“Why me; why was I taken? It's like a hole in your heart that can never heal…” – Bringing Them Home Report

A cross-generational study into the impacts of the ‘Stolen Generations’ on identity formation of Indigenous adolescents

NESA Number – 29133409
Contents

Introduction........................................................................................................................................3
Log ..................................................................................................................................................5
  Chapter 1 – Identification vs Alienation ......................................................................................7
  Chapter 2 – Effects and Impacts ..................................................................................................12
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................................17
Annotated Resource List .............................................................................................................19
Bibliography ...............................................................................................................................25
Introduction

The Stolen Generation is a significant aspect of Indigenous Australia. It has had many impacts, on both Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples. In today’s society, changes are evident as many people have become more comfortable talking about this topic and discussing the impacts and overall opinions. However, continuities are still indisputable with many Indigenous peoples still feeling that this topic is significantly confronting and many have chosen to forget this significant event that shaped and helped in the development of Indigenous Australia. For me, as an Indigenous adolescent, my heritage and identity plays a pivotal role in my recognition of Indigenous Australia and Indigenous Australians.

From the very first day I was told I would have to complete a Personal Interest Project, at the start of Year 11, I knew that I wanted to focus on my Indigenous heritage and identity; that is why I chose the topic:

“A cross-generational study into the impacts of the ‘Stolen Generation’ on identity formation of Indigenous adolescents”.

I chose this topic so I could gain a greater insight into the different range of opinions and impacts this event has had on Indigenous peoples of the same age, but also of different generations, different times, and ultimately different societies. I knew this topic held great significance in a number of Australians lives, specifically Indigenous Australians, because of this, I will take into account just how this event has impacted individuals and attempt to avoid questions and generalisations that may be upsetting to Indigenous peoples affected by the ‘Stolen Generations’.

For my Personal Interest Project, I utilised many secondary sources, such as, songs, news articles and personal stories of many people directly impacted by the Stolen Generation. In addition to this, primary research will also be utilised to gain the most in-depth, detailed and personal information. I have conducted a number of interviews with Indigenous adolescents, and Indigenous peoples who were adolescents and children during the time of the ‘Stolen Generation’. Through these interviews and focus groups, I will be able to establish general ideas of adolescents about the Stolen Generation and discover individual impacts. Interviews with Georgia and Bella, two Indigenous adolescents, who I go to school, and interviews with Dave, a family member, and a number of other interviewees – whose names will remain
anonymous, due to ethical reasons, will cover the cross-generational study. I was also lucky enough to attend a conference with Gail Mabo, Eddie Mabo’s daughter, along with many other Indigenous senior students in my diocese – which didn’t necessarily influence my research, however, it was an inspirational experience for me as an Indigenous adolescent. As an Indigenous adolescent with significant interest in the topic, personal experience and reflection will play a pivotal role in my Personal Interest Project. However, despite this topic being of great interest, I will need to continue to be objective throughout my research processes, even though there may be conflict at times.

My Personal Interest Project has assisted me in gaining a deeper social and cultural understanding by allowing me to find out the impacts of this significant event on society and individuals in society. My research will assist me in discovering the impacts of Indigenous heritage on adolescents, and help me answer the question of whether Indigenous adolescents are proud to identify as Indigenous or if they feel alienated from society and/or embarrassed by their identity.

As mentioned previously, my cross-cultural aspect for my Personal Interest Project will be between generations/ages. I have chosen to research Indigenous adolescents now and Indigenous elders that were adolescents 30-40 years ago because I believe it would allow me, as a social researcher to find out differences in impacts and effects, as well as opinions of the ‘Stolen Generations’.

Lastly, I have closely and accurately investigated the impacts of this event and have chosen concepts that are specifically related to the identity formation of adolescents and the impacts of traditions and ethnicity on this. In addition, power and authority are also strongly emphasised, displaying the impacts of these on identity formation of Indigenous adolescents. Key concepts evident through my Personal Interest Project include, power and identity; the power of the Stolen Generation has on identity formation of thousands of Indigenous Australians. Beliefs; discovering people’s beliefs of the event and finding out opinions will be a significant aspect of my Personal Interest Project, as well as beliefs of my own. Continuities and changes may also be evident throughout my research, these will be used to compare opinions and beliefs and the overall impacts of The Stolen Generation.
Beginning my Personal Interest Project revealed a number of initial challenges. I began to think about my passions and personal attributes. I knew that being Indigenous, a member of Mindaribba Land Council and the President of my schools Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (JAECG), that I wanted to pursue an investigation into something regarding my Indigenous identity and heritage.

I began talking about some ideas with my parents, teacher and fellow classmates and came up with a few rough topics, they were all centred around the Stolen Generation and its impacts, but figuring out how I would incorporate a cross-cultural aspect and Society & Culture concepts proved to be difficult.

My topic excited me to find out more about my own heritage and exactly what impacts it had, which sparked a new idea – “A cross-generational study into the impacts of the Stolen Generation on identity formation of Indigenous adolescents”.

Following my decision on my topic, I began researching impacts of the Stolen Generation on Indigenous elders, this included researching and finding news articles and websites to provide a reliable basis for my primary research, which I would plan to conduct. I found a number of useful resources that helped me gain many different opinions; most of the articles I read were significantly upsetting. I read a number of personal stories of many Indigenous elders; these made me realise just how horrible this event has been for Indigenous Australians. As a result of my significant interest in the topic and involvement in the event through family members, it was difficult for me, as a social researcher to remain bias at times, especially when the ‘Stolen Generations’ is such a significant event in Australia’s history, and more importantly, my history.

Towards the middle of my PIP process, I began thinking about some ideas for my chapters for my Central Material, this was problematic to start with, but with some assistance from my teacher, I was able to figure out what I wanted to focus on and what I thought would benefit me in gaining a comprehensive understanding of Society and Culture and the impacts of the Stolen Generation on Indigenous Australians.

I began my primary research by interviewing an Indigenous student at school. This was unsuccessful for me, as a researcher because my interviewee did not respond with detailed
responses as would have been the most beneficial for me. My interviewee gave one or two
word responses, which was not beneficial for my Personal Interest Project. As a result of this
unsuccessful interview I decided to go back to my basis of secondary research and find some
answers among the sources I had found prior to the interview. In addition to interviews, I
attempted to conduct a focus group with six Indigenous students at my school. Unfortunately,
one of them attended the focus group and I was forced to find other ways of gaining
information. As a result of this, my research suffered a setback.

Several weeks before my Personal Interest Project was due, I decided to conduct some
interviews and finally start putting together and synthesising my primary and secondary
research with my personal experience. My main approach to my research was through a case
study of Indigenous Australians. Although this worked significantly well for my research,
limitations were evident, including the fact that generalisations could not be made due to the
small size of the group I chose to study. However, a case study was particularly useful
because it gave me, as a researcher, a great opportunity to find out personal experiences and
information and gain significantly useful details.

With all my information I started writing drafts of my Central Material and handing them to
my teacher and peers for some feedback. From this great amount of feedback, I was able to
gain confidence and complete my final primary and secondary research.

In the last week before the due date of the PIP, I read all my writing and fixed every detail to
make it the best I possibly could.
Chapter 1 – Identification vs Alienation

In my personal experience, I am proud to identify as Indigenous, although, at times I do feel alienated from society. This alienation can be a response to racist remarks such as ‘abo’. Sometimes it is not directed at me, but being a derogatory name that was given to Indigenous peoples to degrade them, I regard it as offensive to my identity and cultural heritage. In addition to this, I am often ridiculed for the colour of my skin, and not for it being the traditional colour of an Indigenous person, but the complete opposite of the stereotypical social construct of race. “Look how white you are, you’re not Aboriginal!” “You can’t be Aboriginal, you’re not black…” These are the everyday prejudicial comments which form a continuity in my meso world and make me feel alienated from society. My feelings of alienation from society as a result of being a white Indigenous adolescent, are supported by Mykaela Saunders in her personal article titled “But you don’t look Aboriginal”.

“When you tell me ‘you don’t look Aboriginal’, you are denying that I am Aboriginal. To deny that I am Aboriginal is to deny that my grandmother was taken by welfare because she was Aboriginal, by the dictates of past government policies. To deny that she was taken because she was Aboriginal is to deny that past policies attempted genocide of Aboriginal people. To deny that the government’s objective was genocide is to deny that the government is responsible for the widespread decimation of Aboriginal language, traditions, land rights and intact family trees today.” ¹

This quote from Mykaela’s article deeply resonates with me as she has been able to articulate everything I think when someone tells me that I don’t look Aboriginal, just simply for the fair colour of my skin. I believe that she is a voice for Indigenous peoples, she has expressed the feelings of prejudice and alienation of many Indigenous peoples. Whilst the alienation plays a crucial role in my Indigenous identity, I am proud and will forever be proud to be Indigenous. Much like Bella, one of my interviewees, a 17 year old Indigenous girl, with deep connection to her heritage and the Stolen Generations through her grandmother. From my interview with Bella, I can say that she is very proud to be Indigenous, she has extensive knowledge of the

Stolen Generations, due to her grandmother being involved in such a horrific and barbaric event in Australia’s history.

“Being Indigenous makes me feel so proud and I would never be embarrassed to be Indigenous!”

For Bella, her grandmother plays a significant role in her Indigenous identity and heritage, due to her unfortunate involvement with the Stolen Generations.

“When my Nan talks about her experiences, I get emotional, to think that such an amazing and strong woman could be put through such a horrible experience... but you can’t tell just by looking at her.”

Bella’s grandmother may also play a role in whether or not Bella chooses to identify with her Indigenous culture or whether to take a different path with her life that does not involve her Indigenous heritage. That is, the process of acculturation may encourage Bella to adopt the beliefs and behaviours of broader white society. Bella’s grandmother was taken from her home when she was just four years of age and did not reunite with her birth mother until she was 21 years old, by this time, she had married and had a child, and so reuniting with her mother was a significant event in her life. However, unlike many other children, stolen by the government with the intention of performing genocide, Bella’s Grandmother was placed with a loving white cultured family who raised her and sent her to a Catholic school for a ‘proper’ education… In Bella’s words “she got such a good life...” Furthermore, her grandmother was reunited with her family, and is still connected to them today, unlike the many thousands of Indigenous peoples who have never had the opportunity to reunite with their family they were taken from, as detailed in the ‘Bringing Them Home Report’.

“There's still a lot of unresolved issues within me... Every time I used to get close to anyone they were just taken away from me. The other fact is, if I did meet someone, I don't want to have children, cos I'm frightened the welfare system would come back and take my children.”

However, there are a number of reunion services for Indigenous peoples taken from their families, including ‘Link-Up Aboriginal Corp’ (est. 1990), Karu Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Corporation (1997), Reconciliation Australia (2000), and the National Sorry Day Taskforce (1997–2007). These services have played a significant role in helping Indigenous peoples to reconnect with their families and cultural heritage.

---

2 Interview with Bella, 17. 2017
3 Interview with Bella, 17. 2017
4 Confidential evidence 528, New South Wales: man removed at 8 years in the 1970s; suffered sexual abuse in both the orphanage and foster homes organised by the church (extract). ‘Bringing Them Home Report’, 1997 [Accessed Continuously]
Care Agency, NT (est. 1985) and many more. Bella’s grandmothers story is much like Netta’s story. “For 30 years, Netta thought her mother had died.” Netta’s story is just one story documented on the ‘Creative Spirits’ website. This website contains many people’s stories of their experiences of the Stolen Generations, most of which are negative and considerably emotional. Netta’s emotional recount of her early childhood and her experiences with the British colony stood out for me. Netta was just 5 years old when…

“A policeman tried to tempt the young girl away from her mother with a tin of apricot jam. He put her on a truck headed for an institution in Alice Springs where she would be trained as a domestic servant”

Netta would later describe her treatment at the institution of ‘inmates’ and ‘like bullocks in a paddock’. This institution was therefore a negative agent of socialisation as conformity to government expectations was actively encouraged. Later in her life, she was luckily reunited with her mother, however, because she was taken so young, she never got to know her mother, which may have impacted her identity formation due to the lack of a motherly figure in Netta’s life. As a result, she had no feelings towards or about her. Meeting her mother again confused and overwhelmed her. Consequently, feelings of sadness and many emotions were experienced by Netta and her mother.

“When her mother finally recognised her, both of them broke down and cried, the mother saying “my girl has come home””

Archie Roach is an Indigenous singer/song writer who composes his music from an Indigenous perspective about the Stolen Generations. One of his most significant and heartfelt songs is titled ‘Took the Children Away’. Roach speaks of his association with the Stolen Generations and how it impacted him and still continues to impact him, thus demonstrating links between the past, the present and the future Indigenous generations. It is assumed that millions of Indigenous Australians can closely relate to the lyrics of this song; this essentially makes Roach a voice for the victims of this tragedy that is the Stolen Generations.

---


“This story's right, this story's true
I would not tell lies to you
Like the promises they did not keep
And how they fenced us in like sheep”  

This is an extract from Roach’s song, which is further supported by a quote from an interviewee, who requested to stay anonymous.

“What you read on the internet about the truths of The Stolen Generation, that’s how it is, it’s not sugar coated.”

My personal experience leads me to agree with both Archie’s and my interviewee’s statements, as my research suggests that Indigenous heritage and the impacts of the ‘Stolen Generations’ on Indigenous heritage play a key role in the history of Indigenous Australia. It is not something that can be ‘swept under the carpet’, it needs to be addressed, as it is through events such as ‘National Sorry Day’ and ‘Reconciliation Week’.

When people tell their stories of the Stolen Generations, these are unfortunately, the horrid truths, their stories are true recounts of their lives and their association and involvement in the Stolen Generations. These truths of their lives and involvement with such an event directly impacts individual’s identity, and the formation of social, personal and cultural identity. Association may result in loss of these important identities and a lesser importance of Indigenous heritage, identity and overall culture. The growing acceptance of these reconciliation events can be seen as a positive change to cultural diversity in Australia.

From listening to Bella and other interviewees and reading different articles about the impacts of the Stolen Generations, including many of Archie Roach’s personal recounts formulated into heartfelt songs, I have established a greater and deeper understanding of my Indigenous heritage and kinship and just how important it is to so many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. For example, myself and Bella…

“I’m so proud of how far Indigenous Australians have come since this tragedy...”

---


9 Interviewee with anonymous female, 40. 2017

10 Interview with Bella, 17. 2017
Alienation is evident throughout Indigenous Australia, as many people experience significant prejudice and discrimination, some due to the fact that they physically look like the stereotypical Indigenous individual. This may include dark skin, dark hair, dark eyes, and some because they do not physically look Indigenous; they may have pale skin, blue eyes and blonde hair.

Alienation plays a key role in whether or not Indigenous adolescents and Indigenous Elders choose to identify with their heritage and express their identity to society.

As a result of my primary and secondary research I have discovered that there is a large majority of Indigenous adolescents who are proud to be Indigenous and they feel comfortable expressing their Indigenous identity and heritage in the meso and macro levels of society. The pride I share with thousands of Indigenous Australians is significantly important to the formation of identity and cultural identity. The ‘Stolen Generations’ evidently impacts identity formation of Indigenous adolescents, the event brings about pride and a connection that no one could ever understand.

The Stolen Generations impacts on my own, my families and my interviewee, Bella’s identity and identity formation. It effects the passion Indigenous individuals share, and the overall involvement in our Indigenous heritage, it connects us all together, through one passion and one love of each other and the troubles Indigenous peoples have endured. As an Indigenous adolescent, I am significantly comfortable and proud of my heritage, I express this through actively participating with the JAECG at my school and my local land council, Mindaribba. I am also proud of my family, knowing that my ancestors have experienced the hardships associated with such an event and endured the horrors of the Stolen Generations, makes me even prouder to be Indigenous and a 6th generation descendent of Jack Cook (1836-1942), my Aboriginal ancestor, the one who began my heritage and instilled this undeniable pride that continues among my family into the 21st century and beyond.
Chapter 2 – Effects and Impacts

My primary and secondary research has led me to believe that perhaps involvement in the Stolen Generations may enhance an individual’s interest and pride in their Indigenous heritage and identity and encourage them to be greatly involved in celebrating their heritage and the grief and oppression enforced on their ancestors.

In my personal experience, knowing that many of my family members were involved in this event and taken away from their families, at ages younger than I am now, instils a significant amount of sadness and anger, however, it also instils pride in me and in my Indigenous heritage and identity. Dave, was just one of my family members involved in the Stolen Generation. Until 6 months ago, I did not know Dave, I did not even know he existed. Over the short time I have known him, I have listened to his story and grown to know him as the person he is, forever affected by the Stolen Generations.

Dave was taken from his classroom when he was just 10 years old. He never got to say goodbye to his siblings or his mother. This affected his relationship with his mother drastically when they were reunited…

“It was difficult, because she didn’t want us around… We were part of a different era, she even forgot who I was. She didn’t want anything to do with me, or my brothers and sisters.” 11

As a result of this disrupted parenting and family time, it was difficult for Dave to fit in and just live a normal life. Dave recounted a number of events where he was involved with the Police, although, he says that he was never doing anything wrong, that he was targeted because he was listed under the Aboriginal Protection and Welfare Board.

“There was nothing I could do right, from the police or anybody with any authority!” 12

According to the ‘Bringing Them Home Report’ this disrupted parenting and abandonment of family results in many Indigenous peoples turning to crime.

11 Interview with Dave, 65. 2017
12 Interview with Dave, 65. 2017
“A large majority of clients seeking legal aid for criminal offences have a history of institutionalisation, repeated fosterings or adoption by white families ...” 13

My research has led me to believe that this involvement with crime and the Police may be due to a desperate need and want of attention and love that was abandoned, as a result of the lack of attention they may have received previously in their lives. Furthermore, individuals may be committing crimes as a substitute for the lack of identity and belongingness in a group, family or community, more importantly the love and support normally given to a child by their family. As a result of all of these important aspects lacking in an individual’s life, a person’s trust in others, themselves and the Legal System of Australia may be lost. This is supported by the ‘Bringing Them Home Report’...

“It was getting back at society. It was kicking `em, y'know? It wasn't the crime, it was the fact that, well, I'm going to pay back now for 20 odd years. Now, I served something like 5 years in the prisons, not because I wanted to be a criminal, but because I didn't know where I was, I didn't know who I belonged to.” 14

In addition to the effects of the Stolen Generations in correlation to increased involvement with authority, especially the Police and the Legal Systems, there is a significant impact of identity loss among those directly involved in the event and those connected to the event through family members and those in their community. Often, as a result of this loss of identity, individuals lack self-worth, trust and stable relationships, which may influence their well-being.

“I have no identity really...” 15

Cynthia’s mother was stolen when she was a child, and she herself, was fostered as a child. She calls herself second generation Stolen Generations. The idea of the second ‘Stolen Generations’ is becoming increasingly evident in the Northern Territory, with children being


taken out of their homes, placed elsewhere and forced not to speak their native language and not called by their traditional Aboriginal names.

"This is the second Stolen Generation." 16

Identity plays a crucial role in the development of an individual, and unfortunately for those involved in Stolen Generations and ‘Second Stolen Generations’, they suffer a possible loss of personal, social and cultural identity and implications with identity formation. Many effected by the ‘Stolen Generations’ don’t know where they come from, they struggle to belong in white culture and society as well as struggling to fit in to their own heritage and culture, which can impact individuals significantly through feelings of alienation and no sense of self-worth. This is supported by the ‘Bringing Them Home Report’, the entirety of the article displays a number of effects as a result of there being no place for a stolen child to fit in later in their lives.

“You spend your whole life wondering where you fit. You're not white enough to be white and your skin isn't black enough to be black either, and it really does come down to that.” 17

As well as impacts on the individual, there are also a number of impacts on the children of the ‘Stolen Generations’.

“It has left me sick, also my son sick too, never to be the same people again that we were before, being separated from one another, it has made our lives to be nothing on this earth. My sons and myself went through a lot of pain and heartbreak. It's a thing that I'll never forget until I die, it will always be in my mind that the Welfare has ruined my thinking and my life... I thought there was nothing left for me.” 18

My interviewee Dave supports this idea in the sense that he believes his children were impacted by his involvement with the Government and Welfare Institutes involved in the Stolen Generations.


“It stood over into my kids... All my kids were a part of the Stolen Generations too.”

The Stolen Generations may result in impacting the individual stolen, their family members, including siblings and parents and their children. For Dave, his unfortunate involvement in the Stolen Generations impacted him, his children and family. However, as there are a significant number of negative impacts, positive impacts are also evident for Dave, and many other individuals, as my research has led me to conclude.

“It made me, my sisters and my brother stronger and tighter, because we were the only people we had.”

Perhaps involvement in the Stolen Generations impacts an individual in a way they never thought it would, as a researcher I have found a significant number of negative stories, with a small number of positive impacts among the bad. Many of the positive stories of the Stolen Generation include impacts that involve family bonding, and forming stronger connections among families and communities, this is further supported by an anonymous interviewee when he said,

“Me and my brothers were separated physically, but never emotionally. We always knew we would meet again, and we did.”

Through my extensive research into the impacts of the Stolen Generations I have come to the conclusion that this event is one of the most significant and important events of Australia’s history, it demonstrates the strength of Indigenous Australians, the strength to overcome the attempted genocide and the strength to connect again with those important in your life. There are a significant variety of impacts of the Stolen Generation, these may include both negative – loss of identity and culture, loss of family and long-term impacts such as subsequent generations experiencing, suffering the effects of parents being removed from kinship groups and family and trouble with identity formation and positive impacts – stronger bonds and connection within family, friendship groups and community.

As a result of a number of my family members having been involved, I feel a great connection to the Stolen Generations, even though I was not present during the event. My

---

19 Interview with Dave, 65. 2017
20 Interview with Dave, 65. 2017
21 Interview with anonymous male, 70. 2017
identity was formed with a great pride in my heritage and culture, however, these impacts will always play a key role in my life, my children’s lives and my ancestor’s lives, which is perhaps why I am so passionate about this event and my research.
Conclusion

My investigation and research led me to finding out general opinions of the Stolen Generations, as well as the significantly wide range of impacts and effects on Indigenous adolescents today and Indigenous adolescents during the time of the Stolen Generations (1910-1970).

When I first began my research, I was in the frame of mind that everything I would read and find would be negative and heartbreaking as an Indigenous adolescent myself, however, I found that although the majority of stories were negative, there were a small number of positive impacts of this event, mainly the fact that it strengthened a number of relationships within families and communities.

If I was to conduct a major research project like the Personal Interest Project again, I would choose to begin my research, especially my primary research much earlier than what I did during my investigation into the Stolen Generations. However, a case study was highly successful for my research topic, as it gave me the opportunity to find out very detailed and personal information and opinions. Throughout my case study I chose to conduct a number of interviews which fellow students at my school, a number of family members and others involved and/or impacted by the event. In addition to this primary research, I conducted a significant amount of secondary research, which included finding websites, songs, articles and books to find impacts and effects. Both my primary and secondary research were extremely successful for my topic, I attempted to conduct a focus group, which I believe would have been successful for my research, however, none of my chosen participants attended.

As a social and cultural researcher, I would consider conducting this research project again with the future generations, to discover if the impacts were still evident, so far from the actual event.

My research gave me a greater insight into the Stolen Generations and the people involved, their opinions and how the event impacted them as individuals and how the event effects Indigenous peoples now. It enhanced my social and cultural literacy considerably. I have learnt to communicate effectively, I have avoided being ethnocentric within my research and have been significantly interest in my entire research project. My project has assisted me in
applying Society and Culture concepts to real life events and real people. As an Indigenous adolescent, I have grown extremely proud of my culture, more so than I was when I began my research. I have learnt what my ancestors and culture have endured just to survive. As a researcher, I have developed many ways and perspectives to conduct research and synthesis research with my personal experience. There were a number of ethical issues involved in my project, such as using names in my Central Material, taking consideration of different age groups and different educational statuses and I have attempted to remain entirely objective throughout my research, however, due to my significant interest in the topic, this was difficult for me, as a researcher.

The Personal Interest Project was a wonderful experience for my classmates and I, we have bonded over each others topics and encouraged each other every step of the way. I believe I have benefitted greatly from this research, in future years at University, undertaking a large research project will not be a daunting experience, as I have had the Personal Interest Project to expose me to major research projects.
An Annotated Resource List

SECONDARY RESEARCH

ELECTRONIC ARTICLES


This article describes the lives of Indigenous families in the Northern Territory who believe they are becoming part of the ‘second stolen generation’ and their stories of fighting back against the government to have custody over their children.

An Arnhem Land family had their two sons (three and five years old) taken away from them and put into foster care in Darwin – over 1000 kilometres from their home.

I believe this story displays a setback for Indigenous peoples of Australia, all the progress that has been made since the first ‘Stolen Generation’ has been lost with this happening. A statistic that stood out to me in the article is that 1020 children from the Northern Territory have been forcibly removed and put into ‘out of home’ care in 2015 and 2016, out of this 1020 children, 89% of them are Indigenous. These children are placed in homes where they are expected not to speak their cultural language and they are not called by their Aboriginal names. In a way, my research has led me to believe that this is a setback for Indigenous Australia.

This article was significantly beneficial for my research as it showed the impacts and effects of ‘Stolen Generations’ on today’s adolescents and children, which was extremely beneficial for my topic.

The ‘Bringing Them Home’ Report, revealed the loss of many things as a result of the ‘Stolen Generation’ – heritage, culture, language, land, community and many more. The report made many recommendations (54) for the Government to reconcile with Indigenous Australians. These recommendations assisted with the establishment of ‘National Sorry Day’ (7.a.). At the beginning of the report it is said that;

‘This report is a tribute to the strength and struggles of many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by forcible removal. We acknowledge the hardships they endured and the sacrifices they made. We remember and lament all the children who will never come home.’

This report explores the direct impacts on Indigenous peoples as a result of the ‘Stolen Generation’, firstly, I read a quote out of the report that was anonymous that said, when they were little, they were taught by their fosters families that black was bad, this concept was so deeply felt by white Australians that Indigenous Australians began to feel inferior due to their colour of skin, and some even wished they could change the colour of their skin. This event has essentially had an impact on the identity formation of these children. I believe this report has been a significant contributor to my understanding of the impacts of this event, before choosing my topic, I knew the basics; that this event was detrimental to Indigenous culture, but reading the stories of many people who were involved, is saddening although has given me a greater understanding and basis to begin my primary research.

This document made a significant contribution to my Personal Interest Project as it contained a large number of quotes and stories that directly related to my topic.


From my reading of Mykaela’s article, I have found that she is a voice for a large majority of Indigenous peoples, she speaks from the heart in her writing as well as her personal experience with discrimination for ‘not looking Aboriginal’.

This article gave me great insight as a researcher and was beneficial for my Personal Interest Project as it provided me with the general views of many directly exposed to this hurtful discrimination, as a result of not looking like the stereotypical Aboriginal. Furthermore, it
demonstrated the alienation felt by Indigenous peoples in white society, which furthered my research into dedicating an entire chapter to this alienation of Indigenous peoples in our society today.


This website contains many people’s stories of their experiences of the Stolen Generation, most of which are negative and significantly emotional. A particular story that stood out for me was;

‘Netta’s Story: For 30 years she thought her mother had died’.

This is an emotional recount of Netta’s early childhood and her experiences with the British colony. This site gave me an in-depth insight into the amount of physical stress and emotional stress that Indigenous peoples were put through during the colonization of the European peoples.

Netta’s story was significantly useful for my research as she was involved in the ‘Stolen Generations’. The event impacted her negatively and assisted in alienating her for white culture and her traditional culture, including her family. Netta was reunited with her mother, which was an emotional occurrence for both her and her mother.

I found this article/presentation towards the start of my PIP Process, however, it didn’t assist a lot in my research. I found one quote that supported my research about the impacts and effects of the ‘Stolen Generations’. The quote I used was from Cynthia Sariago, whose mother was a part of the ‘Stolen Generations’, so the event impacted her negatively, with a loss of identity.

Overall, this website was somewhat useful for supporting my ideas and hypothesis.
As soon as I chose my topic and began researching secondary sources, I immediately knew that Archie Roach and his songs would play a key role in my analysis of my topic of interest. Roach speaks of his association with the Stolen Generation and how it impacted and still continues to impact him. Many of his songs show great significance for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, a particular song that stands out to me is – ‘Took the children away’.

The lyrics Roach writes are heart felt and clearly show just how this event impacted him, although these lyrics were written by him, it is assumed that millions of Indigenous Australians can closely relate to them, essentially making Roach a voice for the hurt and impacted.

Archie Roach’s song provided me, as a social researcher with evidence of the ‘Stolen Generations’, and also shows just how the event has impacted Indigenous peoples around Australia.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

INTERVIEWS

Interview with Georgia, 17, December 2016

Georgia’s responses were problematic for me, as a researcher. She gave one word responses and little responses with little detail, so her interview was not beneficial for my project and research. However, it did prompt me to changing a number of questions for interviews and made me aware that not every person would know meanings of the words I utilised in my interview questions.

Thank you for your contribution, Georgia.
Interview with Bella, 17, May 2017

Due to Bella being so passionate about her heritage, I chose to conduct an interview with her. As a social and cultural researcher, I was able to explain questions to Bella and subsequently receive detailed and personal responses of her opinions and the impacts the ‘Stolen Generations’ have had on Bella as an Indigenous adolescent. Bella’s grandmother was part of the ‘Stolen Generations’, which I believe may have influenced how beneficial and significant my interview with Bella was.

Thank you for your contribution, Bella.

Interview with Dave, 65, May 2017

My interview with Dave was significant useful for my research and the cross-generational component of my research. As a result of Dave being a family member of mine, I was impacted directly by his involvement with the ‘Stolen Generations’, listening to his story was saddening but it always allowed me to further my understanding of the impacts and effects of the ‘Stolen Generations’ from an individual directly involved. Dave gave in-depth and personal responses to my interview questions, which were significantly beneficial for my Personal Research Project.

Thank you for your contribution, Dave.

Interview with anonymous female, June 2017

My interview with Mary (not real name) was not particularly useful, however, there were a few responses that related to my topic and were useful. Mary was not involved in the ‘Stolen Generations’ however, she feels very strongly about the event and feels as if she was influenced by the event just as those who were involved. Mary provided personal responses for my questions and was able to interpret the questions.

Thank you for your contribution.
Interview with anonymous male, 70. June 2017

My interviewee was somewhat useful in my investigation. He answered my interview questions with great respect and contributed a number of personal and detailed responses to my Personal Interest Project. As a result of no real connection to this person (through family etc.), I found that his story didn’t affect or influence me as much as other interviewees had previously.

Thank you for your contribution.


