



TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

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(THE RECORDING HAS COMMENCED)

5 **INTERVIEWER 1:** And I'm going to press record on this as well. Beautiful, so do you want to start by introducing your name and your mob?

10 [REDACTED]: Yeah. Yeah. [REDACTED], Yorta Yorta man from [REDACTED] originally living here on Dja Dja Wurrung Country, for the last ten years. So I've been here a third of my life now, and yeah, since I was 20, I've been working for [REDACTED].

INTERVIEWER 1: Beautiful.

15 [REDACTED]: Yeah. And why it is that I'm talking today?

INTERVIEWER 1: To tell your truth, today.

20 [REDACTED]: Yoorrook has been one of them things that a few people have looked up to have mentioned and that are keeping an eye on. So I kind of have been led, led by them. And I hadn't known too much about it until recently, but it looks like a good opportunity for anyone to give, like, a good- I guess, platform for anyone, no matter who you are, for any mob to be able to contribute to some greater change. And [REDACTED]. Yeah, he said that you guys were
25 coming around and doing your thing and listening and trying to capture some good bits of information. And I feel like my frustrations in the past as a practitioner have sometimes fallen on deaf ears, both [REDACTED] and outside.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

30 [REDACTED]: To the point where, you know, I'd consider giving up the fight and moving on to something else. And I'm now in a different position and stuff, but I'm still holding some of that angst and that frustration with you know, not getting some of the, some of the wins with families. So I used to work with men in particular, but, you know, all their families. But yeah, I think we could have had
35 some more success with them or success or I, you know, there could have been goals met that weren't because of- because of our external kind of things that were.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

40 [REDACTED]: Were bullshit, really like-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah, do you want to tell us what sort of work you do? And then.

45 [REDACTED]: Yeah, sure. So I-

INTERVIEWER 1: (crosstalk 00:02:07) Barriers-

[REDACTED]: I was a men's practitioner in a group called [REDACTED]. So it was like a men's behaviour change program for Aboriginal men. And it was- I don't know if you know much about men's behaviour change programs, obviously. There'd be a, there'd be an incident or several incidents of family violence the different severity. And then they had the option to either participate voluntarily or they'd be mandated by a correction sort of systems and stuff like that. So out of the courtroom now you've got conditions. You're referred to our program. So yeah, we tried to make fellas help heal within themselves not go straight to the behaviour. It was, you know, what's led you here? What are the what's the intersectionality here. And you know what's going on? What's this? What's your story? You know, get them around the fire. It was always out on country and unlike mainstream, get them in the room and then kind of just go straight into the Psychoeducational model. It was you know, let's check in, build safety. Let's find out who you are. And then, you know, let's recognise our wounds and then how our wounds have made us wound others and see that and feel that. And then, you know, start towards the journey of healing and, and change. So there was, there was concepts from obviously mainstream that, you know, we share that, you know, we want to educate them on what family violence is. And what are the strategies that we can use to reduce that or, you know, eradicate it. But it can't happen without like some, some personal healing and stuff first. And I don't think that that's a sort of a- or a perspective that was you know, kind of shared by mainstream.

[REDACTED] We originally partnered with [REDACTED]. It was a joint partnership when we were starting it off, and the amount of times that we were sitting in that room, you know, saying, this is the way it needs to be done, only to be met with a room full of older non-Australian, non-Indigenous women about how we as blackfellas work with black men. It was just, you know, frustrating and annoying and to the point we ended up saying, you're a handbrake, you know, your policies and stuff aren't- you know, they don't reflect the way we want to work and the way that these fellas respond like you know, we want full control over this, basically. And we severed the partnership with them which was the best thing that we could have done. Then we had all of the creative control and, you know, everything was- you know, it was in our hands now, we can lead this however we want. We know how to work with men and what gets results. But then yeah, unfortunately they would be- the participants would be attached to places like Child Protection and your Anglicare and stuff like that. Corrections, you know, police, like all these, all these-

40
INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

[REDACTED]: Other kind of like really rigid kind of spaces. And like, so then we'd have to kind of work with them a little bit. And there was just frustrations with that, you know, like there was obligations to meet on their end and yeah, probably just felt a little bit disempowered at times, because I mean, do you want me to go into examples now or is that just do you want a nutshell?

INTERVIEWER 1: It still sounds great. So you're talking about you're working with men, behaviour change work.

5 [REDACTED]: yep.

INTERVIEWER 1: You're doing it. You're trying to do it in a way that, you know, works for-

10 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: The men in your community,

15 [REDACTED]: Mmm.

INTERVIEWER 1: And you're being met with this kind of resistance and-

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

20 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Kind of-

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Lack of respect for your expertise.

25 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Community knowledge from mainstream providers.

30 [REDACTED]: Yep.

INTERVIEWER 1: And now you've got to work with a whole bunch of different systems and providers-

35 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah. Yeah. That's right. Yeah, yeah pretty much.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yep.

40 [REDACTED]: And like, I just- You can feel that there wasn't much of a consideration to colonisation.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

45 [REDACTED]: And the generational impact that has now had- has now positioned this man here. You know what I mean? There's survivors like they're fighting.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

5 [REDACTED]: And what you see, so what you see in like, your mainstream family violence kind of narratives and stuff like that, are these, you know, non Australian, non-Indigenous men. So just like your Anglo sort of men that are in positions of power, you know, school teachers, footy coaches, policemen and all that kind of thing that are these calculating kind of- you know, manipulation masters and they're coercive and, you know, that kind of violence and stuff that the wider sort of society are looking at is now violent and that kind of thing. We don't get that guy.
10 We get broken men who are, you know, struggling to get off the drink or the drugs and whatever, they're severely traumatised. And mental health issues. Homeless, like all this stuff. They're not thinking about, like, fucking family violence then- They're not, they're really not the majority of them, like 1 or 2, you know, probably had better judgement and didn't use it. But by and large, like these were broken men and
15 you know, it was us telling the sector, you know, slow down like- we're not jumping to behaviour change. Like it's yeah, so it felt like they were being tarred with the same brushes, like a different cohort. We've got a different cohort here, guys, we work differently. It doesn't fit into your models. And it was received by some, you know, good progressive thinkers and workers and stuff around, but in broader sort of
20 lenses and it yeah, it was- there was an assumption that we would, you know, be colluding with them. We would not be addressing the problem. And it would, you know, all these things that were like kind of-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yep-

25 [REDACTED]: You know, holding us back and we're like, we're fucking healing, you know what I mean? Like, why can't you understand that? That's what needs to be done with our mob.

30 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yep.

[REDACTED]: Like.

35 **INTERVIEWER 1:** And so some of those things are like a lack of respect for your knowledge?

[REDACTED] Yes.

40 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yes. A lack of understanding of colonisation.

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

45 **INTERVIEWER 1:** And maybe a stigma or an idea of what Aboriginal men are actually like or something?

[REDACTED]: Yeah, that. Yeah, a lot of that. And just, just allowing us to kind of lead I think like the one example, I just need to get out of my brain right now is

you know, a fella had- he smashed his phone or something like that, and the cops were called because they heard it, or I can't remember the details on why he ended up. It's been a while now, but anyway, he couldn't see. He was sort of, you know, IVO's are put in place. He's from a different part of Australia, far away from here.
5 I'm trying to kind of de-identify it a little bit.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

10 [REDACTED]: And, you know, he's like, what are you- what's this IVO? What does this mean? All that kind of thing. And you know, he's a really good guy deep down, and they all are. And so we'd explained that process to him- look, you can't, he says, so I can't even see my kid? Like, I've got to find somewhere to live, and I've got to see my kid. Well yeah, okay. And now it's left for us to pick up those pieces. And, okay- fair enough, let's work with that. But then his birthday is coming up, and the
15 nature of the punishment didn't fit the crime. You know, like the nature of what he did compared to what- the suffering that he was then put through of you know, he saved up a little bit of money looking for work, all that kind of thing. Got money together to get [REDACTED] a birthday present. And he said you know, I haven't even been able to see her. They haven't organised any supervised
20 contacts or anything like that. So we'd be on the phone and we'd have to sort of risk our integrity by borderline yelling at workers, saying, why the fuck haven't- haven't you organised a space for him to see his [REDACTED]? Do you know how- we know the impacts of an Aboriginal mum or dad not having a connection with their kid on everyone? Like this is about the kid.

25 This is about the kid, not just him, it's not. We're not punishing him for what he did by not seeing the kid. You're actually punishing the kid too by not allowing- and we'll supervise it if you don't have time. You know, we're offering to do your job for you if you want. No, no, it can't get permitted. I can't get approved. And it's like,
30 well, it's a little Bubba's birthday. He just wants to he just wants to give her a present and we're going to be there. Like, where is the trust in us to be able to kind of hold that space and get something happening and foster a connection between them. Because at any point he could just go, fuck this, I'm out. And then suicide is always a
35 risk for our fellows too. Like the stats are higher for men at the best of times, for suicide, you know. And let alone them going through the system, not seeing their kids. You know, not getting a chance to sort of address or work through their issues. Like, it's just like you're in that box now. You're in the perpetrator box. Good luck getting out, you know? And so, yeah, that's- that's just heartbreaking. Missed his kid's birthday. Didn't get- he still hasn't. I don't know if he even got that present to
40 her, but-

INTERVIEWER 1: Why do you think that- why is the system kind of putting that block in? Do you think?

45 [REDACTED] I think it's just what they do with everyone. Like, it's there's barriers that they agree to, like, I'm not- I'm a bit of an advocate for pushing the boundaries a little bit, because the rules have been set upon us doesn't mean that we

can't challenge them kind of thing. And for them, it was just, oh, this is what it is. You can't see him. We're not allowed kind of thing. And I'm like, but why is it what it is? Like, what- and have a look at Australia. Have a look at our mob, now tell me it is what it is like. You know what I mean? So that there was that broader thinking of like, oh, just not being subject to change. Anything I think was frustrating. Be like
5 me telling you this needs to happen. You're going. No, but we haven't ever done that. Like, yeah, there's obviously some unprecedented kind of work that people have got to step up and do-

10 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yup.

[REDACTED]: Then.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yup.

15 **[REDACTED]:** So yeah. So I found that they were just a big eye roll for me, like child protection. Police were actually really good. Like, they would have some flexible ways. Our local police that they were quite understanding, actually, like a few of them, in my experience, I can't speak on behalf of everyone sort of
20 experience, but they were generally pretty good to work with. And, you know, they'd there would be a guy that. Oh, it happened on a few occasions where fellas that were in our program were actually then wanted by police because something had you know, something had unfolded or whatever, and they'd ring us and say, are they apart of your circles? But I said, yeah, but you know, we can't. I'm not telling you where it
25 is when we're meeting and all that kind of thing, because the last thing that we're ever going to have, like, it'll ruin everything.

INTERVIEWER 1: Trust.

30 **[REDACTED]:** Yeah, trust like or ruin our program. It'll ruin your, like, everything you can't rock up and. But what? You know, what we'll do is we'll ask this fella. Hey, you're pretty hot at the moment. Like, obviously something's happened in that police space. Go and sort it out before you come back. So leave it with us, but if I run into him on the street, or if he pops into my office, I'm not going
35 to ring you and tell him and tell you. And they said no, that's fair enough. You've got to maintain a relationship. So that sort of stuff like that kind of dialogue that we have with police and that kind of thing is like exactly what we kind of wanted with child protection. But, you know, they sort of didn't encourage that sort of spat and you know, there's other examples, like the mandatory urine testing that were completely
40 unfeasible or, you know, not relevant. You know, supervised contacts weren't happening enough. And when they were happening, they were happening in a shitty little clinical, like tight little space in DHS that's like fucking completely unsafe for our mob, you know, not out on country, nothing like that.

45 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Do you want to expand on what the issue is or what even the process is with mandatory urine testing?

[REDACTED]: Yeah. So there'd be, well, I guess reports or concerns that someone like a parent would be using.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

5

[REDACTED]: They backed off a little bit on marijuana. They probably- there's probably some progression there on the way that people smoke marijuana. But their levels still need to be at a decent kind of amount. But that's not a zero tolerance kind of thing anymore. And then there's parameters around that which you know, that are suggested, you know, wait till the kids go to bed go out into your shed, you know. Don't- try not to let it smell. And you know, so that's it's kind of containable a little bit. But, you know, ice was the, the main one. But there'd be people with like a drug use history. And then there'd be like a minor concern or something or a report or something like that. And then it was like, all right, let's put these harsh conditions on them and expectations and all these things that they've got to now do and, you know, drugs being one of them. But they'd be fair- which is fair enough for some, but others would be clean, like, I think that they just used as a rule- alright, put them on. It would just seem to happen to every single bloke we worked with. I got to go for a piss test and half of them would be clean. And then there's transport issues and accessibility issues. Where do they live and how do they get there? And they've got to do it randomly so that they can't, like, say in the system's eyes, you know, you can't kind of you've got it in four days. You can't kind of cleanse yourself the day before blah, blah, blah.

25 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: So that would be like maybe at their job network provider or in court and get a text message saying you need to complete a urine sample today. And now they've just got to run around and do that. And if they didn't it was like a blight on their record. You're not complying to the conditions that were put upon you. And I look at the context though like it's- and then so some of those things that's one example of like of putting an expectation on fellows or families to meet that can't be met because of barriers unspoken about. But then the result is that they didn't meet them. And then, you know, we'll go to court and we'll extend this kind of separation or you've got more work to do on this kind of thing. Like it's just like- the ability of the family to be able to meet their expectations in the timeframe that they expect. It just doesn't work like that, yeah. And it just everything just felt concrete. Like you work with another person and just the exact same shit. And then this guy is the same thing, and then it's just like, well, now we've got like, a system kind of failure down. We've got a system breakdown here because you're all in the same position. Like so yeah that's, you know, if that makes sense. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Totally.

45 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah, that's really clear.

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

5 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah. And I think, yeah, the important thing for Yoorrook as well is that kind of system-

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

10 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Right. Like where is the system-

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Making things harder, not easier-

15 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: And that's. Yeah, a good example-

20 [REDACTED]: Yeah, and- yeah it's just, some of the work- I do feel for them, like the department, like it's a high turnover and there's some gnarly jobs in there that, you know, it's some pretty tough stuff. So I don't sort of blame the level of perhaps incompetence on the ground workers, because a lot of the times it's first cab off the rank out of Uni or TAFE, because they're hungry for a gig, and then they've got like a depleting workforce because it's so stressful and stuff like that. So you've got and not a judgement, but you've got inexperienced people on the ground now
25 working in pretty heavy sort of cases to do with Aboriginal families. And now they're expected to know everything culturally as well. Like, you know, you're not going to want to push boundaries and stuff like that if you're one of those workers against management about the systems and stuff. So they're in a bit of a powerless
30 position, too, for the ones that have good intentions.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

35 [REDACTED]: So yeah, it's more of a (crosstalk 00:18:22) maybe that speaks to the workload and that in these roles and stuff, like we can't get any momentum and stuff if you've got a workforce that's depleted and smashed and-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

40 [REDACTED]: And that sort of thing. Yeah, and experience. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah. Great.

45 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah. That's another kind of system issue. Isn't it? The people that you're working with that are-

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

5 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Having these key roles-

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

10 [REDACTED]: And then you factor health stuff and all that in there like mental
health services and stuff like that. Like we've got a pretty decent team now, social
emotional wellbeing and all of that at BADAC but their waitlists are massive, like
15 like huge, everyone's got mental health issues. Don't mean everyone but like, you know
like it's such a massive thing that you can't get anywhere else in your other systems,
like when you're reunifications and your justice stuff and your drug and alcohol stuff,
like you can't even work, you can't even get a diagnosis or you're struggling to get
access to doctors and psychologists and psychiatrists are the biggest one, really. Like
there'd be people that were too unwell to even think about how they move in the
20 world because they're just sick-

20 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: And then- but they couldn't, they can't afford to or they can't get
25 in to a psychologist or psychiatry sort of anywhere, like. So, yeah, that's hard.

25 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: That's. And that's no one's fault, hey. Like, I'll probably
30 somewhere- but like Yeah, that's another really sort of access kind of thing.

30 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: Even now myself, like I'm getting a little infection here on my
35 finger. I rang up the, like, my doctor [REDACTED] and they said,
yeah come to the- come and see me middle of September. That's when we can get
your appointment. I'm like middle of September? That's six weeks away. Like
what's, I can't even see my doctor, like, for six weeks. Do you know what I mean?
Like that's crazy. Like, imagine if I had something worse than a little finger
40 infection.

40 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: You know?

45 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: That's a whole probably another story, Like just medical-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yes-

5 **[REDACTED]:** Like, yeah. I don't want to go into that-

INTERVIEWER 1: (crosstalk 00:20:30) Leave that for six weeks as well-

10 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah, definitely. Yeah. So but that's. Yeah, that's probably another conversation. But yeah. But my experience has been- yeah against- yeah, my frustrations with the broader structure and some attitudinal stuff, like with the sector about how we do things and you'd go to forums and stuff like that. And you know, people nod when you, when you talk about our mob and all that kind of thing, but then you're not really seeing any- then you go out and work with different sectors, like different people from the sector and stuff in mainstream positions and shit. And

15 you just you wouldn't feel that they're demonstrating what their MOU or their reconciliation action plan actually suggests. Like, it just they feel bullshit to me now. Like they just feel like, you know, executives agreeing on things and Aboriginal organisations being pressured into you know, into those sort of parties-

20 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: But then what are your workers doing? How does that trickle down? Like how- and where's the accountability if you're not kind of abiding by this, what are the accountability systems here? How do we actually challenge them and

25 say like, hey, you know that thing that we agreed upon, how your workers would work with our workers and that. Well, that's actually not been- so what actually happens then? You know what I mean. What's, who's accountable for it?

30 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Oversight and accountability-

[REDACTED]: Yeah. So and it might happen. I don't know, I'm not sure.

INTERVIEWER 1: And do you think the-

35 **[REDACTED]:** Just putting out there-

INTERVIEWER 1: Do you think the issue is that the kind of goals that they're trying to achieve, they aren't serious about, or that there's a breakdown in how those goals get to be achieved and the kind of lack of process around doing them and then

40 checking up on them.

[REDACTED]: I honestly just think that like- just my opinion that potentially it's one of them things that once they sign off on, it's not really that flavour of the month anymore. And then they get busy and then they move on to other things and they sort of forget about us until it's like NAIDOC week and you know, like around

45 like sorry day or, you know, stuff like that. Like, it's just one of them things that, yeah, we're thought of every now and again, but they've got other fish to fry in their

eyes. And you know, they don't sort of circle back to it a little bit maybe. I'm not sure.

INTERVIEWER 2: Or one enthusiastic person leaves and then-

5

[REDACTED]: Yeah. That's right. You lose a bit of progress and stuff depending on yeah, I don't know where the, where the breakdown might be, but NAIDOC week, we're, you know, we're flat out like going to get gifts from other organisations. And you know, we're like, you know, they always want to come on to our family day and all that sort of thing. So they use us in that regard. And it's almost like an image thing. You know, we're partnering with the act and they're so headspace-

10

INTERVIEWER 1: Lots of photos be taken and stuff-

15

[REDACTED]: Yeah. All that sort of thing. And yeah it's really good you know, but you're part of a broader community and all that kind of thing. But then why are we still having issues like why are we- Why are the statistics still like saying that? Why are we still so incarcerated? Why we're still- why is our mental health still so poor? Why is our suicide rate- locally too, like you know what- not just broader. Like, what's being done outside of those events and those, you know, those little get togethers that we all have and that the partnership stuff and all that kind of thing, like-

20

25 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: I actually just want to see, and it should be public information, what it actually all looks like for your organisation.

30 **INTERVIEWER 1:** What the changes are what the impacts are-

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: What the resources are-

35

[REDACTED]: Yeah. And does everyone know that? Like does your receptionist know that?

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

40

[REDACTED]: Like, you know, it's all good for your leadership and that to know it, but like, what about all their workers and stuff like that like-

45 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah. And it sounds like you're talking about, you know, the difference between people being happy to kind of do the symbolic partnership stuff.

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Take photos, do things around NAIDOC week and reconciliation week and make comments and-

5 [REDACTED] Yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: Even make plans and strategies.

10 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: And the big gap between that and actually doing work.

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

15 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Listening to people that know how to do the work best to make outcomes and be flexible around that-

20 [REDACTED]: Yeah, Yeah. And I think that there's a good bit of work that could be done from us about raising that expectation as well and actually seeing what they're worth, seeing what their words are worth, you know, like if you're going to agree to work with us and stuff like that, then do this and do that, change-

INTERVIEWER 1: Raising expectations on-

25 [REDACTED]: On others, on other organisations, yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

30 [REDACTED]: And just laying the terms out. Just saying this is what our community needs. Like not trying to boss you around and all that kind of thing. But yeah, your systems might work for these, but you need to adapt for our cohort a little bit, you know, and everything I say, like there's probably some good work being done in those spaces-

35 **INTERVIEWER 1:** sure-

40 [REDACTED]: I'm aware that, you know, I'm probably, maybe a little bit out of touch. I haven't sort of worked in those spaces for a bit, but yeah, there's probably some progression there somewhere, but- and Simon talks about it all the time, like the education system obviously is like one of those real spoke about rigidity before like that's the there's some there's some concrete stuff in education that's not very kind of not working in his eyes. So yeah, I think people have good intentions and stuff, especially those in leadership positions.

45 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

██████████: They do, but then it just gets lost as it goes down, down through middle management, might have a little bit of it, and then down to the workers. They're just run off their feet not caring. But they don't, yeah, they don't probably consider like generational impacts what trauma is- a good example, like,
5 overcrowding is something like for Aboriginal families and stuff like that. Like it's so not uncommon for like in fact, it's actually common for like, you know, 2 or 3 kids to share one room, people sleeping in the lounge room or, you know, like or, you know, absconding, going missing and coming back or they're at their auntie's place like housing systems look a little bit different. You know what I mean? But in
10 the mainstream context, that looks like overcrowding. It's unsafe. This is like, you know, this is this and that and blah, blah, blah. And then this is that they're saying that this is an issue for this family, but the family is saying this is not an issue.

15 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

██████████: Like it's not an issue.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

20 ██████████: Not really.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

25 ██████████: A little less room and stuff but like that's kind of how mob live and work. And now we've got the department who families have got a fear of. Coming in and saying that this is an issue. Well imagine the alarm bells that that sets off for them. You know what I mean. That's not right. Yeah, so we hear overcrowding a lot is a big problem but everyone's together.

30 **INTERVIEWER 2:** Yeah I grew up on a mission. You all lived in the one house.

██████████: Yeah.

35 **INTERVIEWER 2:** Because you (indistinct 00:27:29) had to go. You couldn't leave the mission.

██████████: Yeah, yeah.

40 **INTERVIEWER 2:** They're just used to it, yeah.

██████████: Yeah so I think it's just- yeah, we've got different lenses and stuff, and the people making those decisions, this is overcrowded. Like that's all sort of subjective to whoever is in that house at the time. What they say is like now reality. It's facts because it's their opinion.

45

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

[REDACTED]: I don't know if this is going anywhere-.

5 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah no, that's really clear, that's really clear. And also in thinking about structurally like the lens that decides whether there's a problem or not-

[REDACTED] Yeah, yeah-

10 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Is the non-Aboriginal lens. Yeah. Yeah. Who doesn't have that experience or understanding-

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

15 **INTERVIEWER 1:** You know, you spoke before about the lack of understanding of colonisation.

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

20 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Lack of understanding about the broader impacts, how people live generally, how people look after their kids-

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: You know, with broader family circles-

25 [REDACTED]: Same as in classrooms. And it's the same in men's behaviour change.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

30 [REDACTED]: It's the same concept. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: So yeah same kind of issues. Yeah. Leading to the same problems-

35 [REDACTED]: They're saying that these are the issues, and we're saying no we've got issues, but there are these issues.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yes.

40 [REDACTED]: yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Kind of like misdiagnosing-

45 [REDACTED] Yeah, yeah, yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: And refusing to listen to the people.

[REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Part of the community, yeah that know.

5 [REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah, that's really clear.

10 [REDACTED]: Yeah. So the issue isn't this kid's behaviour in the classroom. It's the- he's not behaving in the classroom because the curriculum is bullshit to him.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

15 [REDACTED]: Like that sort of stuff.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

20 [REDACTED]: So yes that's an issue. Let's agree that there's an issue. This kid's not learning properly.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yes.

25 [REDACTED]: But is that the kid- like is that on the kid or is that on like, what we place around the kid?

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

30 **INTERVIEWER 1:** And are there things that you think, you know, some of them are kind of obvious- they're kind of the inverse of the problem you're saying. But are there changes that you think would help some of these issues?

35 [REDACTED]: That's the question. Like, what do you do with all that? Yeah, look, I don't even know, like, having a well-informed kind of workforce everywhere. In any human services, like. Yeah we do a lot of cultural awareness training and stuff like that, but even that can get a little bit kind of maybe tokenistic for some organisations. They do one and then they know best for Aboriginal families and stuff like that. Like you can't teach that in one session, sort of thing. So yeah, I don't
40 know- if you look at New Zealand, right. Like, they're a little bit- a lot more sort of advanced in terms of like their acknowledgement of their people, like their First Nations people over there. What building- it's starting to happen a little bit, what buildings look like, what's around them, what language they use that- some of their processes before ceremonies and stuff like that. It's starting to like for us, it's
45 probably not really going beyond an acknowledgement at the moment from other you know, from Anglo kind of, you know, workplaces and stuff- oh, we acknowledge this and pay respects to this and that. Okay, but what do you mean by

pay respects? Like what does that look like, now you're just saying words and then cool, all right, now let's move on sort of thing. So I don't know, I think there's just some deeper work like internal work as individuals like that can you know, if you want to step into working in this sector and stuff, like there needs to be some fucking
5 real rigorous training and some- and a lot of self-reflective, kind of like, work and training about who they are, how they come across and what impact that has on this family sort of thing. Like it's-

INTERVIEWER 1: Do you think many of the mainstream services you work with
10 or departments have an idea of kind of the country they're on the history of this, of either dispossession or-

[REDACTED]: Yeah, a little bit more so now. Yeah, a little bit more so now.
15 Yeah, for sure-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

[REDACTED]: There seems to be a bit of a little bit of a buy in on that and
20 yeah, but we still. Yeah, probably be unpacked a little bit further, I think. I think people need to consider the position that they're in when making decisions about Aboriginal people.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

25 [REDACTED]: And a lot of them probably do but-

INTERVIEWER 1: And what about some of the things you're talking about at the
start- where like, the difference between whose voice is respected in you know,
30 what's the best way forward for a particular participant or community member? And often you were saying, you know, it's not the Aboriginal staff members advice and knowledge, is that like a change that could happen in terms of where that power lies or decision making?

35 [REDACTED]: Yeah, that could yeah, that definitely could be like if one of the principles can be like can be hashed out to all organisations about you're working with Aboriginal families, aboriginal people lead the decision making. All of it.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

40 [REDACTED]: Like buck stops with them, really.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

45 [REDACTED]: Then there's, you know, and then if there's issues, it is on us. But at least we're making the decisions about the family. It's not always going to get it right, but at least we have the opportunity to be able to say like so yeah, I think no

matter what your position is in your own internal hierarchy, if there's now an Aboriginal family and there's an Aboriginal person-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

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██████████: You know, they're now sort of lead decision makers, like they've got to sort of be probably, you know, correctly appointed and have the skills and knowledge and stuff to do that. But Aboriginal people should always be the lead decision makers in community of practice spaces, yeah. No matter like even like a you know- say I just started, for example, I'm only one year in or whatever, but I know this family. I've known them through the community and all that kind of thing. I've got one year experience now, and now I've got, like, a what are they called- senior practitioner in child protection. But now we're all, you know, we've got our drug and alcohol guy. We're running this little community of practice. It should be, at least be offered to me. What do you want to do? What's the final decision here? Okay, we all think this. We're all informing this space. Are you able to, like, what direction do you want to go? And I'll make this- I'll make the judgement. I'll make the judgement, because we've got it in us. Like, despite our experience as workers and stuff like that. Like we just- we'll just know. We just know what this family wants. We'll just know what they need. And they want us to make the- it's about the family wanting us to make the decisions too, it's not just about us getting power back. It's actually about them trusting that we've got, you know, that hey, like, we're going to be sort of acting on your behalf and you don't need to worry about like this, this and this, but then yeah, but then you've got all this legislation and especially in statutory spaces and stuff like that. There's a lot of things that can't actually move like-

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INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

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██████████: They're bound by law.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

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██████████: But which- yeah, that's fuck like, that's a whole other fight. That's like, you know, changing legislations all the way up here and that too. I'm sure a lot of this can be relative to, to that-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yes.

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██████████: But yeah, I don't I don't know how it looks, how that would look like the actual functions of it about Aboriginal people leading decisions and education, same thing, courts, all that kind of thing. Koori court are a good example of like, kind of you've got a magistrate there, but you know much about Koori Court? Yeah, a little bit, yeah. So like that's a good example. That's a really good example of magistrates recognising that they do have the ultimate say, so we can't change it in that space. But you've got elders here and you've got community members potentially in the room, you're reading the room and you're seeing you're kind of

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getting a good judge of character from their elders and that. And then that's a well informed decision. That's a well informed sort of place, right?

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

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[REDACTED]: Yeah. But not all places. Kind of not all spaces look like that. A like. Yeah, they're not sort of well informed, like they're just relying on their cultural awareness training that went for half a day.

10 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah, yeah.

[REDACTED]: Like you know.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

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[REDACTED]: So Yeah, so I don't know, I don't know how-

INTERVIEWER 1: No, that's really clear, yeah, as a principle-

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[REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah. It's a- it's not- I don't know how the nuts and bolts kind of look, but you know, heavy decisions.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

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[REDACTED]: You know, always they're not the- what's it called? The gamble? The anvil? No, that's that feels too justice, kind of. But like, the final decision, you know?

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

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[REDACTED]: In good consultation with the family and what they want-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

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[REDACTED]: Is then voiced by Aboriginal people.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

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[REDACTED]: And then it's on us. It's actually, it's good for the stakeholders and that. Because then if something goes- well yeah they made that decision-

INTERVIEWER 1: It's hard work regardless, yeah.

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[REDACTED]: Yeah, but it's not about the result and all that. It's just about us making- leading the decision making stuff first and you get it wrong, you get it wrong, like-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah. And you're- that decision making would be kind of informed by knowledge of community-

5 [REDACTED]: Yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: Knowledge of those experiences and lived experiences-

[REDACTED]: Yep, yep-

10 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Kind of deeper understanding for-

[REDACTED]: All that, yep-

15 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Contextual-

[REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yep.

20 [REDACTED] Yep, and yeah, it's as I said, it's probably, you know, reducing the workload and the burden of responsibility on others senior practitioners and-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

25 [REDACTED]: You know, head child like- child protection practice and seeing the article in the Bendigo- no, Herald Sun or Daily Telegraph or one of them. And this was just yesterday, google it. There was a child protection worker that ripped an Aboriginal child from the mother's arms. It was like it was in the paper, like we're in 2024. How the fuck does that happen? Like ripping- like what- how have we got,
30 how have we made so much progress? But then we're still ripping like, that should never fucking happen. Like there might be concerns, I don't know the context of what this mum or dad potentially was doing, but like in no context is that okay. Like- and that's concerning, that's concerning.

35 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: But that might be a law kind of thing too. I don't know, but I mean, if you're going to take a kid like that, at least have another Aboriginal woman, like have to remove the kid or something, fuck. Yeah, so it's this stuff that's still
40 reflective of like, you know, old kind of stolen gen sort of stuff. That's very- that's a very triggering thing for a lot of, for people to even read that article-

INTERVIEWER 2: That's what I thought Lakidjeka workers were for and things.

45 [REDACTED]: What's that?

INTERVIEWER 2: Lakidjeka workers. And, you know, they work with child protection. They're meant to be, you know, the Aboriginal people that come and that are those advocates and would be like the people to do that kind of thing-

5 [REDACTED]: Yep-

INTERVIEWER 2: Like to be there to support the mum.

10 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 2: But I guess they're not everywhere.

15 [REDACTED]: Yeah- and yeah, that sounds like a really good thing, but also a very loaded responsibility for them, and then yeah also-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah, (indistinct 00:38:36) clerks-

20 [REDACTED]: Yeah, and then also for them it's just like, we don't have to get our hands dirty kind of thing-

INTERVIEWER 2: (crosstalk 00:38:38) to get the workers to do the job because it is that-

25 [REDACTED]: Yeah-

INTERVIEWER 2: He wants to be associated like that-

30 [REDACTED]: Yeah. I really don't envy people who are in indigenous like ALCO sort of ALO positions and stuff that are in mainstream services, like, you know, being you know- being, for example, like the Aboriginal liaison officer at a at a prison or something like that. You know, you're probably not really going to get what you want because there's just- there's just old archaic- or not archaic, like there's old structures that stop you from doing rehabilitative and healing kind of work. Because we're still led with a punitive model in that, you know what I mean? Like-

35 **INTERVIEWER 2:** Yeah I've mainly worked in mainstream so yeah-

[REDACTED]: Yeah, do you?

40 **INTERVIEWER 2:** I have, I know it well.

[REDACTED]: Yeah. And here, like do you get that a lot like- maybe, I don't know, yeah.

45 **INTERVIEWER 2:** You can, you can do it can't you?

[REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER 2: I'm- that's your job. I'm as well as-

5 [REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 2: No I just do it for you-

10 [REDACTED]: Which is okay, like that's probably them recognising that they don't have the cultural skills or knowledge and stuff like that. But yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: There's issues on all ends, I think.

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

15 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah-

[REDACTED]: There's no solution here. There's fishing around, but like, it's just- it's just so complex, man I don't- yeah.

20 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Identifying the issues is super helpful-

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

25 **INTERVIEWER 1:** I think yeah especially those structural ones-

INTERVIEWER 2: Yeah. About the accountability is huge as well.

30 [REDACTED]: Yeah. Yep. Yeah that's right. How can how can we hold them- because that will give us as a co-op, that would give us like immense kind of empowerment and not in a bad way, not power as in like, you know, fuck yeah, we're on like- we're, you know, we can control you and stuff. It's actually-

INTERVIEWER 2: We're on an even playing field.

35 [REDACTED]: Yeah. Like, I just think if we're able to all understand what's expected of other services around us, and they can have their expectations of us, too, and we'll meet that, too. We have no problem doing that like we always fucking have, but to be able to then challenge them and just say actually, I don't think that your practice in this space or your direction on this big family that we're working on.
40 I don't think that that represents what you guys have agreed to as an organisation like, that would be an awesome, like thing to be able to say and to be able to use that as leverage. You know, like hold them accountable to their word because your CEO told my CEO that they're going to agree to this.

45 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah.

5 [REDACTED]: But we're down here on the ground and you're not reflecting what your leader. I'm doing what my leader has said. You know, our values are aligned with our my values are aligned with the organisation. So is my practice. Yours doesn't seem to be with yours. You know what I mean? That would be- more people need to talk about that. That would be good.

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah, yeah.

10 [REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah. And not just like, yeah. Education, and that too would be really good. Like, you know, teacher to teacher or KESO to teacher or whatever it might be. Yeah, so the consistency from the top because there's some good progressive stuff happening at top levels, but it just needs to flow- flow down, needs to trickle down. You know what I mean?

15 **INTERVIEWER 2:** Yeah.

[REDACTED]: Should be in people's position descriptions or whatever. Like, you know-

20 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah-

[REDACTED]: Well written up, signed, dotted line. Something you know I'm abiding to. I recognise BADAC have this or, you know, Rumbalara or whatever or Njernda, or I recognise that- I don't know, I don't know, I don't know if it's something they sign up to or something that's just like, yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

30 [REDACTED]: You see what I'm saying though? It's like all the work's happening up here and it's all fine and dandy. But then like, by the time it gets down to like, doing the hard work with families and that-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yes.

35 [REDACTED]: It's just like there's an inconsistency there-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah-

40 [REDACTED]: Like, yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: There's a gap between commitments and action.

[REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah correct.

45 **INTERVIEWER 1:** and there's no accountability and monitoring-

[REDACTED]: Yeah, yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: Of progress and that-

5 **[REDACTED]:** In my experience, yeah-

INTERVIEWER 1: Yeah.

10 **[REDACTED]** And not probably not everywhere. Everything that I say has just been from my brain and my experience. So yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: No that's really clear now-

[REDACTED]: Yeah-

15 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah. Is there is there anything else you wanted to say?

INTERVIEWER 1: No. I feel good now-

20 **INTERVIEWER 1:** Yeah?

[REDACTED]: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Awesome.

25 **[REDACTED]:** Yeah.

INTERVIEWER 1: Well I might leave it there and finish this up-

30 **[REDACTED]:** Yeah, cool, no worries.

<THE RECORDING CONCLUDED