

DOREEN WEBSTER



Doreen Webster is a Barkindji woman, born in Wilcannia, in the north west of New South Wales.

“I remember happy times with my parents before I was taken. My dad worked on a station. I loved it. I had a younger sister. She was a baby when she was taken.”

Doreen and her brother John were taken to the local police station and locked up in a cell. The next day she was put on a train to Sydney, where at Central Station, she was separated from her brother.

“A man was waiting there for my brother, from Kinchela Boys Home. I said ‘Where are you going?’ And I was pulling at him, trying to pull him back,” she said. “Here I am on the station, a little eight year old, screaming and crying because they were taking my brother away.”

Doreen was taken to the Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls.

“When I got up to Cootamundra I was thinking, ‘What’s going on here? Where am I?’ I had no idea where I was or what was happening to me. I was screaming for my mum and dad. When we got there we were treated so cruelly—so cruelly,” Doreen said.

She recalls the matron asking a police officer to punish her.

“I was sitting down on the ground and he got me by the hair of the head and just pulled me up, straight up to my feet—lifted me off the ground and stood me on my feet—and then he stood on my foot. I had no shoes on. I was screaming out in agony. It was just horrifying. I used to run away all the time,” she said.

Doreen, who is now on the Board of the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation, is a vocal advocate of appropriate aged care for the Stolen Generations. She wants the survivors of Cootamundra, and the infamous Kinchela Boys Home, to have their own joint aged care facility, so they can spend their last years together.

“For when we get older, a place where we can be. We are family, we are sisters to the Kinchela boys. They are brothers to us. And there is a closeness. That is our family.”