

## **Yoorrook Justice Commission**

### **Statement of Charmaine Sellings**

My name is Charmaine Sellings. I was born in Bairnsdale and raised in Sale. I live in Lake Tyres and work at the Lake Tyres Aboriginal Trust.

My grandfather was stolen generation from Healesville but was raised by my elders here at Lake Tyres Aboriginal Trust, and my Grandmother was a Kurnai woman and born here at Lake Tyres Aboriginal Trust

I was named after Wally Cooper's sister Charmaine. I am fullblood Kurnai woman, most of culture was being taught from my grandmother. So, there is a lot of cultural history there.

I've also done Certificate IV in cultural heritage. So, most of the culture is through work being a ranger and protecting cultural sites within the Lake Tyres Aboriginal Trust.

I have a lot of memories of my childhood. Camping out here at the Lake Tyres Aboriginal Trust, with all the family. Also travelling around where dad can get some work.

Now days I see allot of racism and cultural loss is there, but it's not as bad as racism and intergenerational trauma due to the fact of how we've been treated by white men, especially those in like, the doctor's professions, how they won't even acknowledge us unless they're accusing us of being alcoholics or druggies.

A lot of it is in how we've been treated. The main one is, due to the doctor who accused me when I was going through a traumatic experience with lumps, which I thought were cancer. And he accused me of being an alcoholic. And that's why I got these problems and it upset me. So, I come home very upset about it, and I refused to see him. And it's gotten to the stage where the officer at the hospital has to be there every time I go there, because I refuse to see that doctor after the way he treated me.

My hopes are getting our culture back is about racism - the racism has to stop. Focusing on the next generation to start respecting our elders. There's a lot of stuff that I could put in there, but mainly racism and discrimination against our mob.

About the injustices that me and my family have experienced, we need these people to acknowledge that we're not going to put up with this anymore, and we will take them to court. What needs to happen is these people that have done this especially when you're going through a traumatic experience. They need to lose their jobs, is one of them. And, the people need to

get compensation and a letter of apology. Or face to face apology from that person who's done injustice. And if they don't do it, they need to be put in jail.

And this is about the whole community. I think about everybody and not myself. A lot of the premiers of Victoria, not only of Victoria, but Australia wide, are always only thinking about family and money. We need to change that and focus on all Aboriginal people and not just themselves and their families.

Well, for starters, people talk about Stolen Generation that's still happening today. Especially when you've got those areas working and still taking our children away. It's still hurting the families. And they need to focus on putting children with family or with Aboriginal people and not take them away from other families.

I am sick of seeing so many community members who are struggling out of here, and they're still having their children taken from them. Lots of money needs to be invested in proper housing. Proper relation is for Aboriginal people, because when there's emergencies and we go to a white relief centre, we are getting treated with disrespect. There's a lot of discrimination and racism in that. We also need to focus on more job opportunities and, mainly discrimination as well.

The main obstacle is funding. We would like to see more funding out here. We need more funding out here for jobs and so that people can also work on their cultural stuff like artefacts and that. We also need to focus on the next generation, because the elderly are not going to be around for much longer the way things are going. The other obstacles is that you try and do something good and you've got a lot of people putting you down. So, we need to make a change in, jealousy and stuff like that. But the biggest obstacle to make change is the drugs and alcohol the aggression and the violence. It all has to stop.

**END OF STATEMENT**