

RICHARD CAMPBELL



Richard Campbell is a Dunghutti/Gumbayngirr man from Bowraville on NSW's mid north coast.

At Richard's Catholic School the nuns thwarted several attempts by the Aboriginal Protection Board to remove the aboriginal kids. Then on October 12, 1966 the school was caught unaware.

"All of a sudden they grabbed our younger sisters. Threw them in the back of the car, you could hear them screaming," Richard remembers.

He and his older brother were also forced into the waiting police car. The five children were taken to court, where they were charged with neglect.

"We weren't neglected! We had a life. We had culture, we had language. We had a way of living."

Richard and his brother were taken to the notoriously cruel Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home where their identities were systematically stripped from them. Richard said they were given numbers, not names, and were severely punished if they used their aboriginal language.

"They were told not to speak it. And not to look for your parents and cos they're dead. And they sayin' you're not Richard Campbell, you're now number 28. And you are not black, you are white."

Richard suffered physical, psychological and sexual abuse in Kinchela. He says trauma followed all the boys out of the institution.

"So the next step for us was incarceration in a bigger jail .. straight into Long Bay, Goulburn, Grafton Gaol .. you could see the travel through their lives, through drugs, alcohol, stealing, things like that."

Richard is now Secretary of the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, and has only recently begun to tell his story. He is deeply distressed about the continued removal of aboriginal kids into out of home care, including four of his own grandchildren.

On the 20th anniversary of the Bringing Them Home report, Richard wants governments to stop taking aboriginal children away from their families, and offer more support to Indigenous parents. He says intergenerational trauma must be better understood.

"Time is not on our side. We have lost four men this year alone and this ... means they cannot be part of their families' healings ... who are left living with the pain of questions unanswered."



BringingThemHome

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