

Yoorrook Submission

1. I am [REDACTED] years old. I am a Barkindji/ Yorta Yorta/ Wiradjuri/ Mutti Mutti woman.
2. I got into the child protection system when I was around five. I was first taken to foster homes, then I moved in with my great-grandparents. They taught me about culture then I moved in with my Auntie (she's an important Elder).
3. Auntie brought us up pretty good, but then she became unwell so me and [REDACTED] had to be split up. [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] younger than me.
4. [REDACTED] was sent to a foster home, four hours away from me. [REDACTED] is now in a child protection home.
5. I then moved to a town in [REDACTED] with my cousin. It was pretty good for a while, but then the system kept telling me nah you can't stay here, we need to move you into a residential care because you're messing up at school.
6. I moved into residential care and after this, things turned pretty bad. I met bad people, got on drugs. The system wasn't really helping, they kind of just gave up on me.
7. During this time, [REDACTED] was in another town with family, but I couldn't go with [REDACTED], cause they didn't want me. They didn't want us together cause of how we grew up, we were always fighting.
8. As I said, my situation got worse while I was in residential care. They wouldn't take me to school. I was using drugs and alcohol. Then I met a drug buddy and ended up getting hold of [REDACTED] again. [REDACTED] was giving me drugs. I was around 16 when all this was happening. [REDACTED] started selling me to men for drugs. I tried to escape to my boyfriend's house but then learnt he was sleeping with [REDACTED] as well.
9. For a while, I had my own place, a department house, but I was not safe. One night, I was sleeping, and some men smashed down my door and were standing over me drunk, so I got up and I chased them out of the house. I called the cops, but no one did anything about it.

10. Then I got here at Bunjilwarra cause I was really sick of everything.
11. I was really angry cause I think that the child protection system knew about a lot of the stuff that was happening and they didn't do anything about it.
12. I was failed by the system. They treated me like I was crazy, so they sent more to secure welfare and then I got sick of it, and got [REDACTED] locked up.
13. [REDACTED] hasn't been charged for what [REDACTED] did. I have IVOs on me, cause I had fights with [REDACTED] and damaged property. I was never in a position to provide a statement cause I was always intoxicated from all the drugs [REDACTED] gave to me.
14. DHS need to understand that [REDACTED] kids should not be able to see [REDACTED]. They should not have a choice to see [REDACTED] cause they are underage and [REDACTED] is dangerous.
15. I left Bunjilwarra for a couple of months and was living at a youth hostel cause I got kicked out for starting a relationship with one of the boys here. I [REDACTED] returned to Bunjilwarra. I didn't relapse at all when I was out in the community.
16. I arrived at Bunjilwarra [REDACTED] ago. It's probably been the best thing that has ever happened to me. I am now [REDACTED] sober. I barely talked when I came. I have gotten along with all the staff, I found it harder to connect with the girls. I grew up with my male cousins so sometimes its easier for me to connect with boys. The programs at Bunjilwarra have been amazing.
17. I want to get a Working with Children's Check, so I can take care of [REDACTED].