



New(town) Beginnings #12

Dear Neighbour,

For the second year running, local NAIDOC celebrations scheduled for next week (4-11 July), have endured the fate of this unpredictable deadly pandemic.

[NAIDOC](#), with its activist roots dating back to the early 1920s, organise a week's long celebration of the history, culture and achievements of First Nations people.

In non-pandemic times, we'd normally be joining our colleagues from other local community services at AbSec's glorious Family Fun Day at Steel Park in Marrickville, which has now been postponed.

So despite the restrictions for us in Sydney, we can still respect NAIDOC's wishes to encourage all to reflect and act on **Healing Country**.

As stated on their website: "Healing Country means finally resolving many of the outstanding injustices which impact on the lives of our people."

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre is committed to continue on our path to further educate ourselves and support local truth telling initiatives as best we can.

In mid-June, NNC funded an excursion for staff and volunteers to attend a session at [Kinchella Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation](#) Mobile Education Centre.

The transformed commuter bus was developed to allow communities (both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous) to learn the truth about the Stolen Generations, and most importantly to support the healing of the men who were taken to Kinchella Boys' Home in Kempsey.

The experience starts with the screening of a harrowing but deeply important 13-minute animation describing the first-hand atrocities experienced by the survivors of this heinously cruel and shameful policy.

After the screening we were able to hear from two of the Uncles: one now in his late 60s, who was taken from his mother and separated from his siblings when he was only four-years-old. His recollections are so vivid and powerful. It's impossible to comprehend the sorrow and trauma he and his family endured and continue to endure.

He was quick to point out that the term Stolen Generations is incorrect, when in fact children like himself were kidnapped. He shared that he wants everyone to recognise, this isn't history or something that happened in this past. This is present-day as many of the survivors are still very much alive.

It was also his view that people shouldn't say 'I'm sorry' and that 'they understand' because there's no way that anyone ever could.

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The younger Uncle in his 50s, was taken when he was nine-years-old and recalled trying to escape several times to get back home. He eventually made it to an auntie's house, which filled the room with tears.

The men described the child slave labour they were forced into, having to tend to the land for hours on end in bare feet, with no remuneration. They shared the punitive and cruel punishments for minor misdemeanours, one of their most distressing memories was of a young boy who was chained to a tree overnight.

We were encouraged to ask any questions but I think my colleagues and I felt such shame for what this country has done to First Nations people, most of us were rendered speechless.

The Uncles were generous in sharing their story; it was an extremely humbling and sobering experience and something NNC sees as incredibly important in gaining insights and a broader understanding of the ongoing impact of the Stolen/Kidnapped Generations.

If you have the chance to visit the bus, please do. You will be supporting an incredible organisation and their goal to buy back the land and turn it into a much-needed truth telling museum and healing space. <https://kinchelaboyshome.org.au/how-you-can-help/>

Mel

Community Strengthening Team

P.S - Children are still being taken away from their families and culture at alarming rates. To learn more, please visit ABSEC <https://www.absec.org.au/what-we-stand-for.html>

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