

Yoorrook Justice Commission

Statement of Patricia Hayes

My name's Patricia Hayes. My mob is Bidwell. I would like to share my story.

I was taken away from my mum at the age of eight weeks old.

I was in about 36 different homes under the state award of the Stolen Generation. I was abused.

When I was a young girl, I remember being put into group homes as a young girl, moved around a lot. Not always sure whether to unpack our bags, because within a couple of days we knew that we were always going to be moved.

In most of the homes we copped abuse; physically mentally, sexually.

Today when I look at kids and I see them in homes, and I see something happen it just reminds me of myself when I was in a home and it brings, like, big flashbacks to when I was that kids at that age. And it's not a good feeling.

I just think that the cycle needs to be stopped of our kids being abused and taken away from their mothers, their families. And just to remember who they are and keep our culture alive really in knowing who they are and where they come from.

It's a big thing in our community today that most kids, Aboriginal children that are under the state award or Stolen Generation children that lose that knowledge of who they are and where they come from. They don't recognise who their people are just like we did.

I remember the day I met my mum. I was eight years old and the first day I met her she was in a geriatric centre. I went in, I was so scared, because I didn't know who she was. I was actually quite scared, because she was this dark lady sitting in the room, in a corner in a wheelchair. And I had my siblings telling me that that was my mum, my biological mum and I wasn't sure. I just kept telling them that she wasn't my mum. To me she was just a complete stranger.

I had met my siblings through the homes. We didn't meet all at once, but when we finally did meet each other we didn't know each other and I just feel like the cycle is still going today.

So, I just want people to know that our voices need to be heard and our stories need to be heard, so that this can't continue to go on. And I hope this helps people in a way to make them

understand that we can change our lives for the better or the worse, and make it better for ourselves and our kids, and also for other kids that are still suffering today.

Basically, we've got to say, "No. No more" and make a stand for ourselves, and just to stop that cycle. Because if we don't say, "Enough is enough" it will continue to keep happening. Yep. And that's, yeah, basically all I'd really like to say.

END OF STATEMENT