

Community Capacity Building Indigenous Communities

Barbara O'Neill



UNTOLD STORIES

The Aboriginal Elders' experience

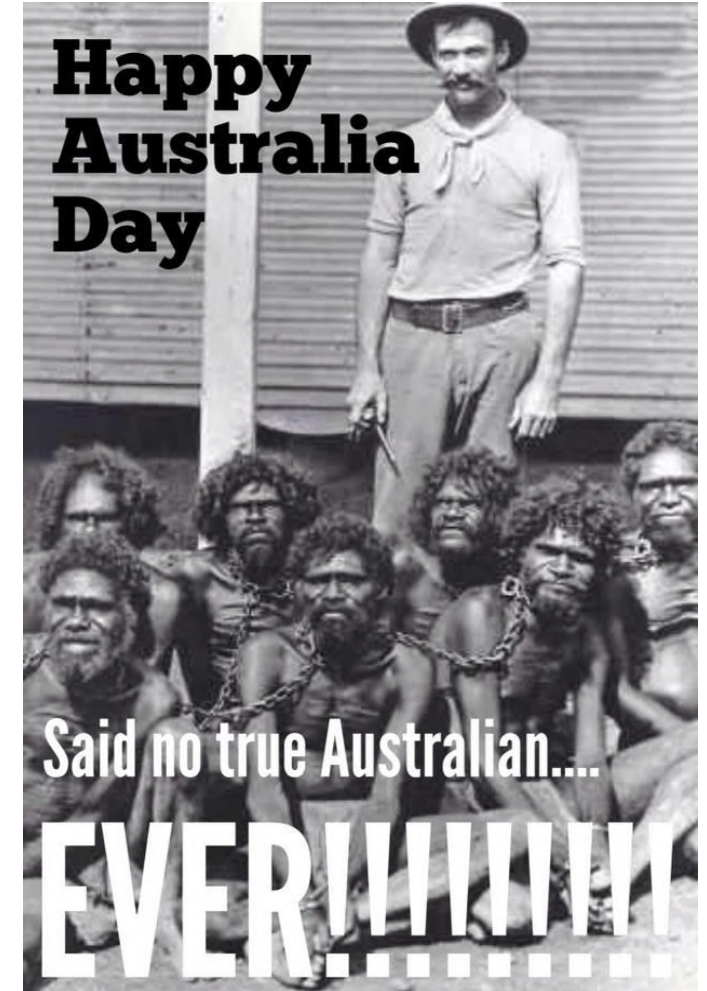
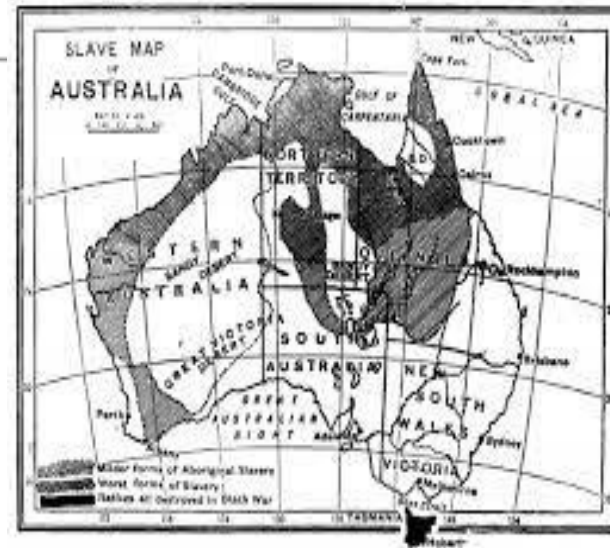
A trauma informed workshop placing the Aboriginal (Colonial) Trauma experience into a contemporary context.

The history of this place is not good. It makes everything sick. People come and live here and do not find out first,
the bad things that have happened here.

Aboriginal Peoples are hurting.

The original badness has not been properly addressed.

We are trying to grow strong again



People died on this beach wrapped in gifts of poison blankets given to them by the invaders, the settlers. This happened in our area. We can't go there because it is so sad and painful.
We remember. The memory runs in our DNA
It is called Trans Generational Trauma



How can we trust these people the invaders when they say they have something to help us, like their services?

This is our place, we live in this place and our history and that of our Parents and Grandparents is in this place. We will not go anywhere else.

This place is terrible sometimes, too much drugs, alcohol, poverty, decay.

We live in urban decay.



- We are still receiving their gifts of poison in the form of deep seated racism, social dominance and indifference.
- The services, they are Trojan horses; they are there to keep tabs on us with the minimum of support available. They were set up for the right reasons.
- These services are a human right; we should not deny them for ourselves and our families, just because they are the wrong design and staffed by the wrong people..

We know that we need services. These services are there because our wealth was taken from us by the invaders.

We have never trusted these government people.

They think we are all the same, like a tin of buttons all the same size and colour.

When they shake up our environment, the buttons slide and slip everywhere but they still stay, because they are trapped in a tin.

Like we are trapped in our poverty.



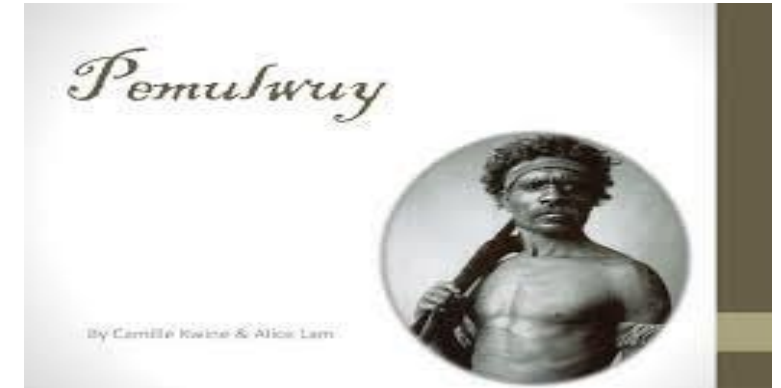
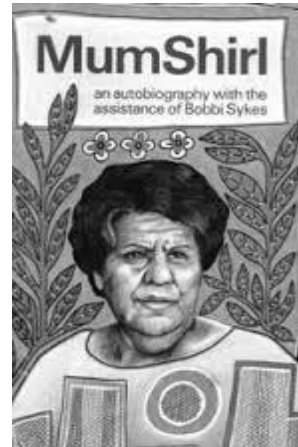
Redfern, a half-hour walk from Sydney's centre, has fewer than 300 indigenous residents left, while neighbouring Waterloo has 386, according to the 2011 census. That's down from about 35,000 in Redfern and neighbouring suburbs in 1968, according to [government statistics](#)

Before 1967, Aborigines weren't officially counted in the nation's population." <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/>. They only know about our poverty when they can exploit it for their wealth



Our Children should be able to feel proud of their Heritage. They should be able to hear their Ancestors' stories.

Our children should see their History around them. All they hear about is colonial history. They need to know about the Aboriginal Warriors who tried to defend their families. The Children need heroes.



Pat Dodson
Unknown Activists
Jenny Munroe
Vincent Lingari and Gurindji Mob
Mum Shirl
Oodgeroo Noonmuckel
Pemulway

The closest heroes some of our children have are their families.
Many families are broken.
Many families are strong
We must ensure that our children understand that they will one day grow into warriors.
The Children must know their spiritual Ancestry to believe this.



Us Women have lost our voice through genocide, forced servitude, mission life, Trans Generational Trauma and dominant society indifference.

We work together as women to find a voice. We work together to rise up and be counted as strong and individual women.



Our way is not always to storm the centre of power. Our way is also to watch and learn then act.

We find that we feel sick in our spirit. We are not seen let alone heard. To some settler people, we will never be quite good enough, no matter what our achievements.

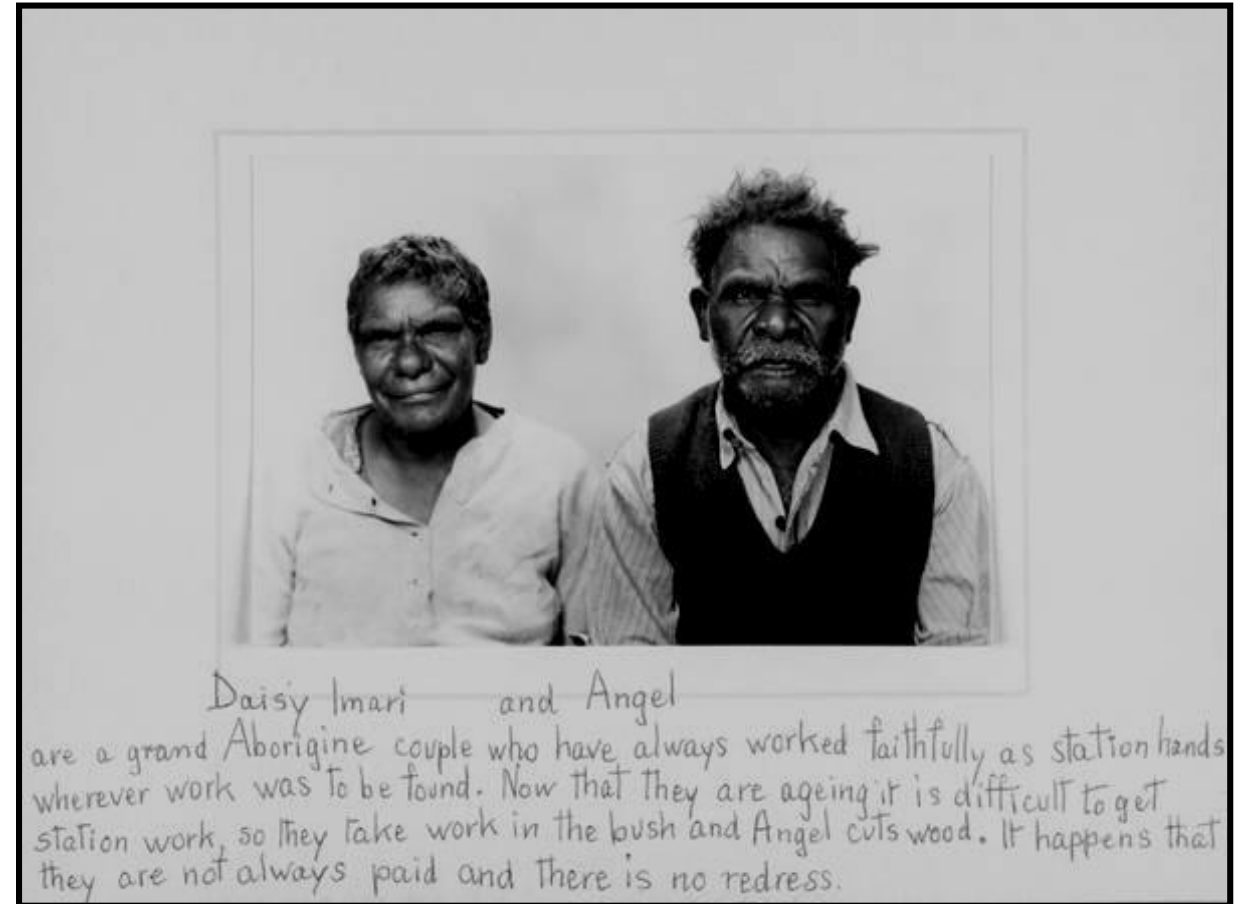


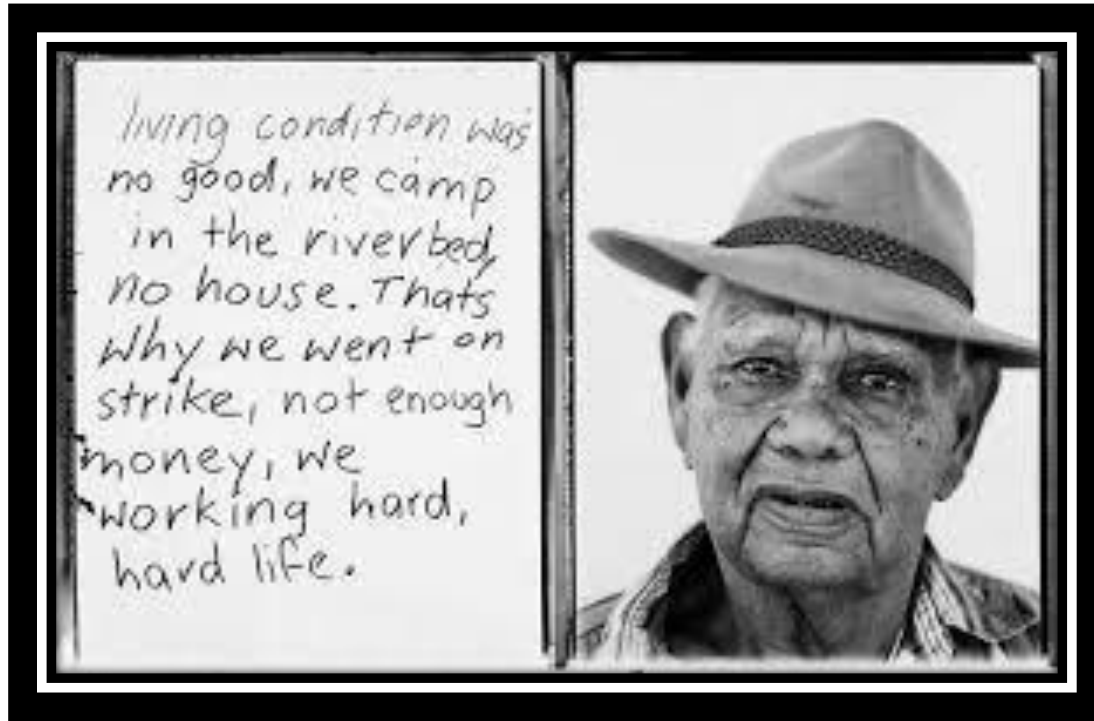
How do we change this? This is a sickness of the heart.

We start to ask “What happened that we feel like this”? Then we remember older people in our family felt like this, like bludgers. Black bludgers at that! We have always been told that Black Fullas don’t work or do anything for this country. We do not agree with this.

We learn that Black Fullas always worked, we just didn’t get paid. Our wages were stolen.

- Daisy Imari and Angel are a grand Aborigine couple who have always worked faithfully as station hands wherever work was to be found. Now that they are ageing it is difficult to get station work so they take work in the bush and Angel cuts wood. It happens that they are not always paid and there is no redress.






Living condition was no good, we camp in the riverbed, no house. That's why we went on strike, not enough money, we working hard, hard life.



Income Tax, Queensland Aborigines Account, To the worker as pocket money, compulsory deduction to the Aborigines Welfare Fund.



Only one side of the argument
has ever been promoted or
discussed by the government
& it's assimilated servants

- We yarn about our story. We trust each other and respect other's stories.
- We learn that we do not need to feel like bludgers when we get our social service support. We should use services as well.
- We learn that those privileged people get welfare but it is called something different—it is called in their world a service. Many privileged people are wealthy because of what their families stole from our families.
- We ask and discuss, why do we feel shamed about what we get? But privileged people demand and expect what they get.
- We decide that we have been conditioned to think that we are undeserving.
- One of Australia's wealthiest people, Andrew Forrest, is the go to person for Federal Government Aboriginal Affairs Decisions.
- His advice to government is to stop Black welfare. We need our own Mob to do the talking to the Prime Minister.
- We know a story about another Forrest, John Forrest.
- We will share a story about this coloniser/settler.

When we share our stories, we realise that we have all suffered badly as children, because our parents or carers suffered badly.

We realise that the settler society assumed that this is how we traditionally treat each other. They think we are savages.

They have the money and tools to share with us to recover, but unless they can do it themselves, and have direct access to us they will not help.

We are screaming out to help ourselves.

We have been so impoverished through psycho social dominance; we have lost any foundations and wealth that we would have culturally relied upon to heal.

We feel sick about this business. How can we tell our children to be strong and proud when we go around feeling shamed?

We decide enough is enough; we are going to learn more about our story, our Ancestors' story.

We need to heal from this feeling of shame so that we can walk our journey in freedom.

We decide how we are going to heal. We are going to use the services with pride. That includes a good knowledge of our history, since the invasion and to know our Human Rights.

We will learn and run our own services for our Mob. This will take knowledge both ours and the White Fella's knowledge.

BLACK SLAVES AND WHITE BRUTES.

SIR JOHN FORREST DEFENDS
THE CHAINS.

INHUMAN WHITE SAVAGERY.

The Melbourne "Age," dealing with the standing scandal connected with the mockery of "protection" of the aborigines as administered in this State, says:—"Since we drew attention a fortnight ago to the inhuman treatment of the Western Australian blacks the subject has been taken up by several correspondents. Their letters strongly support the contention that the condition of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Western State is one which calls for inquiry; while the almost contemptuous attitude adopted by Sir John Forrest on the subject furnishes additional reasons in favor of action by the Federal authorities." It is well known that the daily papers in Perth will not publish letters on

The Cruelties Perpetrated
upon the aboriginals by Nor' West squatters. The columns of the "Age," however, and, we need scarcely say, the columns of this paper are open to all who will humanely endeavor to mitigate the physical sufferings and

come from Victoria." Sir John Forrest did not attempt to absolutely deny, when questioned in Melbourne, that gangs of blackfellows have been worked on the Roebourne-Cossack tramway with chains round their necks. He said he thought their hands were chained to the barrows; and that is not so. He attempted to excuse the inhumanity by saying that if they were not so chained, they would run away. Comment is unnecessary. It is evident that the place where it is necessary to chain human beings by the neck and compel them to work for paltry offences, must be nothing short of a hell upon earth. A correspondent states that he has worked among the blacks on the Cossack to Roebourne road, where almost all the work is done by the "niggers." They are compelled to work in the broiling sun all day, with a white boss standing over them,

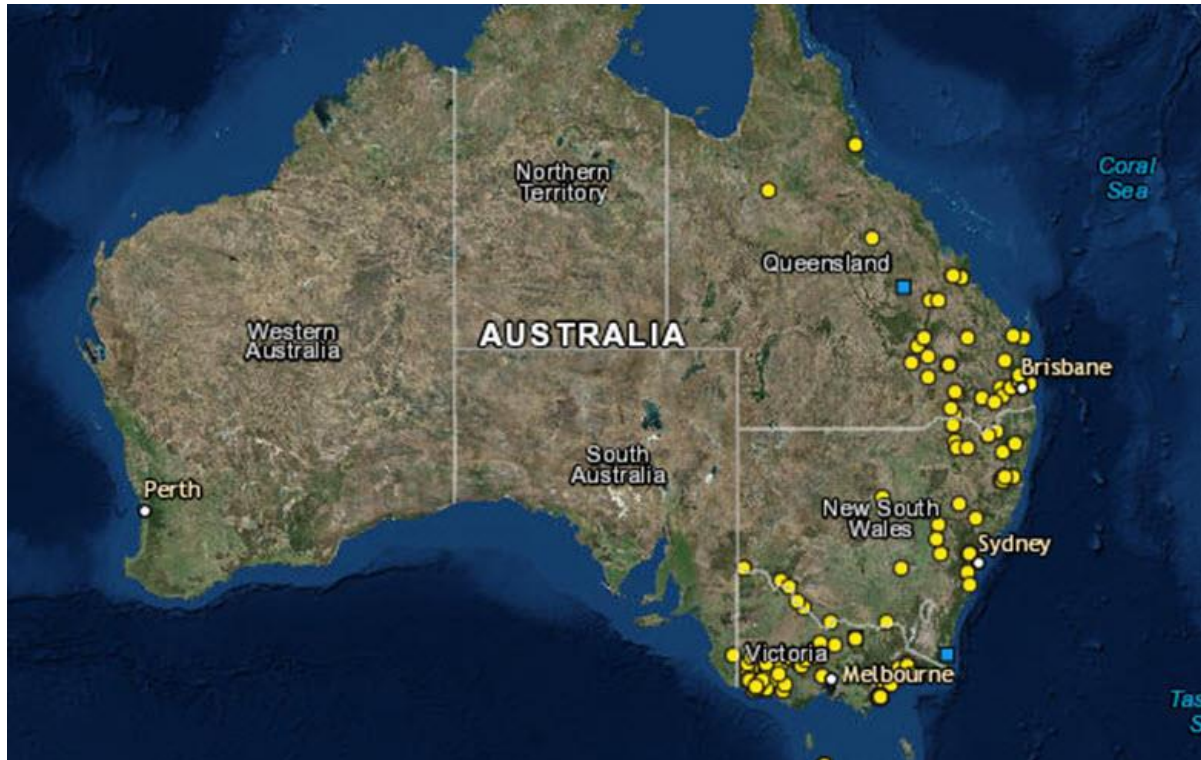
Carrying Heavy Chains

around their necks, and if they once flinch or complain, they are reported to head quarters and their tobacco is stopped if they are fortunate enough to get the usual allowance of one stick of twist per week. On some of the stations in the Roebourne district—the district where Mr. "Protector" Prinsep would have "Banio" and "Roger" "eat upon" by a

BLACK SLAVES AND WHITE BRUTES

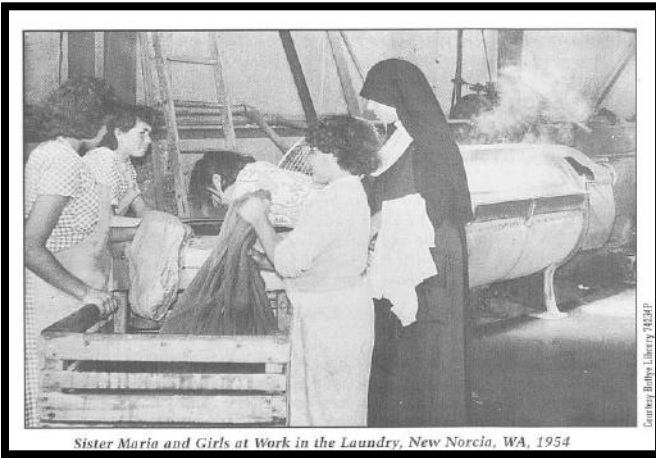
SIR JOHN FORREST DEFENDS THE CHAINS - INHUMAN WHITE SAVAGERY

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Coloniser and Settler Massacres of Australia's First Peoples

We sit down and yarn, and yarn and yarn. Some of our stories are so sad they make you cry; sometimes the stories make you wonder what happens to parents with their kids. You get angry about what other human beings did to us; Sometimes you want to get up and walk out. But you don't. You are part of this and there is no turning back now. This is the hard part. God it is painful.



Sister Maria and Girls at Work in the Laundry, New Norcia, WA, 1954

Sister Maria and the Girls at
work in the Laundry

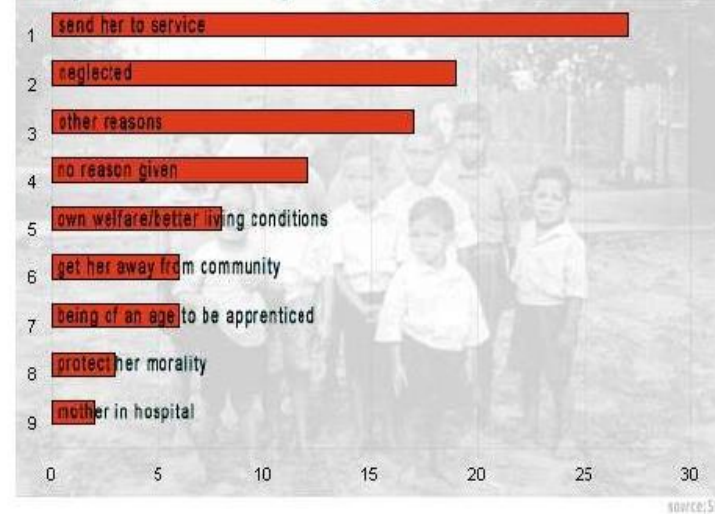
Send her to service,
Neglected,

Other reasons, no reason given

Own Welfare, Remove from community, Apprenticeship age

Protect her morality, Mother in hospital

Why were Aboriginal girls taken?



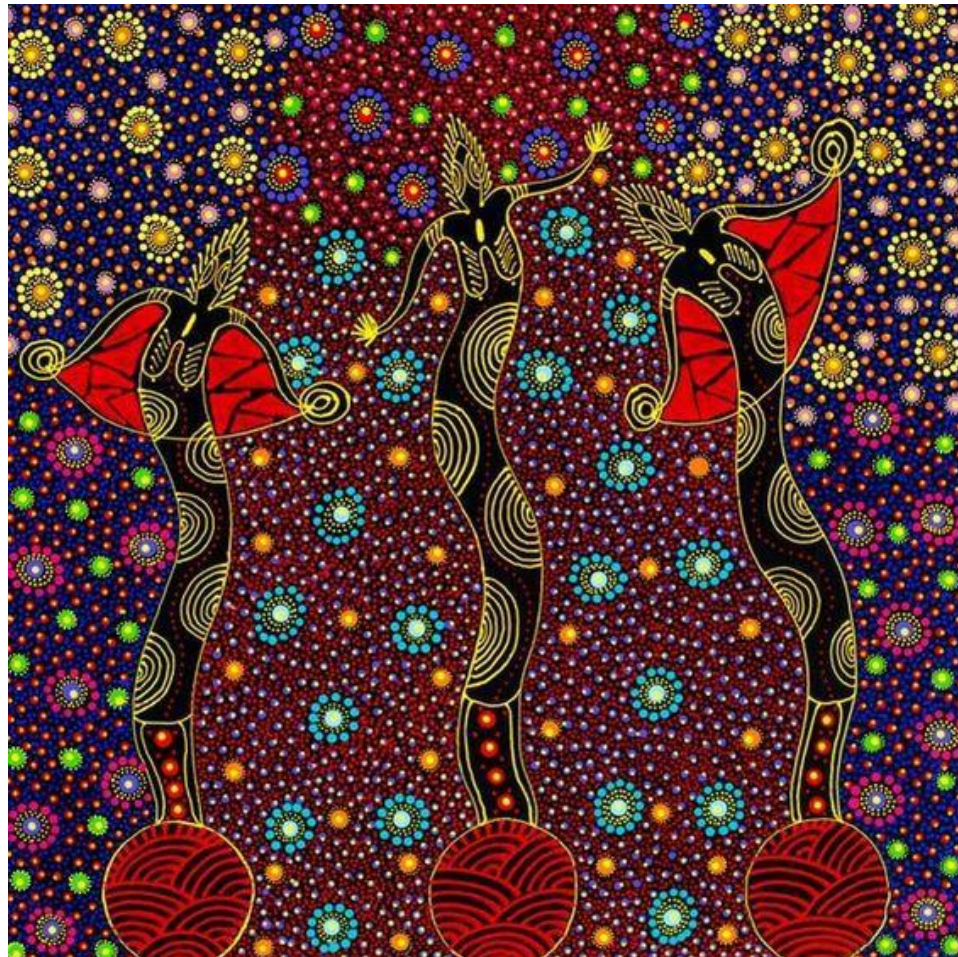
Reasons why Aboriginal girls were taken away (in %).

This statistic considers why Aboriginal girls were removed from their families. "Other" reasons include "being female on an Aboriginal reserve" and simply because of being "Aboriginal".

I LEARNED TO READ and WRITE
WHEN I WAS NEARLY 50... AFTER
I COULD READ and WRITE I SPENT
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Valda Hogan, 2004

I Learned to Read and Write When I was nearly 50After I
could read and write I spent years finding My BROTHERS.

Valda Hogan, 2004 (Bringing them Home Report)



Artist: Colleen Wallace
Nungari Title: Dreamtime
Sisters ID: 10082214 **Medium:** Acrylic on Canvas **Size:** 33 x 33 cm **Region:** Santa Teresa, Central Australia

Somehow this pain has always been around us, we were too numb to feel it.

We realise now, through telling our story, that we have created a space where our pain can now be named.

This is the pain of grief, loss, injustice, neglect, lost childhood, racism, indifference.

We have now named the pain. We now own the pain and we can use this pain to start our journey out of trauma. We will never forget our pain; we will manage and control our pain. But we are moving forward.

How do we start our journey to recovery from this Trauma?

We learn that we start it by asking that question. We will need knowledge. We deserve support and we should ensure that we access services that empower us and support us in our journey forward. We will one day run these services.

Our children will walk with their strong Parents and Carers.



REFERENCES.

Page 3, Malabar Beach

<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/8f/84/84/8f8484c17669c02f94c59d66a0c50bf3.jpg>

Redfern Images page 5

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/>

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[Myall Creek Massacre \(1838\) - Creative Spirits](#)
[www.creativespirits.info480 × 612Search by image](#)
A list of massacres on Aboriginal people

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A diagram showing why Aboriginal children were stolen
[A guide to Australia's Stolen Generations - Creative Spirits](#)

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Dream Sisters Artwork Wallace, Colleen, <http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/artists/colleen-wallace-nungari/dreamtime-sisters-176/>

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Photograph,
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Reprinted from *Inside Black Australia: an anthology of Aboriginal poetry*, edited by Kevin Gilbert, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1988.
Photograph of Maureen Watson, Watson Maureen, <http://cpcabrisbane.org/Kasama/2009/V23n1/MaureenWatson.htm>