the dormitories for the night. Later I shall have something to write of the Camp. While it remains part of the Settlement, it should be made impossible for the

inmates of the Compound to have any communication with it. At New Norcia Mission I noticed that all openings to the dormitories were guarded by strong link mesh netting. I was told that this is effective and a similar expedient for Moore River was suggested by the Superintendent, Mr. Neal, in his evidence. It should, in my opinion, be attended to at once, and the compound should be patrolled at night by a responsible person – not a native policeman. ...

Food. Here there is much room for improvement. Powdered milk for children is obviously useless but 56 cases are consumed in a month. No vegetables are grown at the settlement and a totally inadequate supply is imported. Tinned vegetables (so called) are in the same category as powdered milk. There is an insufficiency of meat and, if such articles as fruit and eggs were occasionally supplied, fewer children would go to the hospital. This view is supported by the Doctor and the nursing sister.

Punishment of inmates. I was not entirely satisfied with the evidence of the Superintendent on this point. I was shown a place of detention commonly called “the boob” and I disliked its appearance very much. A small detached “room” made of posts driven into the ground, floor of white sand, scarcely a gleam of light, and little ventilation, and I was told that inmates have been incarcerated in this place for as long as 14 days. It is barbarous treatment and the place should be pulled down. If detention is necessary, and at this early stage in my investigation, I do not propose to express an opinion, it should be carried out in a more suitable place and the maximum period of 14 days prescribed by regulations considerably reduced. Records of such punishment should be sent to the Chief Protector. ...

I have the honour to be Your Excellency’s obedient servant,

J. D. Moseley, Royal Commissioner

Statement by Mrs Mary Bennett to the Moseley Royal Commission, 19 March 1934.

The inclusion or exclusion of different classes of persons of aboriginal origin in or from native camps: This is but another way of describing the Aborigines' Dept's policy of arbitrary deportation, which has caused more suffering and terror to our natives than any other single cause, except perhaps having the whole of their country taken from them for squattages. A social worker, writing in the Australian Board of Mission's Review for Sept. 1933, says truly –

Deportation by the Govt is one of the chief factors in causing the sure extinction of our native race. Family life to the aborigine is everything ...
Such interference is fatal.

That the dept means well is presumed, but this does not justify inflicting such suffering as the splitting up of families always brings about, and it does not justify deportations of innocent people. No dept in the world can take the place of a child's mother, and the Honorary Minister does not offer any valid justification for the official smashing of native family and community life when he says –

The removal of half-caste children is a necessity for so many reasons that it seems almost futile to mention them.

So mothers with infants, and individual children, and sometimes families, are mustered up like cattle and deported to the remote Govt native settlement at Moore River, there to drag out their days and years in exile, suffering all the miseries of transportation, for no fault but only because the white supplanters are too greedy and too mean to give them living areas in their own districts. A Western Australian half-caste man, Norman Harris, in pleading for "freedom, justice and one law" makes the true charge:

Under the Aborigines Act every one of us is a prisoner in his own country. Any police officer can come along and take all of our children at any time, and we cannot object or we are committing an offence under the Act. A police officer, deeming us to come under Clause 3, sends us off. If we refuse to go, we are forced to a settlement under Clause 55, and can be kept there under Clause 12. In many cases death alone ends our term of duress.

...

The attitude of the white people is reflected in the Aborigines Act, which expressly excludes the mother's evidence as to the father of a half-caste child, and also excludes "all right of the mother" to the child, although the mother is the only one who shows the child parental affection, and though, as the Chief Protector pointed out, the aboriginal woman and the half-caste woman deemed to be an aboriginal under the Act, are the only ones whom the law reaches for the offence of cohabitation with white men – the defenceless victims. (Mr. Neville's reply to a questionnaire sent by the British Commonwealth League, London, April, 1933).

Half-castes have told me how they eluded capture by the police, sometimes escaping by the merest chance after a close chase, preferring hunger and a cold and tribal mutilation and appropriation by an old man to that greatest terror of all – exile from their kin and country. Dora escaped by darkening her skin. Another half-caste girl, Marie, never dared venture away from the spinifex country, and was more ignorant of white people's way for a long time than many aborigines. Another half-caste girl, who suffers from eye trouble as so many half-castes do, was caught when the others escaped and was sent away to the remote Govt institution. Year by year her mother, Mabel, used to beg the missionaries to apply for Wulleen's return. At last the great day came when the request was granted, and I had the pleasure of bringing Wulleen

back to her own country ... (I have accompanied native and half-caste girls travelling, and I do not consider it safe for them to travel without a white woman). Once we go north from Kalgoorlie the news ran along like wildfire, and at each station when the train pulled up groups of natives collected to welcome the poor child back. In their joy at seeing her again they would stretch up and take my hand in theirs with such affectionate confidence. It was a triumphal journey.

A shy gently half-caste girl was taken by a squatter and they had three children. Afterwards Lily Quinn, as she was called, and the three children were sent away to the Govt institution. The poor girl escaped with her children more than once, but they were always captured and brought back. At last she was given permission to return to her own country and keep the youngest child on condition that she married a half-caste man who applied for her. They were married and returned to her country, and placed her little girl in the mission home there, and as they often camp there they see as much of the child as white people see of their children. Many a time when I went into the raffia room I used to see Lily sitting there working with her little girl, nestling beside her; but the two older children are condemned to grow up away from their mother.

Many of these poor children are parted from their mothers, who are the only ones who do really love them, and their hearts are starved for want of love, but first for years they suffer the misery of hunted animals, always running away from the police in the hope of hiding in the country which they know, among their own people, but always in fear that at any moment they may be turned away, never to see them again. They are captured at all ages, as infants in arms, perhaps not until they are grown up; they are not safe until they are dead. If they are not caught and deported as children, because their mothers have been victimised by white men, one day they will

be caught and deported with their children because they have been victimised by white men, but the weary round will go on: From Moore River they may be sent out to service, and back to Moore River many of them will be sent again because they have been victimised again. The native woman never gets justice.

Many of my pupils have been hunted by the police for years, and some of them still bear the marks of shock. Before they were born their aboriginal mothers went in fear of having their half-caste children taken from them, and in fear their children grew from babyhood. Ninggah is a nervy child, continually looking behind her. It is a marvel to me how she gets her work done. Karngoor is a handsome lad, but his early fear still haunts him, and the terror that comes into his eyes reminds me of shell-shock victims. Yet his mother, Yinbidda, is the most splendid looking woman I have ever seen, tall and like a Greek statue. Freddy is a clever child, with strength of character under his acute sensitiveness, but it will be sometime before he out-grows the fear of his babyhood years. Nung-oo, a girl of 13, is still shy to gaucherie, and there is no doubt that this fear is a great handicap to school progress. But it has its compensation, in that by terrified avoidance of all white people many native and half-caste girls have preserved their chastity.

I have often heard the single children pray that God will bless their father and mother, and then I have realised that they mean their aboriginal mother's aboriginal husband, who very often does show them love and brings them presents, a rabbit or a sixpence, and takes an interest in what they are doing, the dress that a girl has made for her mother, the bread that she has learnt to bake, and her schoolwork too. And all these children have their native names and their native relationships. The native tribes are much more Christian than the white race. ...

Departmentalism is no substitute for mother love. I do most earnestly ask that the official smashing of native family life may be stopped, and that native families may be permitted to live where they wish within the law. The laws that are enough for the proper conduct of white communities should be enough for the proper conduct of native communities also. Our aim should be to raise the native camps into thriving self-respecting village communities, rather than to break them down materially by knocking their homes down, and spiritually by taking their children and women from them.

From speech delivered by A. O. Neville, the Western Australian Administrator, to the Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Administrators, held in Canberra in April 1937.

The opinion held by Western Australian authorities is that the problem of the native race, including half-castes, should be dealt with on a long-range plan. We should ask ourselves what will be the position, say, 50 years hence; it is not so much the position to-day 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 long 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 the 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. Cilento 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 becoming detribalized, 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 be 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 not 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 me that 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 per cent 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 ...

An important aspect of this 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 ...

Every administration has trouble with half-caste girls. I know of 200 or 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 a 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 it really does not 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 colored girl. About twelve prosecutions are pending for contraventions of that provision of the new act, and before long I am sure that there will be a diminution of that trouble.

From Margaret Morgan, Mt. Margaret: A Drop in a Bucket, Murundoo, 1986

I. DEPORTED

Then came the fateful day, 15 August 1921, just four months after Rod's arrival in Laverton – a day that cast him into deepest despair the like of which he had not experienced before. On that day fifteen Wongutha were caught and sent away to Moore Rover Government Settlement (also known as Mogumber).

Under the Aborigines Act 1905 the Chief Protector became guardian of all Aborigines and Part-Aborigines to 16 years of age. He had power under the Act to remove people from one place to another as he thought best for them, without reference to any other authority, with the Police Department to carry out his directives.

Months later Rod learned from the people what happened that day in the police yard. The 'indigents' were all gathered around the Laverton police station to get their annual blanket and clothing issue. To their astonishment, the police popped fifteen of them into cells, parting husbands from wives and parents from children. One woman was kicked in the stomach. Next day they were bundled into a cattle truck, and marked on the outside of the truck was a stock notice which Rod read:

15 NIGGERS FOR MOGUMBER

Months later Mysie met a white woman, in Hannan Street Kalgoorlie, who began to recount to her how the niggers were screaming and yelling in the cells that night – she thought it was hilarious. Mysie felt sick. She said quietly, 'Yes, and did you know that one of the men in the cells, separated from his young wife Nardie, anguished over her, wondering what had happened to her? And do you know what happened to her?'

She ran terrified into the bush with her baby and was so shocked that she lost her milk and the baby died.’ She never had another child.

The laugh changed to embarrassment as the lady listened, and she couldn’t excuse herself fast enough. The tragedy was that the woman’s unfeeling account of that incident merely reflected the prevalent opinion of the day. Many did not think Aborigines had human emotions. (Even in the Parliament of the day it was said: ‘When you take a child away from a native women she forgets all about it in hours, and as a rule is glad to get rid of it.’ ...)(James Isdell, MLA, Pilbara.)

THAMALA

The children in those days lived by their wits. When on walkabout the parents gave the children strict instruction. In the pearly grey before dawn when the morning star hung brilliant in the sky the mothers collected their children and they were made to gather round the elders.

With respect they listened to the old men deliver a *Thamala*. It was a little sermon on how to live life. They were told what they should and should not do and that they must obey their mothers. ‘In these days of danger, *Jingarbil* might come from this way, or that, or it might be a policeman will come and you’ll get caught’, the elders told them. ‘He’ll take you away, and we’ll never see you again’.

They then continued on with their instructions: ‘When you get to the water-hole you must sit down quickly and do what your mother says. Your mother will go to the water-hole first and see if it is all right. You mustn’t make a noise’.

‘If you make a noise’, the elders warned, ‘*Jingarbil* will hear you and you will bring trouble on your father and mother and we will all be killed. There will be no mothers

and no children. They will come and kill the lot of you – kill you and leave you in a heap and be gone’.

Even when at the mission the children still took every precaution. The women discussed in the raffia room what to do with their children if the police should take them on the hop. Where could they hide them? – inside the cupboard perhaps? – inside the seats on which they were sitting? – or perhaps the chaff house? – or the blacksmith’s shop? The children however took matters into their own hands. They continually kept their ears cocked for horses’ hooves.

‘*Banya!* Look out!’ called Roy (Walker), whose quick ears always caught the sound first. After all, he was part white and knew he would be snapped up in a jiffy and transported to Moore River. At the first call every child on the place was up to the top of the hill quicker than a crow on a hunk of meat. Not until they were hiding did they check out who the visitor might be. That happened many times. ...

Ten-year-old Ada did not survive the Moore River net. She was born of a white father in Ida H. and the tribal fathers found it difficult to hide this child, with her straight blonde hair, who was so fair. They had many near misses.

When she was a baby her family was travelling in the open truck on the train to Kalgoorlie. That day the police decided to raid the trucks and turn them all out. Over the side went blanket rolls, billycans and sugar bags filled with belongings. People took a flying leap out of the trucks as the police closed in. Gilyal, Ada’s tribal father, standing below watched anxiously. Suddenly a four-gallon kerosene tin came hurtling through the air. He jumped quickly and caught it in mid-flight and breathed a sigh of relief as he put it gently on the ground. Baby Ada was inside the tin, covered with sugar bags.

Ada was finally ‘caught’, as they termed it, by the police in Laverton. Enid, another part-white child, was caught at the same time. Put in separate cells in the lockup, they yelled and screamed, which forced the police to put them together in one cell. The little girls cried themselves to sleep. Two days later they were on their way to Moore River Settlement. ...

III. ELUDING THE MOORE RIVER NET

Lallie

Early in September 1926 Lallie and her brother Snowy Bradley, both in their early teens, arrived from Linden via Morgans, their faces blackened with charcoal because they were part-white. Their mother Jirrgulu brought them to Mount Margaret in the hope that they would not be caught and sent to Moore River Settlement.

Mysie took Lallie into her home and loved her. Lallie in turn loved Mysie’s two babies. She was outgoing and friendly, and to their amazement sang all the songs around the house: *Jesus loves me, Nothing but the blood, I am so glad, At the Cross* and many others. It seems that Frank (O’Loughlin), another part-white boy of 13 years who eluded the Moore River net, had been the gospel messenger in his trips between the Mission and Linden. He taught them all the songs and told them of Jesus. ‘By their roaming the gospel message is circulated’, Rod commented.

One day Mysie said to Lallie, ‘I wish I knew the Wongutha word for *love*’, ‘*Yoowa* (yes), *mogul-mugani*’, said Lallie instantly. Mysie mentioned it to the women in the raffia room. ‘Oh, that’s right’, they agreed. Not long after that, Rod put together his first little song in the language, using the shortened form of Lallie’s word:

<i>Jesus, yamathi</i>	Jesus our Friend
<i>Mugu-mugu Wongutha</i>	Loves the Wongutha –
<i>Jesus yutyala</i>	Jesus the Lovely One;
<i>Jesus Nyallju</i>	Jesus cares, enfolds you.

The people loved that little song – the words and tune were so simple and beautiful.

Early one morning, three weeks after her arrival, Lallie gave birth to a premature three-and-a-half pound baby, stillborn. Five days later, Constable Perks from Morgans was under orders to come and take Lallie away and send her on the train to Moore River Settlement. Mysie was shattered. Not long after her arrival at Moore River, Lallie escaped with the Quinn family. Ada and Enid escaped with them, but fear got the better of them and they ran back to Moore River.

Dora

Lily Quinn, a gentle woman, was softly spoken and reticent, but when it came to defending her children she braved everything for their sakes. She had escaped three times from Moore River, and this time she knew that, if she was caught and sent back, her baby of 12 months would be taken from her, as had happened to others.

As she and Lallie stumbled through the bush after their escape, she clung fiercely to her baby. Jack and Nellie, the two older children, ran along beside them, with many admonitions to keep out of sight. They finally found their way back to the Kurnalpie-Edjudina district, where prospecting in the bush kept them safely hidden – that is, for a time. Jack and Nellie were finally caught and sent back to Moore River, where they grew up.

Baby Dora was still free to toddle around in the bush out of sight of police eyes. Lily, part-white herself, knew that at some time the day of reckoning must come for this precious little girl, indistinguishable from a white child. She could not hide her for

ever. Some years later she heard in Edjudina of a place called Mount Margaret where there was a school and where there were many part-white children – a place where parents could see their children whenever they wanted. So Lily brought Dora to Mount Margaret and she entered the Graham Home.

IV. “DIE-OUT” POLICY

The first Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities was held at Canberra 21-23 April 1937. A copy of the report of the conference was sent to both Rod Schenk and Mrs Bennett.

Things were very busy on Mount Margaret, so Rod never got round to reading it, nor did Mrs Bennett who was up to her eyes in the school program. However, Mysie picked it up to skim through, and found her eyes riveted to the statement on page 1 headed ‘Destiny of the Race’, which read:

That this Conference believes that the destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end.

She then settled herself in the easy chair to really digest the report. There it was, in print, what had long baffled them about Mr Neville’s decisions: let the full-bloods *die out*, and *breed out* the half-castes; or to use Mr Neville’s terms in Canberra: ‘merge’ and ‘absorb’. He predicted that by merging the part-whites into the white race, and allowing the full-bloods to die out, Australia could ‘eventually forget that there ever were any aborigines’. The report spelt it all out. The policy was to be achieved, so Mr Neville told the Conference, through the Act passed in the Western Australian Parliament the previous year. Mysie read on.

The door banged. That was Rod coming in from work. 'Rod!' Mysie called out, as she continued reading. 'Just have a look at this! It's all here: just as we suspected AON was up to!' Rod took the report Mysie handed him and started to read. After reading through the 'long range policy' to page 10 he could hardly contain himself. 'Natives become serfs more than in any other country', he said angrily.

As he sat there and thought about it many things became clear. Every Christian wedding right from 1932 had been a tussle with Mr Neville to get his 'permission'. It was revealed in the report that marriages between half- and full-blood were contrary to his policy. He read: 'State Parliament has just 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'.

The inference from Mr Neville's remarks in the report was that mission teaching arrested tribal practices to which he attributed the decimation of the race. Was that why it had been so hard to establish settled mission stations? In the report Mr Neville said that instead of dying out Aborigines thrived in settled conditions, so much so that 'at mission stations the natives are encouraged to multiply by marriage'.

Mr Neville had constantly rejected the intake of full-blood children into the Graham Homes to receive education. Page 11 of the report explained why. Because there was no such thing as atavism in the Aboriginal, only part-white children were being taught the three Rs so that they would be 'fit and educated' to merge into the white race. Therefore he advocated education for the part-white so that they would be absorbed into the white race, but was opposed to education of full-bloods because he believed they were dying out.

Everything that had been happening for the last few years fell into place as he read on. He couldn't believe what he was reading. Mr Neville boasted to the Conference that:

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 ... the Western Australian law to which have referred is based on the assumption that the aborigines of Australia sprang from the same stock as we did ourselves. I think the Anthropological Board has voiced the opinion that there is no such thing as atavism in the aboriginal ... we have accepted that view in Western Australia.

So that's what the 1936 Act was all about! It reinforced the 'die-out' and the 'breed-out' policy! The report from Canberra was a revelation as to the real intent behind the Act. While so many of its provisions sounded protective of an exploited race, in reality the way it worked out was far different. Rod's suspicions regarding the Act were now thoroughly aroused.

Mr Neville went on further to inform the Conference that in view of his policy, 'Western Australia has no native problem'. Rod informed everyone he knew, by letter and word: 'That statement is wholly incorrect because we all know there have been three Royal Commissions about native affairs, and even now there should be another. Western Australia bristles with problems!'

The 'die-out' policy affected most legislation relating to Aborigines from the 1900s. There had been no future planning for Aborigines because they were considered a dying race. And it was true – they were a dying race.

A. O. Neville inherited policies incorporating these ideas in 1915 when he became the Chief Protector of Aborigines, which position he held until 1940, so the policy of allowing full-blood Aborigines to die out remained unchanged throughout that period.

That these concepts still persisted can be seen from remarks made at the Canberra Conference. Dr Cook (Chief Protector of Aborigines, Northern Territory) had the opinion that if left alone they would die, and then there would be no problem 'apart from attending to those pangs of conscience which must attend the passing of a neglected race'.

Mr Neville said he largely agreed with Dr Cook's sentiments, and added:

There are a great many full-blooded aborigines in Western Australia ... for the most part not 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 ... infanticide and abortion are extensively practised amongst the bush people. They follow their own customs, and no attempt to influence them has much result.

The report of the Canberra Conference became the catalyst which brought into open confrontation the individual policies of Schenk and Neville. To Mr Neville's statement that 'the policy of missions is in direct contrast to that of the Department' Rod agreed, adding that 'our policy is built on the Word of God.'

(Margaret Morgan is the daughter of Rev. Rod Schenk and Mysie Schenk.)

From Doris Pilkington, Rabbit Proof Fence, University of Queensland Press, 1996

When Molly was almost six weeks' old Maude took her up to show Mr Keeling, the Superintendent. The child was wrapped in a piece of calico and was sound asleep in her mother's arms. Mr Keeling said all the nice things about the babe and wished them good health and issued Maude with her own ration order, which included a few yards of unbleached calico to make clothes for the baby. He later recorded in his files that he had just seen the first half-caste child to be born amongst the Jigalong people.

Molly grew into a pretty little girl. Her mother was very proud of her and her father brought her gifts of clothing and pretty coloured ribbons. The other members of the family received parcels of brightly coloured material and tobacco. These gifts were shared amongst family members and the community, and were proudly displayed and shown-off to the people at the depot.

As she grew older, Molly often wished that she didn't have light skin so that she didn't have to play by herself. Most of the time she would sit alone, playing in the red dusty flats or in the riverbed where her family had set up camp. The dust-covered child stood out amongst her darker playmates. The Mardu children insulted her and said hurtful things about her. Some told her that because she was neither Mardu or wudgebulla she was like a mongrel dog. She reacted in the only way she knew. She grabbed handfuls of sand or stone and threw them at her tormentors, and sometimes she chased them with a stick. After a while she became used to the insults, and although they still hurt she didn't show it. One morning, when Molly was about four years old, her mother told her some exciting news. Two of her aunties had babies, little girls, and they were both muda-mudas like her.

The first question Molly asked was, “When are they coming to Jigalong?” She was very happy. Now she had two sisters.

First came Daisy, who was born at Mad Donkey Well, south-west of Jigalong towards Mundiwindi Station. She was followed by Gracie, who was born at Walgun Station north-west of the depot.

As they grew older, Gracie and Molly became inseparable and they supported each other when other children teased them. They also saw Daisy quite frequently when her family moved closer to work on Murra Munda Station.

Mr Keeling had been taking a great deal of interest in Molly and Gracie. One day while he was observing the children at play, he noticed that the attitude of the Mardu children towards the two girls was unfair. He wrote to the Department of Native Affairs in Perth advising them that the girls would be better off if they were removed from Jigalong. In his report he mentioned that the girls, “were not getting a fair chance as the blacks consider the H/Cs [half-castes] inferior to them ...” (Department of Native Affairs file no. 173/30.)

Thousands of miles south, politicians and other officials were planning the destinies of children like Molly, Gracie and Daisy.

Official concern shifted from the decreasing numbers of traditional or full-blood Aborigines to the half-castes and part-Aboriginal children who were being born all over the country. The common belief at that time was that part-Aboriginal children were more intelligent than their darker relations and should be isolated and trained to be domestic servants and labourers. Policies were introduced by the government in an effort to improve the welfare and educational needs of these children. Molly, Gracie

and Daisy were completely unaware that they were to be included in the schemes designed for children who were fathered by white men. Their mothers were accused of being promiscuous. A few critics were honest, however, when they said many white men satisfied their lustful desires with the native women until they were able to return to white society.

Eventually the Western Australian government decided to establish two institutions for Aboriginal children with white fathers: one at Carralup Settlement near Katanning in the south-west, and the Moore River Native Settlement, north of Perth and 13 kilometres west of Mogumber. Although the births of these children were not registered they were still noted by station owners in their journals so it was easy for the authorities to locate them. Also, movement between stations throughout the Pilbara was not quite as frequent as it is today because the travel was mostly by foot. This helped the government officials to track down a family group.

Patrol officers travelled far and wide removing part-Aboriginal children from their families and transported them hundreds of kilometres down south. Every mother of a part-Aboriginal child was aware that their offspring could be taken away from them at any time and they were powerless to stop the abductors. That is why many women preferred to give birth in the bush rather than in a hospital where they believed their babies would be taken from them soon after birth.

The years passed by and the seasons came and went. Except for a couple of years of severe drought when no rain was recorded in the district, nothing extraordinary happened – life and the cycle of nature proceeded. Molly, Gracie and Daisy had outgrown the insults and the teasings. Once the other children accepted their

differences, their lives became quite normal. Nevertheless, the trio stood out from the main community at the depot.

No matter where the three girls went, there was always someone watching them very closely and recording their behaviour just as Mrs Chellow from Murra Munda Station did on 9 December 1930 when she wrote to the Commissioner of Native Affairs.

Murra Munda

9th December 1930

Mr Neville

Chief Protector of Aborigines,

PERTH

... There are two half-caste girls at Jigalong – Molly 15 years, Crissy [also called Gracie] 11 years; in my opinion I think you should see about them as they are running wild with the whites.

(Sgd) Mrs Chellow.

(Department of Native Affairs File No. 175/30)

The girls were very fortunate to be part of a loving, caring family who tried to compensate for all the nasty insults and abuse by spoiling and indulging them at home. Their grandfather even went as far to take them on walkabouts in the bush where he ground black charcoal into fine powder and rubbed it into their bodies, covering them from their faces right down to their toes. This powder, he promised, would solve all their problems. It would darken their light skins and end all the teasings and tauntings, but most importantly, it would protect them and prevent them

from being taken away from their families. The trio was joined by ever-increasing numbers of half-caste or part-Aboriginal children in the East Pilbara region.

However, the birth rate there was insignificant compared to the rate in the south-west of the state.

In July 1930, the rainy season was exceptionally good. For the Mardu people throughout the Western Desert this was the season for taking long walks in the bush, foraging for bush tucker and feasting on the day's catch. Every Mardu welcomes the glorious warm weather, when the azure skies are even bluer against the grey-green mulga trees and the red dusty earth; grass grows under the small shrubs and between the sandy patches around the rocky ledges and even the spinifex is fresh and green. Alas, like everything that is revived and resurrected by the winter rains their beauty and brilliance is shortlived. They seem to fade and die so quickly.

Molly and Gracie spent a lovely weekend with their families digging for kulgu yams and collecting bunches of yellow flowers from the desert oaks, which they brought home to share with those who stayed behind to take care of the old people and the dogs. They soaked bunches of flowers in a bucket of water to make a sweet, refreshing drink. The other bush foods, such as the girdi girdi, murrandus and bush turkeys, were shared amongst the community. After supper the weary girls curled up in their swags, and in no time at all, they were fast asleep.

Early next morning, Molly's step-father Galli rose at dawn and lit the fire. He made a billy of tea and sat under the shade of a large river gum, drinking a mug of warm tea. He glanced over to the sleeping forms of his two wives, and called out, "Come on, get up." The women began to stir. Galli then cut a piece of plug tobacco and crushed it in

his hand, mixed the pure white ashes of the leaves of the mulga tree into it, then put it into his mouth and began to chew the gulja, spitting the juice occasionally. In the old days, the people would collect and chew the leaves of wild or bush tobacco that grew on the cliffs or on rock ledges.

The Mardus preferred the white man's tobacco, plug tobacco, because it was easily available and also it was stronger and lasted longer. They chewed it and spat out the juice, the same way that other races chewed betel leaves.

Maude was Galli's second wife. She and his other wife both belonged to the same group under the kinship system. Both were Garimaras, the spouse category for Galli. Between them they prepared breakfast for the whole family, which included three big dampers cooked in the hot ashes of the fire and the girdi girdi leftover from the hunting trip in the bush. They all agreed that it had been a successful and enjoyable day.

Molly and Daisy finished their breakfast and decided to take all their dirty clothes and wash them in the soak further down the river. They returned to the camp looking clean and refreshed and joined the rest of the family in the shade for lunch of tinned corned beef, damper and tea. The family had just finished eating when all the camp dogs began barking, making a terrible din.

"Shut up," yelled their owners, throwing stones at them. The dogs whinges and skulked away.

Then all eyes turned to the cause of the commotion. A tall, rugged white man stood on the bank above them. He could easily have been mistaken for a pastoralist or a grazier with his tanned complexion except that he was wearing khaki clothing. Fear

and anxiety swept over them when they realised that the fateful day they had been dreading had come at last. They always knew that it would only be a matter of time before the government would track them down. When Constable Riggs, Protector of Aborigines, finally spoke his voice was full of authority and purpose. They knew without a doubt that he was the one who took their children in broad daylight – not like the evil spirits who came into their camps in the night.

“I’ve come to take Molly, Gracie and Daisy, the three half-caste girls, with me to go to school at the Moore River Native Settlement,” he informed the family.

The old man nodded to show that he understood what Riggs was saying. The rest of the family just hung their heads refusing to face the man who was taking their daughters away from them. Silent tears welled in the eyes and trickled down the cheeks.

“Come on, you girls,” he ordered. “Don’t worry about taking anything. We’ll pick up what you need later.”

When the two girls stood up, he noticed that the third girl was missing. “Where’s the other one, Daisy?” he asked anxiously.

“She’s with her mummy and daddy at Murra Munda Station,” the old man informed him.

“She’s not at Murra Munda or at Jimbalbar goldfields. I called into those places before I came here,” said the Constable. “Hurry up then, I want to get started. We’ve got a long way to go yet. You girls can ride this horse back to the depot,” he said, handing the reins over to Molly. Riggs was annoyed that he had to go miles out of his way to find these girls.

Molly and Gracie sat silently on the horse, tears streaming down their cheeks as Constable Riggs turned the big bay stallion and led the way back to the depot. A high pitched wail broke out. The cries of agonised mothers and the women, and the deep sobs of grandfathers, uncles and cousins filled the air. Molly and Gracie looked back just once before they disappeared through the river gums. Behind them, those remaining in the camp found strong sharp objects and gashed themselves and inflicted wounds to their heads and bodies as an expression of their sorrow.

The two frightened and miserable girls began to cry, silently at first, then uncontrollably; their grief made worse by the lamentations of their loved ones and the visions of them sitting on the ground in their camp letting their tears mix with the red blood that flowed from the cuts on their heads. This reaction to their children's abduction showed that the family were now in mourning. They were grieving for their abducted children and their relief would come only when the tears ceased to fall, and that will be along time yet.

At the depot, Molly and Gracie slid down from the horse and followed Constable Riggs to the car. ...

"I'd better get moving," said Constable Riggs. "I have to search around for Daisy. I'll call in next time I'm on patrol in the district."

The patrol officer drew up in front of the Walgun Homestead gate and was greeted by Mr and Mrs Cartwright, managers of the station.

"Hello," said Don Cartwright as he shook hands with the visitor.

"Come inside and have a cuppa tea," said his wife warmly, pointing towards the door.

“Thank you, but not just yet. I must find the half-caste girl, Daisy,” he said. “She’s somewhere between here and Murra Munda Station, near the soak. I already have the other two, Molly and Gracie in the car with Mimi-Ali from Jigalong and Nellie, the cook from Watchtower Station who are in need of medical attention.”

“But where are you taking those half-caste girls?” asked Mrs Cartwright.

“They’re going south to the Moore River Native Settlement, where we hope they will grow up with a better outlook on life than back at their camp,” he answered with great satisfaction.

“I’ll leave the car here but first I’ll drop the women off at the native workers’ camp. I’ll take Molly and Gracie with me, though,” he said. “I don’t want them to clear out.”

Constable Riggs drove slowly down to the camp, followed closely by Tommy with his horse and sulky. Soon, he and Tommy were heading across the flats, over the spinifex grass and through the mulga trees in search of Daisy, who was with her family at the camp. Finding her had proved more difficult than the Constable expected. He had searched the Jimbalbar and Murra Munda area on horseback covering 60 kilometres, and a further 30 kilometres in the dry, rough country between Murra Munda and Walgun stations before he finally found her. The search was so tiring that he decided to stay the night at Walgun Station. His passengers stayed at the camp with Gracie’s mother Lilly, her grandmother, Frinda, and some other relatives.

At 3.30 in the morning, on 16 July, the Constable noticed that rain was threatening. The roads were bad enough as it was, but when wet they were even more hazardous so he decided to make a start.

“I don’t want to be marooned on the road with these natives,” Constable Riggs explained to the Cartwrights.

“We understand,” said Mrs Cartwright, “we’ll see you when you’re in the district. Have a safe trip home.”

“Thank you. I’d better get going,” he said. “The women must have finished their breakfast by now, so I’ll go down and pick them up. Thanks again for your hospitality.”

Grace’s mother, old Granny Frinda and other relations in the camp began to wail and cry.

“Worrah, Worrah! He take ’em way, my grannies [granddaughters], wailed the old lady, as she bent down with great difficulty and picked up a billy can and brought it down heavily on her head. She and the rest of the women began to wail louder, their hearts now burdened with sadness of the girls’ departure and the uncertainty of ever seeing them again. The girls were also weeping. The wailing grew louder as the vehicle that was taking them away headed towards the gate. Each girl felt the pain of being torn from their mothers’ and grandmothers’ arms.

As the car disappeared down the road, old Granny Frinda lay crumpled on the red dirt calling for her granddaughters and cursing the people responsible for their abduction. In their grief the women asked why their children should be taken from them. Their anguished cries echoed across the flats, carried by the wind. But no one listened to them, no one heard them.

A couple of hours after the three girls had been driven away, Gracie’s mother, distraught and angry, was still sitting on the ground rocking back and forth. Maude

and her brother-in-law had ridden over in a horse and cart to discuss the distressing news and stayed to comfort and support each other. Some time later, she calmed down enough to hurl a mouth full of abuse at Alf Fields, Gracie's white father, who was standing silently near the galvanised iron tank. She screamed at him in Aboriginal English and Mardu wangku, and beat his chest with her small fists.

"Why didn't you stop them?" she cried out in anger and frustration.

"I couldn't stop them taking my daughter – yes, she is my daughter too," he said sadly. He was so proud of his beautiful black-haired daughter whom he had named after his idol, English singer Gracie Fields.

He tried to explain to her mother that the patrol officer was a government representative and an officer of the Crown. Had he interfered or tried to stop the man he would have been arrested and put in gaol and charged with obstructing the course of justice. Gracie's mother didn't listen.

"You are a white man too, they will listen to you. Go and talk to them," she pleaded softly.

"I am sorry but I can't do anything to stop them taking our daughter away from us," he said finally.

She couldn't accept his excuse or forgive him for just standing by and doing nothing to prevent their daughter from being taken away from them. She packed up and moved to Wiluna.

E. South Australia

South Australian Removals Policy and Practice

(i) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia,

November 30 1910

Sir,

I have the honor to submit for the information of the Hon. Commissioner of Public Works &c. the following report on the working of the Aborigines Department for the Financial year ended 30th. June 1910, together with reports from the Sub-Protector of Aborigines for the Far North and the Superintendents of Mission Stations.

The want of an Act for the Protection and control of the Aborigines and Half Castes has been much felt, but it is hoped this will be met this Session by the passing of the Bill now before Parliament.

During the year several Half Caste children have been removed from the blacks' camps and placed under the care and control of the State Children's Department, with most encouraging results, the children are thriving and happy and will, I feel confident, grow up self-supporting members of the community, as they will know nothing of the habits of the Aborigines and will be given an occupation.

Several letters have appeared in the press in opposition to the removal of these children from their cruel surroundings, but I think the writers have failed to grasp the seriousness of the problem now facing South Australia and some of the other States.

Take the case of New South Wales, for example. There, according to the report of the "Board for Protection of Aborigines" dated May 1910, the Aboriginal

population consisted of 2123 full-bloods and 5247 Half Castes. Between the years 1882 and 1909 the full bloods decreased from 6540 to 2123 and the Half Castes increased from 2379 to 5247.

In this State a similar state of things is occurring as in 1901 the Census shows there were 502 Half Castes but in August 1909 from information supplied by the Police Officers it was found there were at least 766, and later records have brought the total up to about 800.

At Point Pierce there were on 30th. June 1910, 145 Half Castes and 17 full-bloods, at Point McLeay River Murray and the Lakes there are about 350 Aborigines, 75% of whom are Half Castes.

These figures, I think, prove the necessity of steps being taken to convert these people into useful members of the Community, instead of allowing them to grow up in the Camps where they acquire the lazy habits of the Aborigines, which unfits them for any regular occupation, and I am still firmly of opinion that the very best way is to treat them as neglected children, and have them placed under the care and control of the State Children's Department until they reach the age of 18 years by which time they should be able to earn their own living and should no longer be considered nor treated as Aborigines.

The boys should be taught trades, and the girls trades or domestic duties. On the other hand if left to wander the grow up with the Aborigines they and their offspring will become an ever increasing burden.

At present in many parts of the State may be seen practically white males and females squatting in blacks' camps. On the Mission Stations the same sort of thing

exists after the children have passed the school-going-age. The very time when they should be taught to become self-supporting.

(ii) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, August 7 1911.

I have the honour to report for the information of the Honourable, the Chief Secretary.

There are now over 800 half-castes and quadroons in this state. Until my appointment as Protector of Aborigines, nothing had been done to rescue them from the cruel surroundings of the blacks camps, excepting a few taken on the mission stations, where, unfortunately, they cannot be separated from the blacks. Consequently, they grow up useless, idle dependents; looking to the government and missions for subsistence.

In my opinion, all half-caste children, especially girls, should be considered wards of the state and, should not be left in the blacks camps after they reach the age of four years, but should be placed in an industrial school, educated and taught trades or other occupations and, kept to constant work till they are old enough to take care of themselves, after which they should be compelled to find their own living and, should no longer be considered nor treated as Aborigines.

It seems to me ridiculous to bring up a lot of practically white people in blacks camps and on mission stations in idleness, actually (if unintentionally) making them, and their children, dependents on the state and private charity. People brought up like this are hard to deal with. Recently a woman – the daughter of a half-caste and a white woman, who is married to a white man herself now, considered she was hardly dealt with because I would not recommend her application for a free grant of land.

If the system of treating the old Aborigines is continued with the half-castes and quadroons much longer, the Aborigines problem will become difficult to deal with.

(iii) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, May 13 1913.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I visited the natives camps at Bordertown on the 10th instant, but owing to the short time I could remain there, I was not able to get full particulars of the names, ages and circumstances of two families of half-caste and quadroon children living in the camps, but what I saw, leads me to think the children should be at once removed and placed under the State Children's Department. Two of the children are white, with blue eyes, and one has auburn hair.

I would respectfully request that the police officer there be moved for a report, giving names and ages of the children, and names and circumstances of the parents.

(iv) Letter by W. G. South, Chief Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, June 27 1915

There are no doubt numbers of neglected half-caste and quadroon children roaming with the Aborigines in the western district north of Fowlers Bay who should be removed and placed under the care of the State Children's Department as

recommended by the Aborigines Royal Commission in their progress report dated 2nd October, 1913.

Mrs. D. M. Bates has considerable influence with the natives in this district and I am of the opinion that her services might be utilised by the State Children's Department to collect the children. For this purpose I would recommend that the buggy mentioned by Mr. G. W. Murray be purchased for £25:0:0 and a set of spider harness added to be paid out of Aborigines contingencies and that, Mrs. D. M. Bates be given a temporary appointment under the State Children's Department empowering her to take the children.

The Case of Willie and Paddy Robinson

(i) A. S. Taylor, Renmark, to W. G. South Esq, Protector of Aborigines, Adelaide, September 23 1910.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to call your attention to what I believe to be a grave miscarriage of the intention of the provisions made for the protection of the aborigines of this State. In the case of the lads, Willie and Paddy Robinson, recently committed from Renmark (by your direction, I understand) to the Industrial school. The intention in this matter was doubtless of the best, and I regret that I cannot say as much of the execution of it. I cannot conceive that it was ever the intention of the legislature that native lads should be torn from their parents without their consent, especially when, as in the present case, it could be easily shown that the lads were not, in the ordinary sense of the term, "neglected" children. Both of them, in point of fact, were working for kind and considerate masters; the father is in good and regular work, and both he and the mother, except when under the influence of drink, as occasionally happens, are accustomed to behave in a decent and respectable manner. I can conceive, of course, that it may be to the best interests of the lads that they should be sent away to school, though under the circumstances of this case I am doubtful even of that, but I am unable to regard it as anything short of an outrage that they should have been so sent in defiance of their parents' wish, more particularly when the sending involves their detention for a period of years. As a matter of fact the affair has so worked on the mother's mind that she has had several seizures of fits since the abduction of her children, for in this light I am forced to regard it.

The simple facts of the matter are that the lads were got from their employers, brought into court and committed without either parent knowing of it or having any opportunity to be present, to intimate their mind in the matter or to state what they would themselves be prepared to do to further the better training of their lads, if such were desired. Corporal Panton some months ago received an intimation from the father of the boys that he would be willing to have them sent to a mission school, and Mr Robinson, who cycled 50 miles to see me as soon as he heard what had happened, says that he would be satisfied, even now, if the lads could be transferred to Pt McLeay, where they would be among relatives, but he is strongly opposed to their detention in their industrial school, being of the opinion that they will probably fret themselves ill there. He is also, naturally a good deal surprised that proceedings of the nature indicated should have been taken without any intimation to himself of what was intended.

In view of what is herein recorded I have the honor to request, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Robinson, that you will take steps to have the lads consigned to Pt McLeay, or failing that to have them restored to their parents, if that should be still their wish.

I have no doubt that all the principals responsible for the committal of the lads honestly believed that they are acting in the best interests of the boys, but I respectfully submit that the parents, even though black, have a right to expect that their wishes shall be consulted in such a matter.

I have the honor to be,

Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

A. S. Taylor

*(ii) W. G. South, Protector of Aborigines, Adelaide, to A. S. Taylor, Renmark,
October 4 1910.*

Dear Sir

In reply to yours of 23rd Sept. last I beg to inform you that I now have before me the correspondence re the State Children, Willie and Paddy Robinson and find the Police report shows that the Children were "running wild" not under proper care and control and I consider the Justices before whom they were brought acted strictly up to the provisions of the State Childrens Act in committing them to the care of the State Childrens Council where I think they should remain for the present.

Later on should the parents make application for the Children the matter will receive Careful Consideration. The parent may rest assured that the Children will be well cared for and educated as if they were white.

*(iii) Mrs W Robinson to Mr W South Esq, Protector of Aborigines, Renmark, October
14, 1910.*

Dear Sir

This note is an appeal to you to endeavour to regain possession of my children which was taken from me under false pretences. I may state to you Sir I was in a position to rear them as I am in the present time, as my husband has been in work for some time for Mr. Crozier and also my two boys were snatched from their work by Corporal Panton and Willie the eldest boy was working for Mr. Stockel nearly 20 miles up the river. I can assure you they were never neglected and to my surprise I heard they were locked up in the cell if Mr Panton had come over the river and warned me and spoken kindly I would not have taken it so much to heart but he spoke very unkind to me about taking the boys somewhere a good while before but did not give me an

understanding what he meant to do it was my intention as soon as Mr Robinson finished work we were going to send them to Pt McClay so if you would try and endeavour to get them out of the industrial school it would be a great relief to my mind, and sent to the mission.

Kindly oblige,

Yours obedient

Mrs W Robison

Aboriginal

Also

I beg to inform you that some time ago I was confined of a fine boy and it died through cold and nearly died myself and when the nurse spoke to Mr Panton for blankets he said we would have to buy our own blankets and after the baby died he spoken to about a coffin his answer was you can bury it in a cocoa box. all he did was to send a nurse and he was forced to do it after he sent the nurse he never came across the river to see who I was.

The Case of Priscilla and Manuel

(i) J. B. Steer, Superintendent, Point Macleay Station, to Chief Protector of Aborigines, Adelaide, March 20 1924.

Sir

Re The Baby Manuel Karpany. I have inspected the child and can find nothing wrong with it. Since then the State Children's Nurse saw the baby on her visit here the child was suffering with Native Itch but this has all disappeared. I do not consider the baby needs to go to the Hospital. But if you insist that the baby shall go to Hospital will see that it is carried out but did not think it warrants the expense.

(ii) Chief Protector of Aborigines to J. B. Steer, Superintendent, Point Macleay Station, April 10 1924.

Sir,

With reference to the transfer of control of the infant Manuel J. Karpany will you please let me have a full report at once of any disturbance at the station and also state definitely why the Mother was sent to the Hospital and whether she was aware when she left the station that the baby was to be taken from her.

You 'phoned me on Tuesday the 8th inst. and asked me to arrange for someone to meet the train and take Priscilla to the hospital as she needed hospital attention. Accordingly I arranged with Miss Conks for a Woman Police Constable to be on the railway station to accompany the girl to the hospital.

On the arrival of the train it was found that Priscilla had her baby in her arms and refused to give it up until forced to do. She said that she had not been told that her baby was to be taken.

There was a scene on the platform and it was a most awkward situation for the State Children's Attendant and the Woman Police.

Priscilla was then taken to the hospital but the admitting doc could not find anything the matter with her and she said that as far as she knew she was quite all right, however at the request of the Police Officer he found her a bed for the night and in the morning (Wednesday) another doctor examined her without result.

Do not delay in sending your report as there will probably be an enquiry into the matter.

(iii) J. B. Steer, Superintendent, Point McLeay Station to Chief Protector of Aborigines, April 11 1924.

Sir

In reference to your letter No. A. D. 14/24 re the transfer of control of the infant Manuel J. Karpany on the 4th of April you addressed me a letter stating that a Lady Officer of the State Children's Department accompanied by a Police Officer would visit Pt McLeay on the following Monday in regard to Priscilla Karpany's baby and may take the child away. When the police and the Nurse arrived the police produced a Warrant of Arrest for the child, but we did not tell Priscilla that evening that she had to go to Adelaide in the morning and take the baby with her. I told her on the Tuesday morning that she had to go to Adelaide and take the baby to the Marceta Hospital. Priscilla made a fuss because she said she hadn't any clothes to wear to

Adelaide. I told her she would get clothes which were supplied her. She did not want to go but was told by the Police Officer that she must go or he would arrest the child and take it whether she went or not, and then she consented to go. The reason why Priscilla was sent was that the Police Officer said when he had taken children to Adelaide before on similar cases he took both Mother and Child together and the Mother was put in Hospital to deal with the milk she would have and I thought it best to send the Mother and let her be treated at the Hospital in regard to the Milk trouble.

I did not tell Priscilla that her Baby would be taken away from her, before she left the Station and I could not say if the Police Officer told her or not because I was not with him all the time. The reason why I phoned you on 8th inst. was that the Nurse said she could not put Priscilla up at the State Children's Department for the night and that she should go in that night Tuesday the 8th inst. and as the Baby was not weaned thought it best to phone you on the matter and have the girl met and taken to the Hospital that night.

There was not any disturbance at the Station more than there were a good number of men and women to see Priscilla and her Baby as well as the State Nurse and the Police Officer leave the Station in the Station trap.

(iv) C. E. Taplin, Honorary Protector of Aborigines to Chief Protector of Aborigines, Flinders Street, Adelaide, April 21 1924.

Dear Sir

My attention has been drawn to the case of the native girl – Precilla Karpany – having her baby, nine months old, taken away from her under the provisions of the Aborigines Act passed last year. Also to the report of the occurrence, with severe

comments thereon, published in "The Adelaide Sun" of April 12th. The tenor of that article makes a vivid criticism of the gross inhumanity of such a ruthless, and cruel administration of the Act. That a woman should have her own baby recklessly dragged from her arms, and taken entirely away from her, at the behest of a Government Official, because some female inspectress thought the mother an unsuitable guardian, is shocking to contemplate. What does the female official know of the right way to treat an aboriginal baby? As a matter of fact I have taken this young native woman into my own home, and find her clean and well behaved. Not at all such a character as might be expected to illtreat her own child.

The fact that this young native woman has a child when she is not married is not so much a reproach to her, as to the abominable way in which the natives at Point McLeay are housed. The shocking way in which they are placed together, without sufficient accommodation, fosters immorality, and it is a credit to the natives that immorality is not more rampant. At the same time there is a very grave reflection on the Aborigines Department, which on the station being taken over by the Government, abolished the children's Boarding Establishment, which had been in existence from the inception of the Mission.

I may say that I am well acquainted with the provisions of last year's Act which gives you power to remove an Aboriginal Child from its mother in certain circumstances. This however is a provision which in the opinion of any reasonable person, should not need to be put into operation at an institution, such as that at Point McLeay. If an aboriginal mother is discovered away in the back blocks, where she cannot in reason be expected to give her child proper care, it may be a good thing to transport the child to Adelaide, where it can be better attended to. But at an institution

such as that at Point McLeay, the officials should be in a position to see that the children are not neglected. To forcibly remove an infant in these circumstances from its natural protector, I contend is a grave outrage.

(Following the public outrage in Adelaide Manuel was returned to Priscilla Karpany.)

From Doris Kartinyeri, Kick The Tin, Spinifex, 2000

STOLEN

The day I was conceived, life began. The nurturing began. I was surrounded by love, protected in my mother's womb. A sense of bonding was all around.

The event of my birth started life shattering experiences for me and for my family. I was born 8 September 1945 at Raukkan, a Ngarrindjeri community at Point McLeay on the shores of Lake Alexandrina. My mother died of complications in Murray Bridge Hospital on October 8, just one month after my birth. Within a few days of the death of my mother, I was stolen from my family. Welfare officers from the Aboriginal Protection Board removed me from the Murray Bridge Hospital and placed me in Colebrook Home without my father knowing.

I stayed at Colebrook Home until I turned fourteen years of age. I was never told that I was removed from my family. I was never told that my mother had died. In all of my childhood, I was never taken back to my family.

About four years ago, I went to meet with my older sister, Doreen, at our friend's place to learn about my family. We sat in the confined space of Margaret's kitchen. Doreen has written numerous books tracing our family tree. She has helped me to understand more about my heritage, a heritage rightly mine from birth, which was taken away from me.

First I learned of the disturbing facts surrounding our family at the time of my birth. Doreen told me gently that there were complications when Mum gave birth to me at Raukkan. A few days later the nursing sister at Raukkan called on the Aboriginal mid-wife, Mrs. Beatrice Karpany. She asked Beatrice to come down and see Mum as she was running an intensely high temperature. Beatrice argued with the sister to take my mother to Murray Bridge Hospital. My mother and I were taken to the hospital at Murray Bridge where we stayed; Mum getting treatment until she died on 8 October 1945. That was on the Eight Hours Day public holiday, which was what they used as Labour Day.

It was decided by the family that Mum's funeral would be at Raukkan on Friday the 12th of October.

Doreen was finding it hard, in that kitchen, to tell me about the events that followed. I waited in silence. Still it was difficult for Doreen to speak. In an angry voice she told me that our Mum's body was transported all the way from Murray Bridge to Raukkan on the back of a ute. We sat in disbelief, in a frozen state. My eyes filled with tears. Doreen continued to speak in an awkward and quivering voice, jotting down notes for me. She told me that on the day after my Mother's funeral, on the Saturday, my Dad went back to Murray Bridge Hospital to collect me. When he arrived with my Auntie Martha to pick me up from the hospital, I was gone. He was told that Sister McKenzie had removed me from the hospital and taken me to Adelaide on the day before my Mum's funeral. This must have been extremely devastating for my father, particularly while he was still in mourning over the death of his wife.

The family had gathered when Dad came home without me. The whole family was traumatised to hear that I was not coming home. Auntie Martha was soon telling everyone that I was taken. Doreen ran down to Auntie Phillis very upset. No one could understand why no phone message came from the Protector to say Doris was taken. All my family had offered to look after me.

Doreen told me that Dad went back to Tailem Bend to get another train to take him to Adelaide to see where I was placed. He went to see a Mr. Penhall at the Protection Board in Kintore Avenue, Adelaide. Dad was greatly upset and he cursed and argued with Mr. Penhall, as he wanted to know where I was. Dad was informed that I was in a home and that it was better for me to be with other Aboriginal children in a home. Dad's reply to this was, 'What the fuck would you know what is best for my daughter, or that she is better off with other Aboriginal children. She has her own family. Her nanna would look after her as well as you would. Or better!'

Mr. Penhall talked to Dad and tried to convince him that I should stay at the home until I was old enough for Nanna to look after me. But Dad never agreed. On 9 January 1946, my father signed a document giving me into the care of Colebrook Home until I reached sixteen. He thought he was signing the form for child endowment. It was an unnatural act for any Aboriginal child to be separated from their family. I didn't receive any parental nurturing or have the privilege of growing up with my brothers and sisters. I never experienced any emotions involving the loss of my mother. I lost my family ties and heritage. I know this has affected my whole family.

My eldest sister Doreen was just ten years old, living at Raukkan and making feather flowers to support the family. After the death of our mother, Doreen was also

removed from our family and placed in the Salvation Army Girls' Home at Fullarton. This meant that she was also separated from me and my family. This was a traumatic time for Dad and our grandparents, Archie and Sally Kartinyeri.

It was obvious to our family that the Government deliberately wanted to separate us and did not want us together. My sister Connie, who was three years old when I was taken, stayed on at Raukkan with our brothers, Oscar and Ronald, and our grandparents. Oscar worked with Dad on the mission. Grandmother Sally cried every day for me. She wondered if I had curls and looked like Connie who had beautiful black curly hair. It brought sorrow and pain as I heard these stories that Doreen had to tell me.

It's taken many years to get to know the surviving members of my family. Both of my parents were from Point McLeay, known as Raukkan. They were both Ngarrindjeri. Oswald Saunders Kartinyeri and Thelma Christabel Kartinyeri (née Rigney) were living at the Mission when I was born. My father was born 26 December 1908 and died 9 July 1979. He was 71 years old when he passed away. My mother was born 8 November 1910 and died in 1945 at the age of 35.

My mother was a very strong and loving woman. She took great pride in my family's small cottage set by the lake. Oscar often sat on the bed while my mother unpicked dresses and skirts. She unpicked old jumpers and made clothes for the less fortunate children. My mother was very artistic in keeping her house neat and tidy. She kept herself busy sewing and making feather flowers and mats from rushes. She was a good cook. There were seven children in our family – five girls and two boys. Oscar was the eldest of the family followed by Doreen and Ronald. Then Connie and me. Nancy and Alma both died before I was born.

Colebrook provided me with an extended family of other Aboriginal children who had also been removed from their families. Life as a child in the home was enjoyable up to a point, however we were deprived of family affection.

I understand why there is a lot of hatred in the Aboriginal community where children have been forcibly removed from their families by white governments. How could anyone think that apologies or money could make up for the lost years and the terrible trauma and emotional damage caused to my family?

F. New South Wales

New South Wales Removals Policy and Practice

(i) From Report to the NSW Board for Protection of Aborigines, 1907.

One of the most important questions the Board have to face is that of a large number of half-caste and other children (some of whom are almost white) at the various stations and camps. Under present conditions, though much has been done for some of them as regards primary education, and also (on the Board's stations) training the girls for domestic duties, they are, to a large extent, growing up in idleness, and under the influence of ill-regulated parents. An attempt will be made to solve what is undoubtedly a difficult problem. Returns are being obtained from the various superintendents of police throughout the State, furnishing full information regarding the children at the stations and camps, up to the age of 18 years, and the Board will endeavour, without unduly interfering with parental control, to evolve some scheme for training their children to proper spheres of usefulness, instead of allowing them to become an encumbrance on the State.

(ii) From Report of the NSW Board for Protection of Aborigines, 1911.

ACT AND REGULATIONS

The "Aborigines Protection Act, 1909" with Regulations thereunder, has now been in operation since the 8th June, 1910, and while it has, in a measure, been effective in meeting a number of requirements, the Board are assured that many of their aims cannot be accomplished unless they are clothed with much fuller powers in dealing with the aborigines, and that the early amendment of the Act in this direction

is very necessary. This is more particularly the case with regard to the training of the children. A number of boys and girls have been apprenticed under the existing law, but, although some of them are well spoken of by their employers, and places can readily be found for them, the Act does not give the Board power to either train or effectively bind them without their consent.

It must be admitted that the problem offers many difficulties. The day is long past when it was possible to segregate the aborigines. So far as the full-bloods are concerned, the Board have done much with the limited funds at their disposal, to make their lot as easy of possible by providing suitable dwellings and supplying them with rations, clothing, and blankets, and it is not proposed to interfere with them; but by far the greater number of those the Board have to deal with are half-castes, and others with a lesser degree of aboriginal blood. With regard to the adults, it would be obviously harsh to turn a number of those who have families dependent upon them, and who have for years been taught to look upon themselves as aborigines, away from the Reserves. On the other hand, unless some prompt measures are taken, the children who are now growing up, will, in a few years, be in the same position as their parents. Of these children, a number who are half-castes, quadroons, and octoroons, are increasing with alarming rapidity. To allow these children to remain on the Reserves to grow up in comparative idleness, and in the midst of more or less vicious surroundings, would be, to say the least, an injustice to the children themselves, and a positive menace to the State. The only solution of the problem, therefore, is to deal effectively with the children; and while not unduly interfering with the relationship between parent and child, to see that they are properly trained to spheres of future usefulness, and once away from the Reserves not to allow them to return – except, perhaps, in the case of those who have parents, on an occasional visit. Past

experience has shown that the children cannot be properly trained under their present environments, and it is essential that they should be removed at as early an age as possible to ensure success.

Lang Dean, Letter to the Editor, The Age, 1997

My father was a Victorian policeman from 1922 until 1946. He spent a long spell of duty at Echuca and he was there when the Deniliquin and Balranald railway spurs were constructed.

The rail workers came to Echuca to spend their earnings and let off steam. My father made 343 arrests on average in those years. He was a good and conscientious policeman. During 1937-38, when I was seven or eight years old, he would sometimes come off duty and, as was his custom, sit on a stool outside our kitchen and take his helmet off. On occasions he would be crying and sobbing like a child, I would be upset to see such a strong man cry and I asked him why. He said he would not tell me as I was too young to understand but he would tell me when I grew up. What he did say then was: 'Son, don't ever be a policeman, it's a dirty job.'

After he left the force, when I was about sixteen years old, he and I were camping on a fishing trip and we were sitting around the campfire. I had often thought about how Dad cried years ago so I asked him would he tell me the reason. He told me that when he went on duty those mornings his sergeant would order his to accompany two welfare officers to Cumragunga, a mission station, to give them bodily protection when they entered nice clean simple homes of half-caste people and bodily removed nine, ten, eleven and twelve-year-old children from loving mothers and fathers into commandeered taxis. They were then taken to the Echuca railway station and sent to the far reaches of NSW and Queensland. They were farmed out to service to wealthy

businessmen and graziers. No doubt a few were treated well but the rest would be thrown on the human scrap-heap when finished with.

So that was the reason my father cried on those days.

From Margaret Tucker, If Everyone Cared, Ure Smith, 1977

We were terrified at the thought of being separated from our parents, and while we listened fear and suspicion grew in our hearts. I edged nearer to Father, who I felt for the first time really belonged to us and would help my mother protect us. My father and mother were fighting to keep us together as a family. I realised now why there were few girls or boys of my age at the Settlement. Most had been taken away to be trained, never to be seen for many years. My auntie had been taken from her grandmother and many parents did not see their children for years. Some of the children died fretting for home. Home was their people. We suffered hunger and sometimes sorrow in our homes, but we were together, free to go walkabout, to hunt and to learn at school. These Board members were insistent on having us, but Father said, 'No,' he wanted us home and could keep us. Mother, to end this frightening conversation said, 'We will think about it.' ...

One day when we were at school I was thrilled because an older boy and I were the only ones to get the answer to a difficult sum. Mrs Hill praised us, and as I am not brainy it really meant a lot to me. Between morning school and the lunch break, we heard the unmistakable sound of a motor car. Out where we were motor cars were very rare at that time, and although we were seething with curiosity, we did not dare to move from our desks. One or two ventured to ask if they could leave the room, but were not allowed. Our schoolmistress was called outside. She cautioned us not to move until she returned. Some of the boys got on the desks and took a peep through the window. They relayed to us what was going on outside. A policeman and a young man and Mr Hill were talking together. Mrs Hill came in for a minute, but did not take any notice of the few boys who she must surely have seen jumping down

from the window. She seemed very upset. She called Eric Briggs and Osley McGee and spoke quietly to them. They left the school through the back door. I cannot remember everything that went on, but the next thing I do remember was that the policeman and Mr Hill came into the school. Mrs Hill seemed to be in a heated argument with her husband. She was very distressed.

The children were all standing (we always stood up when visitors came and the police were no exception). My sister May and another little girl, an orphan, started to cry. Then others. They may have heard the conversation. I was puzzled to know what they were crying for, until Mr Hill told all the children to leave the school, except myself and May and Myrtle Taylor, who was the same age as May (eleven years). Myrtle was an orphan reared by Mrs Maggie Briggs. She was very fair-skinned and pretty.

I had forgotten about Brungle and the gang of men representing the Aborigines Protection Board who had visited when we were staying there. But then it came to me in a rush! But I didn't believe for a moment that my mother would let us go. She would put a stop to it! All the children who had been dismissed must have run home and told their parents what was happening at school. When I looked out that schoolroom door, every Moonahculla Aboriginal mother – some with babies in arms – and a sprinkling of elderly men were standing in groups. Most of the younger men were away working on homesteads and sheep stations or farms. Then I started to cry. There were forty or fifty of our people standing silently grieving for us. They knew something treacherous was going on, something to break our way of life. They could not see ahead to the white man's world. We simply accepted the whites as a superior race. Around that particular part of Australia, I feel we were fortunate in having a kindly lot of white station owners.

Then suddenly that little group were all talking at once, some in the language, some in English, but all with a hopelessness, knowing they would not have the last say. Some looked very angry, others had tears running down their cheeks. Then Mr Hill demanded that we three girls leave immediately with the police. The Aboriginal women were very angry.

Mr Hill was in a situation he had never experienced before. He did not take into account that Aboriginal hearts could break down with despair and helplessness, the same as any other human hearts. Mrs Hill, the tears running down her cheeks, made a valiant attempt to prolong our stay. I did not realise she had sent our two radicals Eric and Osley to race the mile and a half to get our mother. I will never forget her for that. She stood her ground, against her husband, the police and the driver of the car. 'Well, they can't go without something to eat, and it is lunch time,' she said, in a determined way.

'No thank you Teacher, we are not hungry,' we said.

'All the same, you children are not going that long journey (first to Deniliquin, then many more miles to Finley, where we would catch the train to Cootamundra) without food,' she insisted.

She went out to her house at the side of the school, taking as long as she dared to prepare something to eat. Her husband, his face going purple, was looking at his watch every few minutes. At last she came in with a tray with glasses of milk and the kind of food we only got at Christmastime. We said we couldn't eat it – we were not hungry – but she coaxed us to drink the milk and eat something. Mr Hill couldn't stand it any longer and said a lot of time was being wasted, and that the police and the driver wanted to leave.

We started to cry again and most of our school mates and the mothers too, when our mother, like an angel, came through the schoolroom door. Little Myrtle's auntie rushed in too.

I thought: 'Everything will be right now. Mum won't let us go.'

Myrtle was grabbed up by her auntie. We had our arms around our mother, and refused to let go. She still had her apron on, and must have run the whole one and a half miles. She arrived just in time, due to the kindness of Mrs Hill. As we hung onto our mother she said fiercely, 'They are my children and they are not going away with you.'

The policeman, who no doubt was doing his duty, patted his handcuffs, which were in a leather case on his belt, and which May and I thought was a revolver.

'Mrs Clements,' he said, 'I'll have to use this if you do not let us take these children now.'

Thinking that policeman would shoot Mother, because she was trying to stop him, we screamed, 'We'll go with him Mum, we'll go.' I cannot forget any detail of that moment, it stands out as though it were yesterday. I cannot ever see kittens taken from their mother cat without remembering that scene. It is just on sixty years ago.

However, the policeman must have had a heart, because he allowed my mother to come in the car with us as far as Deniliquin. She had no money, and took nothing with her, only the clothes she had on. Then the policeman sprang another shock. He said he had to go to the hospital to pick up Geraldine, who was to be taken as well. The horror on my mother's face and her heartbroken cry! I tried to reason why all this was happening to us, and tried not to think.

All my mother could say was, 'Oh, no, not my Baby, please let me have her. I will look after her.'

As that policeman walked up the hospital path to get my little sister, May and Myrtle and I sobbed quietly. Mother got out of the car and stood waiting with a hopeless look. Her tears had run dry I guess. I thought to myself, I will gladly go, if they will only leave Geraldine with Mother.

‘Mrs Clements, you can have your little girl. She left the hospital this morning,’ said the policeman.

Mother simply took that policeman’s hand and kissed it and said, ‘Thank you, thank you.’

Then we were taken to the police station, where the policeman no doubt had to report. Mother followed him, thinking she could beg once more for us, only to rush out when she heard the car start up. My last memory of her for many years was her waving pathetically, as we waved back and called out goodbye to her, but we were too far away for her to hear us.

I heard years later how after watching us go out of her life, she wandered away from the police station three miles along the road leading out of town to Moonahculla. She was worn out, with no food or money, her apron still on. She wandered off the road to rest in the long grass under a tree. That is where old Uncle and Aunt found her the next day. They had arrived back with Geraldine from the Deniliquin hospital and they were at once surrounded by our people at Moonahculla, who told them the whole story. Someone immediately offered the loan of a fresh horse to go back and find Mother. They found our mother still moaning and crying. They heard the sounds and thought it was an animal in pain. Uncle stopped the horse and got out of the buggy to investigate. Auntie heard him talking in the language. She got down and rushed to old Uncle’s side. Mother was half demented and ill. They gave her water and tried to feed her, but she couldn’t eat. She was not interested in anything

for weeks, and wouldn't let Geraldine out of her sight. She slowly got better, but I believe for months after, at the sight of a policeman's white helmet coming round the bend of the river, she would grab her little girl and escape into the bush, as did all the Aboriginal people who had children.

When these happenings reached the ears of the farmers and homesteaders, they got together and protested I believe. They got an assurance that Mother and Geraldine would be left alone. Mother was highly respected in the district. The love and care of all the Aboriginal people on the Settlement, especially of old Aunt and Uncle, and her own courage, helped her back to her old self, 'up and doing', as she had so often said to us.

I often wonder how many black children were taken like that.

From Evelyn Crawford, Over My Tracks, Penguin Books, 1993. (Set in Brewarrina, New South Wales. The time is late 1930s).

I don't know what finally decided them. When we were young, kids really were seen and not heard. There were a lot of things grown-ups never discussed with us. The old people would sit and yarn among themselves, and if you came anywhere within hearin' distance, you'd be told to go, and if you didn't you'd get a crack with a stick or anything handy. None of us were brave enough for that so we stayed away. Now when I think about it, I realize that I was gettin' older, and you never knew when the Manager would send a girl to live in the Girl's Dormitory, whether her parents wanted it or not. Any girls, especially the fair-skinned ones, could be sent away to Cootamundra to be trained as housemaids, or for work on stations. Their parents had no say in it, and wouldn't even know where they were. That could have influenced Mum and Dad too.

In the end my father said he'd had enough. It was in the summer after Christmas and school had started again. He just said to Mum, "We'll go."

Word got around that Mallyer was going. Every grown-up Aboriginal on the Mission knew, but of course us kids knew nothing about it. The white fellers never heard a word. We didn't trust **any** white person.

Then people who wanted to save their creamy kids came and said to my father, "Mullya, will you take our kids out with you?" Dad said he'd take as many as he could.

The fathers got together and built this big frame thing, a bit like a false floor, that they could put in the back of the buggy, so that the kids could get in under it, and Mum and Dad could pile all their stuff on top. They were even afraid the white fellers

would come and wonder what it was for. It would be nothing for them to pull your buggy to pieces and just chuck everything on the ground, even if things got smashed.

It was kept quiet – from the kids, that is – right up to the night we were leavin'. We heard about the planning a long time after.

We come home from school that afternoon and went for a swim 'cos it was very hot. When we got back we noticed all our toys and things were picked up. We just thought Mum had been tidying up, and wondered if she'd go mad at us for leavin' them in a mess. Then we spotted Dad greasin' some harness, and greasin' the buggy wheels, and we knew what that meant. So, being the inquisitive one, I asked Aunty Violet, "Where's Dad goin' with the buggy? Is he goin' for wood?"

She said, "No, but I can't tell you what's to do. They'll tell you themselves. But whatever you do, don't go away from the camp. Don't you leave here – Gladys too."

There were kids playin' round that I'd never seen at our place before and I wondered what they were doin' here with their parents. It wasn't till about eleven o'clock that night that we knew what it was all about. We were leavin', Mum and Dad, me and Gladys, and takin' these other kids with us. Our family was going back to Yantabulla through Enngonia where some of the other kids were to be collected by relatives. Enngonia is about ninety miles in a straight line from Brewarrina, so they thought that was far enough away for us all to be safe. Of course we couldn't travel in anything like a straight line.

Mum had all our clothes and stuff packed up ready. The other kids and mums and dads were cryin' because they had to leave each other. There were eleven kids altogether, me and Gladys and nine others. Gladys was real dark and so were two of the others, so Mum sat them up on top of the load in full view. No white person wanted **black** kids. The other two kids on top were a bit older too, and understood

better that Dad really meant “**No noise.**” They had to listen all the time that no one was following.

The rest of us were all pretty light-skinned, some fairer than me. They packed us away lyin’ down under the frame. It was pretty cramped but we were only there that one night. There was a bit of “Move over, you got all the space ...” just like kids in the same bed.

Dad waited till the moon was up and past its top so we could travel in the long shadow with the trees between us and the Mission Station. They couldn't use any lamps on the buggy so it must have been scary for Mum who was driving while Dad rode ahead to cut the fence wires, because he thought it would be safer going across country instead of by the road where the white fellers could pick up the buggy tracks. We had four dogs that were used to just walkin’ quietly along under the buggy. Mum wouldn’t go anywhere without her little bantams slung in their coop, but by the next morning when the chooks were crowin’, we were well away from the Mission. We had to go along the creek, over grass so we wouldn’t leave a track. The grass would have sprung up again before the white fellers thought of lookin’ off the road.

Mum was driving along the creek bank and went over a stump in the dark, and all of us kids tried not to squeal. We’d been warned over and over to stay still and not make a sound. I thought we were all going to be tipped out. Dad was singin’ out in a funny sort of whisper, “Annie, look where you’re bloody well goin’. You’ll tip all the kids out and kill the lot!”

Early in the morning – it was still dark – Mum and Dad pulled up at the Cato Bridge and got all us kids out. We had a feed and they gave us each a little bundle of something to eat and some water because we had to split up. We were to be just each

one by ourself, one kid to a tree, one kid to a stump. That way there'd be no crowdin' and pushin', and makin' a noise ...

Dad had marked out a mud map for us before we left, showin' us the lie of the land between Brewarrina and Enngonia, a river here and a creek there. We had to go from the Cato Creek towards the Bokhara, across the back of Mitchell Vale Station.

Dad told us to follow the creek a bit and hide till dark. The plan was that we were to travel only in the dark and hide during the day, each of us under our own bush. That turned out to be the hardest time – the daytime – because it was such very hot weather. Gladys and two other kids, much, much darker than her, stayed with Mum and Dad. I suppose you could say they were the decoys.

I felt terrible. Mum was sayin', "Hurry up and go now, Ev, quick, because it's getting' daylight," I thought to meself, "Will I ever see Mum and Dad and Gladys again?" 'cos that would have been the first time in my whole life that the family had been split up. The eight of us kids separated and cleared off down the Cato Creek towards Quantambone Station.

My old ginger sheep dog used to follow me everywhere, so they had to tie him up, and the last thing I could hear from right down the creek was this old dog still playin' up, barkin' and pullin' on the chain. A couple of times I was sure I heard him get hit to try and shut him up. Dad had wanted to leave him behind at the Mission but I'd kept sayin', "He'll be alright." Dad knew how much he'd miss one of his own dogs so he let him come. I'm sure he wished he hadn't because he told me afterwards that he caused a lot of hassles lookin' for me. They had to hide all me clothes and anything I'd touched so he lost the scent of me altogether. Then he gave up on me and became Gladys's friend ...

Dad told us afterwards that they'd only gone a little distance in the buggy that day. In the afternoon there were heaps of white fellers riding round looking for us. They'd missed us kids from the school 'cos, remember, the Mission Manager was the teacher. He used to stand at the door and count us as we went in, so of course he'd miss eleven kids. The other kids said we were sick. But if we were too sick to go to school we had to go to the treatment room, and the nurse said none of us had been there. That's when they all started rushin' round. The call went out to see if anyone was travellin', and they got onto the search real quick. Every time the APB fellers went lookin' for people they always took a policeman with them, and the one they picked always seemed to be a brute of a person, almost a sadist, a feller with no feelings.

That first afternoon at the Cato Mum and Dad spotted them out on horseback way across the Plain, looking for us. They could see the sun flashin' off the policeman's leggings. Stockmen wore leggings too, but the policeman's were part of his uniform so he kept them real shiny. The sun would shine on 'em, and you could see them through the trees or anywhere. Late in the afternoon APB people had pulled Dad up and questioned him. He told 'em something was wrong with the buggy and he had to fix it. Lucky it was no one who knew him well from the Mission, and to most white fellers one blackfeller was the same as another, and they thought the three real dark kids were all his ...

We must 'ave looked done from walking – we were eleven days on the track, see. Mum came over and she cuddled me, crying, and Dad was sayin', "Don't stand there cryin'. Take her and give her a feed and a drink." He had two kids under his arm and other huggin' his legs, 'cos my father was a big man.

That night we all had a feed, but Dad said, “Only eat a little bit now and have a sleep. Don’t eat too much ’cos you’ll get sick, your bellies aren’t used to it. You can fill up when you wake up.” ...

Most of the next day they were pickin’ burrs out of my feet and it was hard for me to walk about, but it didn’t matter a bit. We played in the gully and we swam in the creek and we shouted and yelled to each other while we played. We could play in the daytime, sleep at night and Mum and Dad and Gladys were there. All those bad eleven days just disappeared.

One lot of parents from the Mission were already in Enngonia. They’d got permission to visit relatives in Bourke, and I guess the APB had already checked that the missing kids weren’t there. We had to wait for a few days for the other kids’ relations to pick them up, then we went off to Yantabulla by ourselves, just the four of us, a family again.

From Donna Meehan, It is no secret: the story of a stolen child, Random House, Australia, 2000

I. CHILDHOOD

The strongest echo of my past is the sound of laughter. The memories of my early childhood are of being encircled by the laughter of my cousins, as we played freely in the warmth of the sun-glazed days. We either fell asleep at night to the rowdy encore of singing from my grand-parents, aunties and mother, accompanied by the uncles on their guitars, or to the sound of drifting voices from the adults sharing stories and their insistent laughter. I don't think I ever knew what silence was, for when the voices died down, there was always the repetitive crackling of the fire, over which the billy hung.

Such carefree days. Life was simple. Days rolled into one another. Sunrise, sunset.

Grandfather, Jimmy Welsh, was working for a white property owner as a helping hand and labourer, and he managed to get permission to set up camp for his family at one end of the property. Our camp was on the Walgett end of town, now known as Broad Street. The camp consisted of a few huts erected out of corrugated iron or 'tin iron', as my uncles called it, usually retrieved from the dump. They were small, one-room buildings which served their purpose, simply to provide shelter for sleep or from rain. It was a happy camp with the family looking after each other and sharing everything from food to treasures found at the dump. No-one was greedy or wanting something from someone else as everyone had their turn to enjoy the find.

There was always plenty of advice on hand between the knowledge and life experiences of the grandparents and adults. The older children automatically took on

their roles to protect the younger children and keep them amused. It was the role of the men to bring home game and the role of the women to cook. Even the cooking was shared and we ate everything on our plates as we were too poor to be fussy. When there was no game, we lived on Johnny cakes cooked on the open fire. Johnny cakes served as birthday cakes and Christmas cakes. They were the only standby for unexpected visitors and were usually cooked before the billy boiled. ...

II. 1960: REMOVAL

The first train ride I took is as clear in my mind as if it had happened yesterday.

Mum had all us kids dressed up, our hair brushed, which was only done for special days, and we were constantly reminded to use our manners. Barry, Widdy, Robby, Sooty and myself were put in the back seat of a taxi while Mum sat in the front with the taxi driver. The lady taxi driver had known all the kids at the camp since their birth and I thought it was strange that she and Mum didn't speak as we made our way along the bumpy red track leading from camp towards town.

As I watched the red dust swirling from behind the vehicle, I remembered we were all dressed up and on our way to the station for my first ride on the big steam train. We had always heard the faint train whistle from camp, and a few times we saw the clouds of smoke from the train, but I had never seen one close up. I sat impatiently in the back seat clicking my shiny new black shoes together and admiring the new dress I'd been given for the day. All my brothers wore their new shoes with white socks, a white shirt and a little black bow tie. We knew everyone had to get dressed up to go on the train and we felt important, like the little rich kids from town who often had train rides during the holidays.

When we arrived at the station we were surprised to see so many other kids and women waiting on the platform. All the children were happy and running in between the legs of their mothers, playing tips to fill in time. It wouldn't be long before the huge powerful black train pulled into the station as we could see its dirty grey smoke pouring into the air half a mile away. It was a rare treat for us kids at camp to climb into one of the uncles' old cars and be driven into town, so, when Mum said it was time to take our seat on the train, we climbed aboard jubilantly, anticipating the joy ride.

We took a few minutes to decide who would have the window seat or sit near the aisle, then we kept changing places to decide who'd sit next to whom. Mum hadn't taken her seat yet, so we all took turns inspecting the toilet which fascinated us. We knew it wouldn't be long before the train pulled out so we took our seats again, but then we realised we'd lost Sooty and Robby. When an old white woman in a red hat sat next to me, I changed seats with Barry, as she terrified me. Suddenly I felt scared. 'Where's Mum?' I asked Barry, who kept telling us, 'Mum'll be gettin on the train in a minute.' I kept asking him where were Sooty, Robby and Mum and he said, 'They must be in the next car.' There were lots of black women standing on the platform hugging one another.

With a sudden jerk, squealing of brakes and a loud puff of the steam engine, the train shunted forward. Fear gripped my heart. Barry and Widdy had bewildered looks on their faces, glancing at me and then at each other. I stared out of the window as we slowly pulled out of the station. I was very confused by all the women standing on the platform watching us and wailing. Then I saw her. There was my mum in her only good blue dress standing next to my aunts and our old grandmother. Just

standing there. Standing there with tears rolling down their cheeks too fast to wipe away. Then Mum waved a white hanky and I pressed my face against the window pane as hard as I could, watching her. Watching until her blue dress faded into a tiny dot of colour. I looked back at the station for as long as I could until it was out of sight.

The atmosphere of celebration and anticipation that had filled the cabin vanished, and there now echoed the distressed calls of frightened, broken-hearted children. 'Why didn't Mum and Grandma get on the train?' I cried over and over. The white woman in the red hat sat beside me with clasped hands, expressionless. Barry reassured me: 'Mum'll catch the next train. I'll look after you.' But he was crying too. I didn't understand what had happened, why Mum had changed her mind or why she would let us go anywhere without our aunty or grandmother to look after us.

We were on that train for a very long time. As the hours ticked by, I ran out of tears to cry. I sat with my back to the white woman and my face near the window so I could feel the breeze on my face. The flat country from home covered with warm red dirt was now very hilly and layered with trees, and the camps alongside the train track became larger and more frequent. The white woman corrected Barry as she overheard him telling Widdy and me that they were the camps of the white man, saying, 'They are called towns and we are going to the city.' ...

III. REUNION 1983

My greatest realisation was that Beatrice was just a normal person. She didn't fit any of the images I had built up of her. She was honest, sincere, and loved by everyone. She would help anyone who came to her doorstep for help. She was the Mum Shirl of Coonamble. Everyone called her 'Aunty Beat'; her humble dwelling, the little grey

fibro Housing Commission place, was a refuge for young and old alike. No fancy bed, just a pillow on the lino floor, a blanket or two. It was shelter, where people could be sung to sleep by her tender voice and warmed by her love. Here one found a few hours' peace from the storms of life.

She vowed she would never send anyone from her door-step ever since that shattering day in 1960 when the government took her seven children away. No words can express her anguished memories, the anger, the stinging of a broken heart which took twenty-three years to heal. Twenty-three long, miserable, lonely, destructive years waiting for her children to return to her arms. But they did. One by one, just as Grandfather said they would. They came home and found her arms outstretched like a big hen giving protection to her little chicks. She felt needed but, more than that, she was now giving her love to the original seven who had been denied her love because of ruthless government policies. ...

IV. BEATRICE

The next day Beatrice wanted to stay home and have a quiet day, so I sat on the floor playing records. I wanted her to know all my favourite songs. We spent two hours talking music. It was unbelievable, but the very ones I chose, Beatrice informed me, were the very ones that Grandfather and the aunties used to sing around the campfire at night. I thought I just liked them because of the beat or melody but those songs had been imprinted on my subconscious.

Beatrice told me how when she went home from the train station that day, she played records over and over. She named the songs she played. The anger and pain and memory of that day sent Beatrice, and thousands of women like her, into a drinking frenzy, trying to kill the pain. In time, it became an addiction.

I sat frozen at our kitchen table, unable to say anything, just listening and trying not to feel guilty. Beatrice continued, explaining how she would wake up and think it was a bad dream, but it wasn't, so she would drink more. Her heart was broken. The Aboriginal people thought, 'What gives those white people the right to take our babies away. We wouldn't do that to them.'

Neither of us on that day knew why we were split up but Beatrice explained now that she had received a letter from the Welfare Board ordering her to have all her children at the railway station on 21 April 1960. A Welfare Officer would meet her and take her children to a home. Beatrice came to believe that a nurse at Coonamble Hospital must have contacted the Welfare when her twins were born, three months before that time. ...

V. BEATRICE'S FUNERAL

I say in my mother's backyard an hour later with all the relations and felt something begin to stir in my heart. Something was happening, but I didn't know what. About fifteen minutes later all I could remember was that I kept looking from one face to another. I looked at a child, then an elder, at a male, then a female. I studied the faces. I noticed dark ones and fairer ones. Then slowly, slowly, the tears started to roll down my cheeks. The more I examined the faces the more it made me cry. It was so wonderful. I felt something I had never felt before. I saw true beauty in each face I beheld.

All of my anger and denial left at that moment. All the pain I had carried within me all my life left and in an instant I fell in love with a whole race of people. My spirit danced for joy. I felt new and wonderful in a strange way, and I began to understand that something spiritual had happened. I said to my heart, 'These people are so

beautiful, these wonderful people, and to think they are my relations. My people. I belong to them.' I whispered, 'Thank you, God,'

We had buried my mother seven years after she received my letter. Seven years to the very day, in fact to the very hour she'd opened it, the day before Mother's Day.

When she read my letter I gave back meaning to her life and now that she had died she gave my life meaning.

I wept with thanks as I sat there silently praising God for yet another miracle of love. Another answered prayer. He made me Aboriginal but all my life I was unable to accept His blessing. Now, for the first time in my life, I eagerly received what He had bestowed on me. This was the day my head and heart were in unison over my identity. The tears that flowed were full of guilt and shame. I now understood what the barriers had been and why I had been cautious. Although in recent years I was able to admit I was Aboriginal, it was only head knowledge and not flowing from my spirit or my heart. Apart from Mum, Ron and my boys, I protected myself by never allowing anyone to get too close to me because I was convinced that sooner or later they would reject me.

I could see now that from day one these people had wanted to be close to me but they were more perceptive than I, and had allowed me room and time to draw nearer to them. At last that day came and I wanted to get close to them. I claimed them as my relations and from that time they were my people. As I sat looking at their dark velvet skin, I knew that this too had been another barrier, as somewhere in my childhood I had adopted the view from white society that the fairer the skin the more acceptable people were; but now the darker their skin, the deeper the love I had for them.

I had an overwhelming sense of belonging. I had been searching for something all my life but didn't know what I was searching for until this moment and now it was so easy to identify. I needed to know what I belonged to. I needed to know that I was part of a family and I needed to know I was a part of a race. It was much more than just needing to know, it was a matter of wanting to belong as well as feeling I belonged. I became one of them and they became my people. I could now say I was Aboriginal knowing it was coming from my heart and not just my head. I thought about the events of the past two weeks, how ashamed I was not knowing the importance of a funeral. Now I knew it was more than a funeral: it was a farewell, a celebration of life, a returning to the land and a family reunion. I knew my prayer had been answered. I became one of my race. ...

VI. NATIONAL SORRY DAY, 1998

... I am still learning from my people. There is so much to know about Aboriginal history and the thing I love most is to watch our people communicating. I have been asked to share my story many times and am always emotional telling it, as I remember the places, the people, the heart. The hardest day in my life was National Sorry Day in 1998. I am sure that it was a day when a lot of awareness was raised, but for me it was heart rending. I had to speak at three different school assemblies and so driving to each location I was able to tune into the local talkback radio and hear the community's response to the observance day. The negative comments made me shudder as I realised how many people resisted the truth. I was glad my mum, Beatrice, was not here as it was all too painful.

That evening there was a special service at the cathedral to commemorate the Stolen Children. Sir Ronald Wilson from the Reconciliation Committee was the special

guest. He had headed the enquiry into the removal of Aboriginal children from their families and presented the report, *Bringing Them Home*. Over five hundred people attended and I was so thankful that there was a strong representation of our own Aboriginal community. It was one of those rare times when I didn't feel like speaking but literally had to force myself to share the story one more time. I told myself, You have to do this for Beatrice. I didn't want people saying 'sorry' to me. They should be saying 'sorry' to my mum – she had the worst pain and the worst life out of all of us.

I was never told exactly what the Welfare wrote in that letter to my mother except that she should put them on the train. Word spread quickly and all of the family, including grandparents, brothers and sisters, gathered together to try and console her. They all cried with broken hearts. They had heard of this happening to many families who had come off missions and now the government had struck fear in our happy little camp. They discussed hiding from the Welfare and the police, but they knew if she didn't obey the letter that the police would come and place the children in a utility and take them to the city. I only know that *that train* was full of Aboriginal children.

After the service, we, the Aboriginal community, stood in the grounds of the cathedral. So many people kissed my tears, hugged me and expressed their deep sentiments. I can honestly say that I have met people who were so very sincere and who were not ashamed to say 'sorry'.