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TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDING

MICHAEL NICHOLLS SUBMISSION

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## &lt;THE RECORDING COMMENCED

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Oh. Thriving man.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I'm volunteering five days a week. I was attending every bloody thing. My name is Michael Nicholls. I'm a Palawa man from (indistinct 00:00:10) country. Is that recording?

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**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** First, I'd like to acknowledge their land of the Wurundjeri people. We tell our story. Elders past, present and emerging. Yeah. I first walked into Mullum Mullum on the 13th of August - oh, no - the 10th of August 2012. The day after my [REDACTED] was born. 9.1 weeks prem. I signed up for everything. The first three months I attended Mullum for food bank, they were calling me the floor manager there of the food bank because I was running it so well. Yeah. The first three months I attended food bank, I felt like I didn't belong there. Nobody would talk to me. I just felt snobbed.

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Then I mentioned it to Aunty, who was in the kitchen cooking. Beautiful lady, Aunty Jackie. I asked - actually asked her to be here today because she's a founding member of Mullum, and she agrees what Mullum's done is wrong. Yeah. She left and Mullum pretty much went to shit once [REDACTED] took over. [REDACTED] told me 20 years ago [REDACTED] will get me one day because I called [REDACTED] white. And I was pissed at a camp somewhere, just in the bush camping. And yeah, I come across [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] introducing [REDACTED] as Aboriginal. I wasn't even calling myself Aboriginal. And [REDACTED] goes, I'm going to get you one day.

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[REDACTED] started at Mullum the night I won the NAIDOC Arts Award, which is up here, Eastern NAIDOC Arts Award. [REDACTED] told me [REDACTED] going to get my suspended from Mullum for life. Within a month, I was suspended for allegedly spreading rumours. I didn't spread no rumour. All I did, I heard a rumour and I asked who the rumour was about. Oh - I went straight to the person who the rumour was about and asked him, the men's worker. He said who told me, and I said, I'm not telling you because a respected Elder told me. And a week later he asked me who told me, and I said, I forgot. I was suspended the next day and I haven't been since.

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40 That was in 2019, I think. October 2019. But yeah, Mullum was my safety space from substance abuse, drugs and alcohol. Yeah, because I was a single dad for eight years with my [REDACTED] I had ten nights per fortnight custody. Yeah. And I lost [REDACTED] in September 15, 22 because of drug use. And now I'm straight pissing in a bottle three times a week, doing everything I can to get my [REDACTED] back. And it's going good, just had the weekend with [REDACTED] Which is great, first time in two years [REDACTED] stayed here.

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Yeah, but Mullum, I was involved in everything there. Like women's groups. One time at Mullen for the gala dinner and the women's group, we made a big quilt in the women's group and two of the handprints out of the 12 were made by me. That got auctioned off. I donated many things to Mullum, auctioned them off a gala or any event Mullum had I was helping at. What - 2018 I think it was - raised \$15,000 at Belgrave Survival Day. I sat on a barbecue all day for Mullum. Yeah.

Yeah. All I wanted to do was help Mullum to get their building because they needed funding for their building. And at one stage I thought, yeah, I'm going to be able to help them good. Because - right, our - in 2010 I went to jail for something that happened when I was 17. [REDACTED] 17 years later I got locked up for it. When I - for 252 or 254 days or something. And yeah, when I went to court, I was told by the magistrate I wasn't required to be on the register because of the nature of the offence.

Two years later, three months after my [REDACTED] was born, detectives come and knock on my door and tell me to sign this bit of paper to make me registered. I told them where to go because I'm taking it to a lawyer. And I took it to a lawyer, apparently I had to sign it. So I was made registered. Became homeless with my [REDACTED] Got breached of my reporting obligations the very first night I was homeless because I didn't report where I was living. I'm homeless with an [REDACTED] I've got more things on my mind than reporting.

So I got to fined for that. But anyway, 2020 I was removed from the register. I should never have been put on. It is - I've heard that since I was removed, I've heard two judges say I should never have been put on it. But it's still - I was removed, but it still remains on my police paperwork. And when coppers read that, it reads so wrong. And yeah, but because I was made, registered and removed from the register, it's a big part of my life. It affects my parenting. It affects everything. I believe that's half the reason why I'm suspended from Mullum still four years ago. But they don't want to say that because it's discrimination. And - but yeah, I was taken off. And yeah, it's just like - life can only get better now. I'm making it better. Yeah. But it affects my - my parenting immensely. Like, if I was never made registered, I could have had a working with children check to promote culture in schools.

Like, you can see, I do a lot of it. I made didges, I made boomerangs, bundis. You name it, I make it. I weave as well. Like every year at my [REDACTED] school, I was taking in all my artefacts for NAIDOC week. Like this possum skin cloak. It was worn on the MCG 2017 - 50th anniversary of the census. I also made for smoking ceremony bowls for the 2017 Dreamtime game. Made them at Mullum. Made lots of things at Mullum. Nearly everything I made at Mullum in eight years, I gave to Mullum. Yeah. There's more (indistinct 00:07:22 - 00:07:25) if you want. They're just some things I've made in my time. Donated most of them. Culture, I've probably made \$500 in 8, 10, 12 years I've been doing culture. Culture is not about money to me. It's about self. Yeah. Bettering myself. And I can't share culture at Mullum. It really pisses me off. But I made - after the three months where nobody spoke to me.

Only Jacky. She spoke to the floor at food fank and said, why isn't anyone talking to him? Like, he wants to leave. That's how snobbed I felt. But yeah, they ended up talking to me. It was good. But yeah Mullum pick and choose who they have attending.

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**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** So how long were you, like, an active member there?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Oh, eight years. From 13 - oh, the 10th of August 2012, the day after my [REDACTED] was born. Until I was suspended on October 2000 - 8th  
10 November 2019, I received this letter from [REDACTED] But yeah I also I was attending Boorndawan Willam and I was talking about my past. About being registered, removed from the register. The men's group at Boorndawan, we were sitting around and they actually set me up. Like we - they started talking about criminal records and that. So I spoke about what's on my criminal record about being  
15 made registered, removed from the register. Because I was talking about that, I've been suspended from there, but I've spoken about me being registered since day one of Boorndawan and day one at Mullum.

I felt obligated to tell people I was registered, but - because I don't care if people  
20 want to judge me. They can judge me. I'm judged anyway, I'm Aboriginal. Yeah. Half my criminal record is just bullshit. But I need this register thing cleared up. I want it removed. I need it removed from criminal history. And it's still on my paperwork from four years ago when I was removed from it. I want some compensation. They don't understand how hard that made my life. I couldn't have  
25 friends stay here of (indistinct 00:10:11) - of my [REDACTED] I couldn't attend places. I couldn't do a lot of things. People are just judgemental, which is understandable. I felt obligated to tell people because it seemed like the right thing to do. I used to get in trouble for it. If people don't tell people you're registered. Well, why not? I mean, it's the right thing to do. They might not want their children around my [REDACTED] Oh,  
30 well.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Have you sought legal advice around that?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I'm speaking to somebody from VALS at the moment. I  
35 just had to do paperwork - sign paperwork, send it back so then they can look into it, which they should have now. Yeah. I'm just at a standstill. I've got nobody helping me. I've got no direction. Everything I do, I do by myself because I've pretty much banished from culture. So, the culture I do, I do by myself. I've learned to use ochre, wax and sap. I teach myself that. That's what this is. Ochre wax and sap. Looks like a  
40 bone, doesn't it?

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** It does yeah.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, that's my favourite one.

45

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah. Did you - did you paint that with the ochre?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. That bit of - that bit of wood was as rotten as this. Like had holes in it and that everywhere. And now, it will not break because I've  
5 made it rock. It's probably got about this much rock all over it. Centimetre of rock.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** So, you combine the ochre with the sap and -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, ochre with sap. Because sap works as glue. And  
10 waxes were polish.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah (indistinct 00:12:05)

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** That's why it's all polished, isn't it?  
15

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** That's impressive.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. And I just play with it in different ways. See that  
20 one. I tried making, like, scales on it.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Oh, yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Seems like you use this to keep yourself well.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Distractions delay.  
25

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** The creative - creative process.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. Yeah. I can just - yeah - just keep myself busy.  
30

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Did you grow up around here?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I grew up in Emerald till I was 27 and went to Gembrook  
35 and been all over the place. Yeah. Up in Emerald I was hassled big time by police.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** I don't know where that is.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Emerald. Puffing Billy. Just past Belgrave.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Oh. Okay.  
40

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah - used to -

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** (Indistinct 00:13:57) Dandenong as well, isn't it?  
45

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** If something happened in Emerald, police used to come  
to me straight away. Because my nickname is poo. Oh, shit sticks to poo.

One time I got a charge, a stolen car charge. I've never stolen a car in my life. I was up in Heathcote with my parents and even my parents came to court. Yeah. I was still found guilty. And, about this stolen car, the bloke who actually stole it, his brother took him into Emerald Police station to say it wasn't me. It was him. No shit sticks to poo. So they just charge me. And it's all my criminal history, but oh well, what can I do about it? Nothing. I plead not guilty. You plead not guilty. You're guilty. That's why Koori Court is such a good thing. You get to voice that - but the thing is, you got to plead guilty to go there.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** So yeah.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** So you mentioned that you also wanted to talk about like the justice system and things?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. Well that's what I was just talking about - about like how can I be taken off the register. Told I should never have been put on there. But it still remains on my police paperwork.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** That doesn't seem to make sense?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** No the police are so judgemental. As soon as they look up my criminal history.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** So, did they admit they'd made a mistake or -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Well, when I was sentenced by the judge, I was told time served for sleeping with her under age. I wasn't required to be on the register because of the nature of the offence. Two years later, three months after my [REDACTED] was born, detectives knock on the door and say, sign this bit of paper to make you registered. I said, get fucked, I'm going to take it to a lawyer. And the lawyer told me, you got to sign it, otherwise you're going to jail for two years. I was about to become homeless with my [REDACTED] But I can't. I had to sign it.

35 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** And. Yeah.

40 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** So it's an actual thing that you were registered?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, I was registered.

45 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** And at some point they take you off because it's been a certain amount of time?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** No, no, no.



**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Why did they take you off?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Because I should never have been put on it.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Right.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** A new law -

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** So they made a mistake, or new law came out?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** A new law came out. No. Well, when I was first made registered, that was like the magistrate said. You're not required to be on the register because of the nature of the offence.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** What's the nature of the defence, though?

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Of the offence?

20 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I was a child. I was 17. I was 17, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** It doesn't seem like an offence.

■ **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Well, they look - oh, I got 100 hours community work as well for recklessly causing serious injury by self-defence. Yeah. [REDACTED]

30 [REDACTED] She came back 17 years later, contacted me. She came and picked me up in the basin where I was living. I was just in boxer shorts cos it was summer. We drove up to Emerald, where she was living. She rode her car off on the way just coming over the hill into Belgrave, where the big rock wall is.

35 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

40 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** She's looking at me and I said, what's wrong? And she's just, bang - and the car went into the slide. Front end, then the back end. The car spun around, hit the back end. She's out cold on the passenger - on the driver's seat. I just went over to grab the hand handbrake and the steering wheel. Got it up on the gutter. Woke her up, got her out of there. She rang her stepdad, and he picked us up from Belgrave. [REDACTED]

45 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Hectic.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** That's a hectic story, yeah.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Oh. Oh, no. She's a hectic girl. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Sound like you've had multiple stalkers.

5

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** No. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

15 Like, being registered has got me suspended from Boorndawan. Like that's on the paperwork there because I was talking about my past. And you're not allowed to talk about your past to organisations. Like they've just - Boorndawan are very hopeless. I've been waiting on a counsellor for a long time. I finally got one. I can't understand him. I can't understand a word he says. And yesterday I got a text message off of  
20 him. Hi, Michael. Hope you're doing well. I'm reaching out to inform you that I was terminated from BWAHS. And my last day will be - if you need to contact me, ring, blah, blah. And here - also, if you do have something to say about the decision, you have the right to ring BWAHS reception and express your concerns.

25 That's about - that's coming from the counsellor about me being suspended from that because he believes it's wrong. Well, I know it's wrong. I'm slowly being banished from all culture. I even entered the Koori Heritage Trust art competition this year. I've entered it 4 or 5 times. I entered this once, I entered this once. Made this to represent the Aboriginal cricket team that went to England and didn't lose a game.

30

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Fiona Clarke does the artwork for that, didn't she?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Who?

35 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Fiona Clarke.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** No, I was talking to [REDACTED] That's who I spoke to at Koori Heritage Trust.

40 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** No, she did the artwork. You know that circle artwork for the cricket team?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Oh, no, I don't know it. Yeah, well, I'll just do my own things. But, yeah, I'm very disappointed with Mullum. I absolutely love that place. I thrived there. I felt I belonged. I made connections with people. Even if they were pretend connections, I still felt like - yeah. I felt like I belonged at Mullum. And then  
45 I when [REDACTED] started, it was just - yeah. Like (indistinct 00:19:30).



He's an unbelievable manager there. He done - he run that place really good. Yeah. Like another lady that worked at Mullum. She - she left three weeks short of her long service leave because [REDACTED] started. The whole staff of Mullum left when [REDACTED] started pretty much. Because they knew [REDACTED] was just a thing. Yeah. But the fact that [REDACTED] told me when I won the NAIDOC Arts Award, I'm getting suspended for life. Yeah. That told me I had a hard run coming. And I have. Yeah. I've missed out on funerals. Like, this bloke up here - Keegan.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Keegan.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. I didn't even get to say. See you later in person. He rang me up a couple of weeks before he died. Just to say I'm dying.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** [REDACTED] (indistinct 00:21:26)

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. That's who I heard the rumour about. Apparently the men's worker who you mentioned before. [REDACTED] Yeah. And of course, I'm going to ask him. I got respect for both of them. [REDACTED] was one of my mentors for culture. I got nothing but respect for him. But am I not allowed to take the piss out of a mate if I hear a story? No. That's what you do with friends, I guess. Well, I always have.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

25 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** But then did he tell somebody that you -

30 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I don't know. I don't know. All I know is that I got suspended for absolutely ridiculous reasons. I sent emails begging Mullum to reconsider my suspension, to help me, to assist me, to get my [REDACTED] back. Nah, nah. It's illegal to deny an Aboriginal man an Aboriginal organisation. So it's worse than what the white man did coming here. White man outlaw - deny culture to blackfellas. I got blackfellas denying me culture.

35 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** What would you like to see happen?

40 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** My suspension lifted from Mullum. An apology letter. I don't know. I've raised a lot of money for Mullum. A lot. And I'm treated like this. Everybody makes mistakes. We're all humans. So on the Monday after the NAIDOC Ball - the NAIDOC Ball, when I won that - first thing I did on the Monday was went to Mullum to apologise about being drunk at the NAIDOC Ball. It's an event where you're allowed to drink. I got drunk and I made a dick of myself. I apologise. What else can I do? Be suspended for four years? That doesn't help me. Not at all.

45 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Yep.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. It just makes me furious. I've just completed men's behaviour change course a couple of weeks ago. I've got my drug and alcohol counsellor. Yeah.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** I feel like you're making all the right moves and (indistinct 00:23:49)

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I'm doing everything right.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I've been doing everything right for a long time now. At least six months. And, yeah, it took my lady to make me give up drugs because she was going to leave me. Mullum was my saviour from my past because I used to be  
15 on drugs prior to my [REDACTED] My [REDACTED] came along. Mullum was my drug. Mullen was taken away. So I went to another drug. Yeah. It's not good. But I got I've missed a few people's funeral. I had Donna, this girl from Mullum, I used to only see her on a Wednesday. She was lovely. She'd come in and volunteer every now and then. I didn't even get to hear about her funeral, so I didn't get to say bye. Yeah. I had  
20 a lot of funerals in the last ten years - or four years.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** It seems to be that it really - your story, like, really hones in on that -

25 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** You noticed it.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Well, no, the cultural aspect of, like, you know, keeping you as a, you know, good in your own mind, in your own head, is connecting.

30 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. Well -

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** I think we know that about addiction is when we're connected to people, we're less likely to, you know.

35 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I felt I belonged at Mullum. I felt I had a place there.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Positive.

40 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. It was nothing but positive for me.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** I used to work at Mullum. After. After.

45 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. How long ago? What - after [REDACTED]

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** When they got the social enterprise up and going again.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Oh.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** You know the food (indistinct 00:25:35).

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I've got to have a yarn about him too.  
About [REDACTED]

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** I was after him.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. Well, [REDACTED] -.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

15

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah I did -.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Age.

20 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Age. Yeah. Mr. white man. Mr. fake that black fella. Oh he got me to do this introduction to community development course. It was a seven week program. If you attended that, you could do the year-long community development course. I attended the seven - Introduction to Community Development course. After the last one, [REDACTED] goes, now you've got to pay \$3,400. I can't afford that  
25 to do the community development course. About two years later, I was chatting to a chick up in Healesville who also did the community development course, and I told her what happened. She goes, the introduction - if you did the introduction, that made you eligible for the funding for the year-long course.

30 So [REDACTED] obviously just put the money in his pocket. Well, why would he say to me that I had to pay \$3,400 for a course? Yeah, it's just rorting the system. They all do it. They all do it. And yeah, he never took a liking to me, [REDACTED] He's just judgemental. I'm better than you. That's the way he used to think of himself. So I just ignored him. Pretty much. But no, I was very disappointed about that community  
35 development, because that would have given me the right to run my own programs, and obviously I could. Because of all the culture I learn and do. But yeah, once again, shot in the foot. Yeah. Just used and abused. That's how I feel like I was for Mullum now. I feel like I've just been used and abused by them. Yeah.

40 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** One other question I had was just around the - what would you want to happen around the - around that history, around the - being registered.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** On the paper - I want the -

45

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Do you want some statement around - we made an apology or something.



**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** No, I want the notification taken off of my criminal record. When police look my name up, it says on my criminal record, 2010, sex pen of a child under 16. Does that not read wrong to you? If I'm 34, sex pen of a child under 16. That's wrong. It doesn't state in there I was 17 at the time of the offence. It should. If it's to remain on there, it should say - because coppers read that. Who's this? Instantly want to lock me up. Instantly judge me. Instantly treat me like shit. Like, wouldn't you?

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** So that's how they read it. They read it -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Well, it's right here.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Well, that's what it says when the cops look it up.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** That's fucking bullshit.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah. That'd be fucked if that is what they'd done.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** It was 2010 when it happened.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** What? No. '93.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Yeah. When you were a child.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I was locked up for it 17 years later.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Yeah, that's what I was thinking. I'm like, because if it says 2010 -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, I was locked up for 17 years after. And it's not even an offence. I can't - I was locked up for an offence I committed when I was 17. It's not an offence.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** You should get (indistinct 00:29:30) or somebody.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** And Boorndawan - and Boorndawan are like, what the? I can't talk - like, I'm talking about criminal history. And at Boorndawan - I'm talking on my criminal history. I've got - yeah, this. Locked up for something I committed when I was 16. And yeah, but it's not an offence. Where is it?

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** We do have a lawyer that you can talk to - to ask questions to, that can maybe help give you some knowledge around potential steps or -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, well that's what I'm talking to.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** And you're going to need to speak to a lawyer anyways around some of the content of your submission.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah.

5

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Just around the name - names and stuff like that.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** And then -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. Well, I don't want -

15 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Because they might need to just advise you around that - of why things will be - might not be included. But how you can sort of adjust it a little bit to still keep the essence of the story.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** If that makes sense. Yeah. Are you looking for that -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. I can't see it. This must be an old criminal history. Okay. It's 2010. 9th of the 12th. Yeah, that's when I was - see previous page.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Is there anything else you really want to go into on the recording to start, and then maybe we'll have a bit of a yarn afterwards about the other stuff?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Like what?

30

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Just like anything else you feel like you might want to share, be part of your submission. So -

35 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I'm just disappointed with the mob. Disappointed big time.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** Yeah.

40 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. And I don't know how things are going to get better with culture. I'm at the point of just throwing it all in the fire and not even doing it. But I've donated things to Mullum. I've bought things back that I've donated from Mullum. This - see the big dip in that? That's just from polishing. Rubbing wood. And you can imagine how long that would take to rub it down from that thickness.

45

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. This this was a boomerang I donated to Mullum. It was seventh Boomerang I made. And I bought it back for \$65. I chopped the end off, worked on it for three months and gave it to my [REDACTED] prep teacher. So every year at school, I gave my [REDACTED] teacher something, whether it be a basket, clap sticks, whatever. But I used to get to school 2:30, wait an hour to pick my [REDACTED] up, and I'd sit there doing culture for an hour in the car while waiting for [REDACTED]

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Seems like one of the biggest things that's holding you back is that registration thing. Because if you didn't have that, you'd be able to do the cultural activities.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, well. Well, I can't talk about my past. That's why I've been suspended from Boorndawan for talking about my past. But it was all right for the rest of the group to talk about their past. That's what I mean. They set me up. They're all talking about criminal records, so I'd talk about mine. Oh, how's this on my criminal record, I've got a crime that's not even a crime. I was made registered, and I shouldn't have been. I've been taken off of it and told I should never have been put on it, twice. Yeah, but it still remains on my paperwork.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** I think if that's if that's absolutely true, then -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Well, it is true.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah. I've taken your word for it - for that.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** And then the outcomes that's been happening on - on that - on the back of that has caused a lot of repercussions.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I talk about my past. It affects me inside mentally. And physically. Right. I will not even kiss my missus without asking her. Like, yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** So I guess it's got to you've got to follow that legal - legal line. I guess see what VALS - you know, because you've made - you've made an inquiry into that.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** There's a process underway, so you need to follow that through.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. [REDACTED] I think her name is.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** [REDACTED] Okay. Yeah. I think you need to follow that through. Because if - if there's something that can be done around that.



**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Some sort of - some sort of. I don't know what can happen around that. Where it leads to -

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**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Well, it needs to go to court and the judge needs to take it off the paperwork. That's the only way I can see it happening. Because whenever police look my name -

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Yeah. Surely there's been other instances of this, and there's been a process that's happened to rectify it or -

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, well, they opened up a law in 2019 or 2020. They opened a new law, which is what got me off the register. It was like it was specifically opened for me.

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**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Right. But nine out of ten people that applied to get off the register were successful. Yeah. And then I was successful as well.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** You got off the register.

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**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** But it's on my paperwork.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** But it's still on the paperwork.

25 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, it's - I -

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Like a trail of some sort - or some sort -.

30 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah, I was - spoke to police. They were automatically - freak.

**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** And so when it's on the paperwork. You have to hand that paperwork in to your employer or to the -

35 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. I won't even apply for a job.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** If you go for a police check (indistinct 00:35:30)

40 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** I won't even apply for a job because of that. Serious? I'm just so judged on it and me being brutally honest, like, I tell people. Because that's brutally honest. I beat myself up over it. I beat myself up over it every day. Missus, she thought about leaving me because of it. Yeah, but she already knew, like, prior to us getting together. We've been together nearly four years now, yay, another 40 to go. Yeah.

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**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Well if you feel like you've said everything you needed to say?

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Oh, I suppose. I used to attend five days a week.

(Crosstalk 00:36:18 - 00:36:22)

5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Oh yeah. They're great. You can also add other aspects to your submission, Michael.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Yeah. That's on a grave in Fiji.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Like if you wanted to add any written documents or any art, you know, any pictures of artefacts or some positive stuff or whatever. Or even this documentation here, we can add that to the submission.

**MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** There you go. You have them two.

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**UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Should we take these or take photos of them?

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** We'll take photos of them.

20 **MICHAEL NICHOLLS:** Oh, these are (indistinct 00:37:50). Even just the reporting obligations when I was registered was a pain.

**UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** I'll just push pause.

25 **<THE RECORDING CONCLUDED**