Mooney’s emotional homecoming

Bradford Theodossi

Decades have gone by, and it had no idea it would come the day when he would set foot on the land of his ancestors.

The tears of joy were plain on his eyes. But there were also smiles and warm words of welcome.

Mooney’s emotional homecoming was the result of years of hard work and determination.

Mooney is a descendant of one of the Solomon Islanders who was taken to Australia during the Blackbirding days.

His ancestors were taken to work in sugarcane farms in Queensland. Now he is returning to a place he had only heard of.

But that’s not until he was 62.

“Meeting 100% here was very emotional,” Mooney told the Sunday Star.

He was the first in a family of seven.

He said his siblings are four, but all live in Solomon Islands, who he has never visited and called Australia home.

“It was just unbelievable. I’ve finally made it to the place my ancestors came from. This is something I’ve been looking forward to for many years,” he said.

Mooney’s father was of Malaita and Gela parentage while his mother was of Vanuatu.

But his great grandmother and great grandfather are both from Solomon Islands.

“The excitement came to my family everyone’s happy for me and receiving texts telling me of going home in a heartwarming,” the very emotional Mooney said.

“Touching down here, for me, is like becoming myself living in between the old and new Solomon Islanders.

“I could sense the image of seeing the natural bush and gardens that my father usually refers to in Malaita, Queensland.”

“His always a point—this is the Solomon Islands garden referring to his own garden, that I can actually feel the mood being here different from Monto,” he said.

He said he very much wanted to feel at one with what local people do.

“Always want to know what local people do. I want to get a taste of what’s like.”

Mooney said it was very exciting moment he stepped out of the plane and not long after, he started to talk and meet people.

“I could sense the humour of connection, and would get the feeling of wanting to move up with relatives here.”

That explains my first night on arrival. I was so anxious, wanting so much to walk the streets and get to feel what locals do.

“I knew that connection, and by now discovering what my great grandparent’s backyard. I could have jumped into a boat heading out to the province.”

If only it was not for my colleagues with the sole purpose of being, I would have wondered somewhere in Malaita or Gela,” he said.

Mooney is here on a fact finding mission with colleagues from the Australian South Sea Islanders Association.

Their mission is to find, re-establish and unite Solomon Islands descendants in Queensland, Australia, taken during the Blackbirding era to their ancestry links.

Unlike his colleagues who are mostly of ancestry connections to Vanuatu, Mooney was the one stand out who had blood ties here.

He never had that in mind as a child, until he was matured enough to know, that is when he came to discover his roots from Solomon Islands.

But how did Graeme Mooney actually place in history through this past Blackbirding era?

With mixed blood ties including Aboriginals, Mooney’s untold story in discovering his family’s ancestry in Solomon Islands is history recorded.

Not to mention that of Aboriginals advantage, it gives Mooney an easier path for him to understand the different cultures and eventually pave enough to discover his rightful connections.

Mooney has both Aboriginal and South Sea Islander heritage from both his father and mother’s ancestry.

His father was brought up strictly in Solomon Islands culture and still speaks pidgin today.

It was given the role as an educational historian both on my father’s ancestry and lineage into the Solomon Islands and my mother’s ancestry and lineage into my Vanuatu heritage,” he said.

Mooney went on and explain his connection in history.

“Our great grandparent, Kusailu and great-grandmother, Overa were brought to Queensland as indentured workers to grow sugar cane in traditional in the North Queensland.”

“My father came from Fatalam, Malaita in 1935. My father’s lineages as a Solomon Islander comes through his mother, Cecilia Fatavou, the youngest daughter of Kusailu and Overa.”

Neddy Fatavou married Harry Mooney, whose Solomon Islander ancestry comes through his father’s bloodline Ales Leeki from Gela.

He explained he might not be that person again in his extended family connections because his aunt, father’s only sister Isolat Sablio with her daughter Karen Soble was here last year.

“My aunt visited Malaita on other occasions of that made concrete links to our families in Malaita and just recently there was a visit to my father in Mackay to pay respect to him.”

Mooney said he knows one of those elders in Malaita that three block birding his status remains significant today.

“He is the most elderly between our family in Australia and our family in Malaita; he is well and alive at age 99.”

A short stand for the Archbishop on PARDEN BACK FAMILI.

Mooney wishes he could make up for and discover more about Solomon Islands.

It would have been nice to have that, or else it would have been his family’s lineage on Gela.

“But it certainly good to be home,” he said.