UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Children of the Sugar Slaves: Black and Resilient

by

(Waskam) Emelda Davis

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program

Sydney, Australia 2020

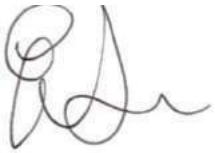
Certificate of Original Authorship

I, (Waskam) Emelda Davis, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts, in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

Signature: 

Date: 20 October, 2020.

ABSTRACT

This MA thesis is framed by the advocacy work of the Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson). Through grassroots access to local knowledge and Australian South Sea Islander oral histories, the research is informed by an adapted First Nations Standpoint theory. I draw on memories that link several generational stories from the ninetenth century through the twentieth. An 'inside story' one of Australia's best kept secrets, it is the first culturally appropriate academic study by an Australian South Sea Islander person that focuses specifically on the Tweed Heads area of northern NSW. Drawing on collective community memories, the thesis proposes the phrase 'Australia's Melanesian region' in recognition of South Sea Islanders first contact locations which are sites of historical cultural importance for the displaced peoples from the islands of Vanuatu, the Solomons, and the Torres Strait; and Aboriginal Australians and Australian South Sea Islander kinship groups created through intermarriage of our peoples. The naming an 'Australian Melanesian region' is a deliberate gesture to emphasize that the negative impacts of colonialism on SSI Indigenous peoples is not just an Australian story, but part of an ongoing catastrophic global history of post-colonial oppression.

The main section of the thesis titled 'Memory Work' has three chapters which investigate my own memories of the Tweed and integrates them with those of my family as part of a multigenerational history. It begins with my autobiography. This is followed by a biography of my mother and her activism; and finally the story of the Australian South Sea Islander community in northern NSW, particularly in the small town of Chinderah of her ancestors. It is intimate histories which rely on recent memory that have been pivotal in providing Australian South Sea Islander peoples with foundational knowledge and understandings to meaningfully and authentically reconnect with our traditional cultures and customary practices. We also develop ways to ensure that we can preserve these for future generations.

The final section titled 'Memory Activism' highlights the courageous leadership of generations of South Sea Islander leaders from the Tweed and discusses how we have used our past to amplify the voices of Australian South Sea Islander peoples across time. I argue that it is important to use our past to help strengthen our collective identity and give greater force to the community campaigns for socialjustice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To those that have gone before us, the foundation from which we build.

'We will never forget you nor your teachings of custom and cultural practice that have anchored our determination and continued struggle for identity through Black resilience and contribution to the global history of slavery.'

To the Faculty of Humanities Associate Dean Dr Alan McKee, Dr Alex Munt and especially Professor Paula Hamilton, thank you for your patience and support. Professor Hamilton's enthusiasm and genuine interest in promoting the recognition of Australian South Sea Islander history and culture has been most appreciated. In particular her encouragement of the use of personal narratives of truth telling of colonial oppression that previously have gone unaccounted for in mainstream histories of Australian South Sea Islander peoples. Thank you for guiding me through the research processes of academia that has allowed me to present such stories in ways that have exceeded my expectations. Thank you to Professor Larissa Behrendt, for seeing the value in this research and to other UTS cohorts and supporters. Also thanks to the Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) academia advisory panel and many volunteers who for over a decade have supported our causes for social justice and the building of our Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson website, which acts as an authentic online Australian South Sea Islander educational resource for Australian South Sea Islander shared histories. Tanku tumas Dr Vanessa Lee for your academic and cultural mentorship and reassurance. Thanks to the Vanuatu Government's support, in particular the Hon. Ralph Regenvanu for respecting and facilitating the need for Australian South Sea Islander sovereignty and reconnection across our homelands and in country, also the Gold Coast Tweed Australian South Sea Islander Association, which has for over 48 years provided inspirational and sustained leadership, and the Tweed community oral historians, thank you for trusting this documentary process and your continued support. Many thanks also to Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson Honorary Patron Aunty Shireen Malamoo and respected founding elders: my mother, Ms Nellie Enares, Mrs Carriette Pangas (nee Togo) logo design, Dr Bonita Mabo, Mr Graham Mooney, Ms Avis Deugara and Mr Victor Corowa, our deadly board, Mr Danny Togo, Ms Melina Fakatava, Mr Shola Diop, Ms Binette Diop, Professor Gracelyn Smallwood, Dr Marie Geissler, Pastor Ray Minniecon, Duane Vickery and Ms Dianna Robinson. Thanks as well to so many good people from the past that have contributed to a collective work in so many ways. The voices of our forebears, my grandparents, my uncles and aunties, cousins, my father, all formidable influences in our lives … I know you better than ever before. Thanks go to Ms Lilon Bandler and Ms Kaiya Aboagye for their shared insight, reassurance and respect, also my children, who continue to inspire and support the Australian South Sea Islander self-determination vision for our next generations. Lastly, Mrs Faith Bandler, AO, who is yet to be celebrated nationally, and we would like to see the commissioning of a commemorative statue for placement in a key site associated with our history, recognising her as one of our nation's most important leaders and systemic change makers in the history of social justice for women, First Nations and Australian South Sea Islander recognition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

'Every moment happens twice: inside and outside, and they are two different histories.' Zadie Smith, White Teeth (2000)

Kristal Brown family archive, 2016 Facebook

This thesis aims to make a contribution to, and intervention in, the process of public remembering in Australia of our South Sea Islander forebears and their descendants legislated by the Commonwealth Government as Australian South Sea Islanders, 'a distinct cultural group' which has been largely invisible in the past, especially in NSW, which is the focus of this study. The project is framed by adaptation of Standpoint theory to Australian South Sea Islanders, previously developed by feminist and First Nations people. It is an 'inside story'. In that process the thesis draws on approaches for decolonising European knowledge systems, helping others to understand Australian South Sea Islanders' own perspectives on the past, present and future that are derived from cultural identities which originated in nineteenth century forced migration from hundreds of Melanesian islands to Australia, amongst other parts of the Pacific. These methods are now well developed, particularly in relation to work with Indigenous people and are used regularly in a range of contexts where they are research leaders, partners and participants in projects. (Moreton-Robinson, 2013). At its basic level, decolonising research argues that knowledge has to be viewed with a different lens from the Western frame. Adapting these Indigenous based methodologies to our particular circumstances as an Australian South Sea Islander standpoint values the perspective of marginalised peoples written our way. Elizbeth Carlson (2016), a Canadian theorist, claims that 'Eurocentric scholarly hegemony venerates detachment and abstraction' and certainly on a traditional basis expects writing in the third person rather than the 'I' that I have used here. For a doubly marginalised population like Australian South Sea Islanders, black in a largely white Australia, with deeply embedded links to their Pacific cultures, and not fully accepted by First Nations Australians, it seems to me that Standpoint theory can assist with the particular complexity of our multiple identities. Even urban Torres Strait Islanders and Australian South Sea Islanders some generations separated from their origins have these multiple intersections with the past, the present and the future. I have drawn on Torres Strait Islander academic Martin Nakata's model:

> Building an Islander standpoint into a theoretical framework requires then more than the inclusion of Islander perspectives and narratives. It requires the recognition of the existence of the contested nature of these, the many vantage points through which they can be analysed and the theorising of these constitutive aspects of Islander experience as integral to understanding the complexity of the Islander position. *(*Nakata, 2007)

In particular I have relied on that aspect of decolonising methodologies which is identified as 'relational'. South African academics Ruth & Romm state that 'a relational epistemology emphasises the transactional and embedded nature of knowing'. This does not aim at objectivity as a researcher but includes 'knowledge of the community gained through lived experiences, observations, interactions and reflections'. (Ruth & Romm in Ngulube, 2017) My role as an advocate for Australian South Sea Islanders in New South Wales is central to this project. I am privileged to work in community development for First Nations and Australian South Sea Islander initiatives in my official capacity as chairwoman for Australian South Sea Islanders - Port Jackson founded in 2010.

If knowledge stems from our cultural and social position, then we can understand where knowledge is situated and the complex nature of it. An example comes from the spirit world and our relationship with our ancestors and spirit beings. These are central to our values and understanding of the world. I also want to explore the idea as part of my Standpoint approach, that Australia has a 'Melanesian region' of indigenous and immigrant origins which links us strongly with the peoples of the Pacific. Australia also has a more recent Pacific community numbering some 500,000 people, largely but not only of Polynesian origin. We also recognise our kinship with them, and want to encourage a concept of unity in this familial context as representing one voice for the many Pacific nations in Australia, not refer to our island groups solely in term of their geographical proximity. To explore this identity might figure significantly in the imagination and hearts of our peoples.

I have titled this thesis 'Children of the Sugar Slaves – Black and Resilient' because I want to emphasise elements of our collective memory passed down through generations. The 'historian orators' of the Australian South Sea Islander communities have never been comfortable with academic writing that requires my people to be labelled as descendants of 'recruited Indentured labourers', when in fact they were Blackbirded to Australia as 'Sugar Slaves'. The history supports this in that our grandparents and great grandparents were part of the systematic trafficking of about 60,000 Pacific Islander labourers, which started with Benjamin Boyd in NSW in 1847.

It was followed by the influx from 1860s to 1900s where SSI peoples were violently and coercively taken from their island homes, and then shipped to Australia as an itinerant labour force to work in appalling conditions in the sugar plantation industries of Queensland and NSW.

Ancestry (see also Appendix 2 for DNA analysis)

My grandmother's name was Emily May Enares (nee Santo / Sendy), who lived most of her life in NSW and was the first generation born descendant of a female child servant stolen from the island of Ambae (formerly Aoba), aged approximately 14 years. My uncle James told me Nanna was estranged from her father, believed to be Terry (Tarry) Santo, who came from a mission or reserve in Hervey Bay (Butchulla country) Queensland. Nanna was born on a plantation in Maryborough (Gubbi Gubbi country) Queensland. She was raised by my great grandmother, known as granny Toar, Sarah Booky (Bouky) Toar (Toa). According to Nanna, my grandfather, Moses Topay Enares, was 12 years old when he was kidnapped out of the water swimming with two other boys. (Enares & Toar 1975) They were tricked into boarding a ship that took them away from their homelands of Tanauta Island, Vanuatu. The people of Tanauta are renowned for their assertive advocacy as champions of self-determination and defiance. Moses demonstrated this resilience throughout his life, to which community oral histories attest.

Tanauta is the decolonised name for the island of 'Tanna', as it was known for some 200 years. "The Island of Tanauta", is the first island in Vanuatu to reclaim its original name following the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs resolution to restore the pre- colonial era names. A momentous occasion of reclamation, it was officiated by the President of Vanuatu Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs in Lenakel in 2019.

Moses and Nanna Enares had 11 children, which included my mother Nellie. My mother's cultural heritage and family name ‘Santo’ ‘Toar’ ‘Toa’ can be traced to the Cape York region of Aboriginal Australia and Melanesian regions of Townsville and the Torres Strait Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. The region which includes Cape York area is historically known as black Oceania.

She also had part of an unidentified heritage from Polynesia. From an Australian South Sea Islander cultural perspective, I equate these mixed genealogies with being part of the vast Melanesian region of Australia where many South Sea Islander/Australian South Sea Islander histories and living memories have been identified throughout this thesis.

To support my written text, I have charted sites of great significance to South Sea Islander/Australian South Sea Islander history in northern NSW. I have also drawn on memory work across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian peoples' traditional lands, identifying local accounts and traditional Australian South Sea Islander/South Sea Islander knowledge associated with the former plantations, stations, missions and fishing industries related to our history, as well as the receiving ports and nomadic trails along the peripheries of coastal Queensland and NSW.

These include landscape monuments and sites of cultural significance such as memorial sites of Chinderah where the placement of mango trees around the sites of unmarked graves still exist for our communities. The oral histories and recent thesis work of Kathleen Fallon that investigates over 190 existing sites in NSW and Queensland refers to these. (Fallon, thesis, 2016)

Terminology

Historically culturally diverse languages such as Pijin English are a combination of English words with grammatical structures from the Pacific region and Indigenous Australia. Pijin English is also called Tok Pisin, Solomon's Pijin, and Bislamar, which is the common language spoken throughout the Pacific and more recently, taught as part of the Vanuatu curriculum. Bislamar was developed during the 1860s to 1880s as an organic means of communication between Indigenous peoples of Australia and the Pacific and as a means of communication with colonisers. Creole is spoken mainly in the Torres Strait by descendants of the 'Blackbirding' trade, with a small increase of Bislama and Solomons Pijin on the mainland as descendants have been relinking with our families and cultural practices in Australia and the Pacific. Australian South Sea Islander contemporary culture has adopted specific terminology from the nineteenth century that is used to identify the origins of our heritage.

We are not indigenous to Australia as we know it today. However, in 1993 the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous and Minority Peoples identified Australian South Sea Islanders as 'population transfer'. (State Library of Queensland website 2013) The 1994 Commonwealth Recognition saw Australian South Sea Islanders included as a 'distinct cultural group' and is the specific name that we are legislated under. In the process of decolonising, some in my community have discussed and use 'Australian' as part of our cultural description and so the term 'Australian South Sea Islanders' has been coined.

However, there is no general consensus about how to identify ourselves as a group to date. Nonetheless, for the first time Australian South Sea Islander peoples have been identified as a group within the Australian Census, but despite this, we are still struggling to secure the same benefits and services equal to that of other Australians.

In the early 1970s, the term 'Australian South Sea Islanders' was agreed upon by the Australian South Sea Islander community and elders of the day who debated and agreed that the word Kanaka was derogatory. When referring to this in documentation as well as public speaking, I always point out that we are Australian South Sea Islanders, in order to assert our political rights in relation to social justice needs within Australia, and are descendants of the Sugar Slaves with kinship connections to First Nations Australian and Pacific peoples.

We share Aboriginal English with common words of 'gamin', 'savvy', 'deadly' and use interconnected words like 'South Sea', 'Kanak' or 'Kanaka', traditionally the Hawaiian term for bushman. I have endorsed this usage along with various other Australian South Sea Islander leaders. Since the late 1970s and 1980s, there has been a growing momentum to use terms by younger generations. It has accelerated with the gaining of independence by the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Their use can be seen on the 'Wantok 2012' conference apparel and in the naming of Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea organisations in Sydney NSW, and more broadly throughout parts of Queensland. The term 'Wantok' is a custom word that identifies kinship systems and means a common bond and knowingness across our Melanesian regions. It is used as a term of endearment in dialogue amongst members mainly of the Australian South Sea Islander community.

The word ‘Kanaka’ and ‘Kanak’ (the French version) is used in contemporary tattoo design on young men and women, used as an assertion of identification with Melanesian culture and origins. Terms such as ‘Kanaka born’ ‘Kanakas’ and ‘Kanak’ are commonly used amongst the community in Australia. I use the word ‘Kanak’ or ‘Kanaka’ and have done since the late 1980s. (Wantok 2012)

Tattoo 3 pig tusks under the word Kanaka represent 3rd generation born in Australia from Vanuatu islands of Ambae, Santo, Tanna. Danny Togo family archive 2020.

Other contemporary cultural terminology refers to an individual’s island of origin. My mother identified as ‘Woman Tanna’ meaning from her father’s island in Vanuatu. From a contemporary perspective, the words ‘woman’ or ‘man’ are used as prefixes which placed before the island of origin. For example, this was been my experience when on my most recent trips to Vanuatu, when working with grassroots communities during the Cyclone Pam disaster relief in 2015, when I was identified as ‘Woman Tanna’, Tanna being my ancestral family home. These terms are part of an ongoing tradition, and have continued as part of contemporary Australian South Sea Islander cultural practices. They are respected and celebrated throughout our communities regardless of the era in which they originated. They have been reclaimed through a decolonising self- determination by our community. Respect for cultural language and terminology is central to the empowerment of our Melanesian Standpoint and cultures in Australia.

Historical background and Field

Many Australian South Sea Islander lives were affected by the widespread racism and cruelty that was practised towards them by many nations during the 'Blackbirding' trade to Australia. Some 500,000 Pacific Islanders were involved in labour trafficking before the First World War, and following this another 300,000 until the 1960s and 1970s (Saunders, 1984; Munro 1990; Dick, 2015). Between 1840 and 1950 the Pacific labour trade moved 1.5 million Indigenous and Asian individuals around the Pacific, with 62,000 of our people taken to Australia between 1847 and 1906. Many thousands died from common diseases during the first months of arrival. An astounding 15,000 of these, mainly young men, died well before their prime. (The accuracy of records for deaths and persons missing is questioned by many Australian South Sea Islander peoples and others, and needs urgent review.) Sydney, New South Wales was a receiving port for Pacific Island labour from the 1790s where the peoples worked as wharf labourers, seafarers and deckhands. They were contracted under the guise of 'indentured labourers'. In 1847, Benjamin Boyd set up his whaling industry, and blackbirded 119 men from the islands of Lifu, New Caledonia and Tanna in Vanuatu to work alongside First Nations and Maori slaves. (ASSI.PJ web) Such a devastating expedition saw the men escape and walk back to Sydney roaming the streets naked, seeking their passage home. One 'man Tanna', who was denied passage back to his island, was found deceased in Sydney Harbour after he proceeded to swim out to sea.

As early as the 1860s the South Sea Islander influx trafficked slaves throughout pearling and bêche-de-mer industries and imposed assimilation acts of colonisation through Christianity on Torres Strait Island communities. The London Missionary Society infiltrated the islands and parts of Queensland in establishing Kanaka Missions. The most significant Australian South Sea Islander 'colony' was on Mua (St Pauls) Island and was established by the Anglican Church in the 1900s (Stoetzel, 2014). Deployment of South Sea Islanders to the Torres Strait islands from NSW ports also in the 1860s was followed by the treacherous 'Blackbirding' trade. This witnessed the inhumane removal and treatment of mainly men, but some women and children, from their island homes, who were shipped *en masse* to Australia. As hard working, strong and resilient people, they were recruited as an itinerant labour force to work in the nation's sugar plantation industries. Later they were vital in the growth of Australian

rural industries (pastoral and cotton) and maritime economies. They were widely employed to build the local transport infrastructure such as railways and roads.

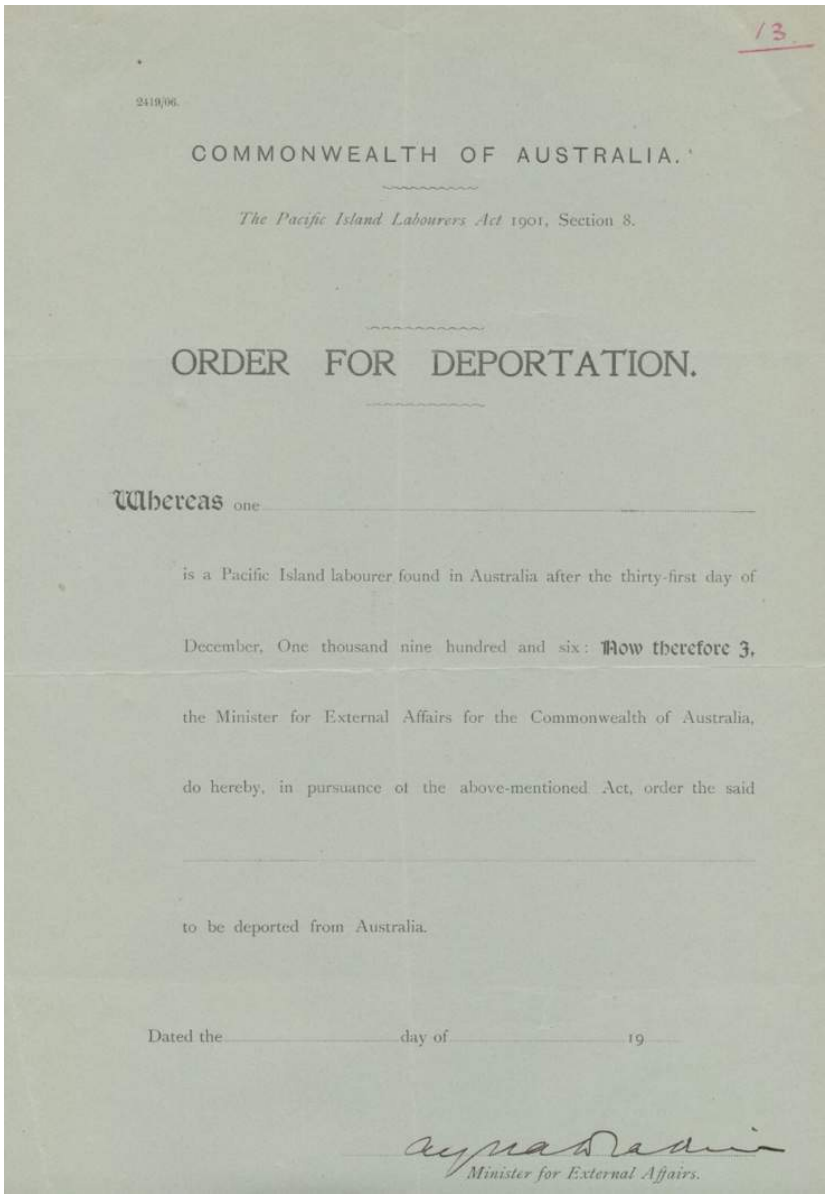
The coercive and exploitative people-trafficking practices of colonial nations, to enhance their economics, as exemplified in Queensland, occurred within other parts of the Pacific. A complex and contested history, occurring over a one hundred year period, it includes transfers of SSI peoples to Fiji between 1870 and 1914, New Caledonia between 1864 and 1922, and Samoa between 1867 and 1913 (Munro 1990, Dick, 2015). Despite the nuances of the changing circumstances of this history and its impact on Australia being widely researched by scholars, mainly from the University of Queensland and the Australian National University College of Asia and the Pacific for at least fifty years, it still largely remains as a marginal, invisible story within the national narrative of Australia, and has not become part of the public consciousness.

Clive Moore pioneered the early scholarship in the 1970s and is one of the few who has worked tirelessly to inform people about the coercive nature of the Australian South Sea Islander labour trade. Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson), with the financial support of the NSW and federal state governments, have produced an extensive bibliography authored by Moore which reflects his life's work in this field. Hardwork: Australian South Sea islander Bibliography with a Select Bibliography of the Sugar Industry and Pacific Labour Trade it draws on accounts from oral history, digital media, video and historical material available in various state and regional libraries of NSW and QLD and the Canberra Parliamentary library. Such a unique resource outlines a detailed history of the labour trade, noting that most of the academic research to date is skewed to nineteenth century Queensland.

(see http://www.assipj.com.au/southsea/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-AUSTRALIAN-SOUTH-SEA- ISLANDER-BIBLIOGRAPHY-28-08-2019.pdf.)

In 2019, *Hardwork* was made freely available to libraries within NSW and Queensland, where there are large populations of Australian South Sea Islander peoples, namely residents of western Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane. Recent research by Tracey Banivanua-Mar before she died in 2017 has much to say about the violence of colonialism, but her concerns were more of the nineteenth century moment than the afterlife of the twentieth. (Banivanua-Mar, 2005, 2007)

A tragic landmark event in our history occurred in 1901 with the introduction of the White Australia policy, with wide ranging effects on many nationalities living in Australia and the majority of Australian South Sea Islander peoples, who as non-whites working in the sugar industry were deported back to the Pacific islands.



13.

2419/06.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

The Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901, Section 8.

ORDER FOR DEPORTATION.

Whereas one _____

is a Pacific Island labourer found in Australia after the thirty-first day of December, One thousand nine hundred and six: Now therefore I, the Minister for External Affairs for the Commonwealth of Australia, do hereby, in pursuance of the above-mentioned Act, order the said _____ to be deported from Australia.

Dated the _____ day of _____ 19__

Minister for External Affairs.

This triggered islander resistance in Mackay, Queensland that saw the formation of a Pacific Island Association in 1901-1906. (Moore,1992)

As seen above the 'Order for Deportation' by Australian Prime Minister Alfred Deakin in 1906 sent some 7,000 Melanesians and their families back to the Pacific islands. Some, who wished to remain after many years of living in Australia, moved to northern NSW to avoid deportation. In later years, *The Aboriginals Protection Amendment Act of 1934* broadened the category of 'Aboriginal' to include people of Pacific Islander heritage who lived with or were associated with Queensland's First Peoples, (Moore 2019) a form of genocide ensuring our distinct identity was lost. These traumatic experiences for our forebears and their established families have had an ongoing effect of generational scarring that is a common theme of lived experiences throughout our traditional stories, even in Vanuatu. One of the unexpected consequences for those who were deported is that the process of interracial marriage and being taken in by First Nations communities in Australia meant that they were also complete outsiders when they were returned to their islands of origin. Their experiences demonstrate the very long-term disruptive effects by colonial and state authorities moving people in and out of various places, destroying Australian South Sea Islander culture and identity.

Dr Peter Prince (2016) from Australian National Universities' most recent research on 'Australia's most inhumane act of deportation' highlights that another major cause of the suffering of South Sea Islanders came as a result of their wrongful labelling as 'aliens' in nineteenth and twentieth century Australia, when they belonged as much to Australia as other settler groups in this period. In Robtelmes v Brenan (1906) the High Court authorised the expulsion of the South Sea Islander community under the 'aliens power' of the Constitution. The case, however, was decided on incorrect foundations. Many Islanders who were the subject of the expulsion were not 'aliens' under the law but British subjects. Moreover, each of the judges had a conflict of interest in the matter before them as they had long been supporters of deportation as necessary for a 'White Australia'.

Finally, says Prince, 'Yet it continues today to be cited as a foundational authority in support of the Commonwealth's sweeping power to exclude, detain indefinitely without trial and deport 'aliens'. Pacific people who escaped expulsion were further targeted as 'coloured aliens' under Queensland's extensive dictation test legislation, excluding them from any meaningful economic or employment opportunity' (Prince, 2016).

An important agenda for Australian South Sea Islander people living in Australia today, second and third generation Australians of South Sea Islander heritage, is to reconnect with their families in the islands and undo the radical rupture of families that occurred during the 60-70 years of slavery and seek to re-establish some genealogical continuity. There are also many families in the islands seeking connection with their lost families in Australia. This year the University of Technology Sydney 'Shopfront' initiative committed to assist in the groundbreaking development of a data collation mechanism that will assist inquiries of this nature. This will feed into the Australian South Sea Islander development under way, of a stolen generation database to assist in the reconnection our families.

The many South Pacific Islands that Australian South Sea Islander peoples came from were changed irrevocably by the labour trade, as were the lives of the people who came to Australia. In 2018 I participated in a public symposium 'South Pacific Islander and Australian reflections on Blackbirding' at the Bob Hawke Centre, University of South Australia which hosted a historical panel of guests from Tongariki Island in Vanuatu. I had the pleasure to meet and spend time with Rudy Pakoa Rolling, Pastor Willie Yanik, Fennesseh & Stacey Carter, Tukini Tavui, Chair of Pacific Island Communities, South Australia (PICSA), David & Helen Bunton (Australians), Abel David, Chief Richard, and Velma Tor.

ASSIPJ - Davis archive

Left to Right: Abel David (Vanuatu Australia ConnectionInc.); Helen Stacey Bunton; Velma Karabani (Pentecost,Vanuatu); David Bunton; Rudy Pakoa Rolland (back), Toam Norman John (front), bothTongariki Aboriginaldescendants; Frankie Tureleo Dee (AmbaeAboriginal descendant); Pastor Willie Yanick (President, Tongariki Australian Aborigines Association;) melda Davis (President, Australian South Sea Islanders. Port Jackson); Chief Richard DavidFandanumata (Vanuatu National Council of Chiefs); Tukini Tavui (President, Pacific Islands Council of South Australia).

The majority of Vanuatu representatives were descendants of First Nations Australians who were coming back to Australia to find their families. Helen Stacey Bunton is an accomplished Australian artist and her husband David is a historian who is related to a missionary who opposed Blackbirding when he went to the New Hebrides in 1858. Both David and Helen, with the support of the Pacific Island Community of South Australia President Mr Tukini Tavui, put together a detailed exhibition and symposium to assist the Tongariki families in telling, another hidden story as part of the experience for our people of the Pacific. From oral family histories, they recounted how New Hebrides sugar plantation workers returned from Tweed Heads in northern NSW soon after their 1901 deportation, included two Aboriginal children, a brother and a sister named Willie Tutukan and Rossie. Circumstances around the pair being snatched are murky, but by various accounts their parents had either been killed or had disappeared. An interview with Aboriginal descendant Pakoa Rudy and Mr Rolland from Tongariki in Vanuatu was documented online by RNZ Dateline Pacific. Pakoa Rudy said: *My father told me since I was a boy, we were Australian Aborigines living here.* His fellow descendant Mr Roland said: *I have Vanuatu ID but still in my heart I know I don't belong here. I want the recognition from our government in Canberra that we have the rights all Australian citizens have.*" (ASSI.PJ web 2018)

Mr David says Aboriginal descendants can be found across Vanuatu: *"They are from Tongariki Island in the Shepherd Group and then from Ambae, which is Penama Province. Sanma Province on Malo and I just received a message from Torba Province. Also, Tafea province, so it looks like it will cover almost the six provinces*." (ASSI.PJ web 2018)

So, hundreds of SSI living in Vanuatu complain they are being discriminated against because they have Aboriginal ancestry, and have begun advocating for official Australian recognition. (ASSI.PJ web 2018) Pakoa Rudy explained the problem has become so critical that more than 480 Aboriginal people on the island of Tongariki are fringe dwellers, living as second class citizens with restricted access to land or proper education. (ASSI.PJ web 2018)

Matters relating to the Tongariki are a familiar story for Australian South Sea Islander communities in Australia as we have to constantly refer to our legal standing as recognised by the Commonwealth as the basis of our claims for our disadvantage in a variety of ways resulting from slavery.

Pakoa Rudy said he grew up "just accepting it" it was true that he did not have full status in the eyes of the indigenous Ni-Vanuatu. This is another sad consequence of colonialism which continues into the present. (ASSI.PJ web 2018)

Northern NSW

Trauma, of the kind experienced by the Australian South Sea Islander through the labour trade and colonialism, did not end with the Deportation Act, which was used to send back many of the Melanesian labourers at the beginning of the twentieth century. Several thousand remained in both Northern NSW and Queensland. The oral testimonies about the abuses experienced by parents and grandparents echoed down through the generations. Some people have remained silent, some told half-stories, and others spoke to me for the first time about their tragic experiences. Nor was it just a memory: abuse continued as recently as the 1960s, as I discussed with Gordon Johnson in 2017 in a candid interview at his home in Lismore, NSW. (Johnson interview, 2017) Gordon was put to work in the cane fields on 'Keith Howard Plantation' in Queensland as a young boy and told us about his father's story and his trauma from being flogged by the plantation overseer on many occasions with the wooden end of a cane knife.

Gordon and his family were living in a small wooden shack that barely housed ten family members on this particular plantation/farm. Gordon's mother, fearing for his well-being, sent him away to another family member so he could escape the ongoing abuse which his father had experienced, but had no option but to sit and watch (Johnson interview 2017).

(left) Makeshift House and Cane knife
Keith Howard plantation in Bundaberg Queensland by Gordon Johnson

Previously untold memories like this draw a compelling narrative in relation to South Sea Islander resilience, determination and pride, which have been important qualities for the survival of marginalised communities

They also provide the context for the situation of my own research and the way in which cataclysmic historical events do not 'end' in the past but have continuing reverberations for generations. My project focuses on accounts of the twentieth century and the Australian South Sea Islander community, which has been sustained over a long period in Northern NSW by the determined efforts of their people. It is a community now roughly bounded within the Tweed Shire Council, just over the border from Queensland, and between the Tweed River and the sea. The major centres of Australian South Sea Islander settlement include Tweed Heads, Fingal, Chinderah and further south Cudgen, Murwillumbah, Eungella and Tumbulgum. Importantly in this context, the state border between NSW and Queensland was always porous because Australian South Sea Islanders moved up and down the 2000 miles of the eastern coast frequently looking for work or visiting other Australian South Sea Islander relatives. The NSW story is largely treated by scholars as an 'add on' to Queensland, but it needs to be reconsidered more broadly, as it was also part of a southern history, which investigates movements of Australian South Sea Islander labour and goods lines in another direction, to and from Sydney.

It was in the 1970s that a number of historians from Queensland – Patricia Mercer, Kay Saunders and Clive Moore amongst others; and later Doug Munro in the 1990s – did valuable research on the history of the Queensland Melanesian labour trade to Australia and located their work within a more general Pacific History. (Mercer 1980) Clive Moore has continued to this day and he has spent his career as both a historian of the Australian South Sea Islanders and as an activist for the cause of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

However, by far the focus of almost all of this work has been North and Central Queensland, where the majority of South Sea Islanders lived at the time and since. In one sense Australian South Sea Islanders from the Tweed area are doubly exiled – from their homeland in the Pacific and from an assumption that it is a Queensland story, rather than a national or international one. Katherine Mary Fallon's 2016 doctoral thesis 'Hidden in Plain Sight: Negotiating Postcolonial Public Remembrance: The Australian South Sea Islanders and Their Strategies of Cultural and Political Survival since 1980' on Australian South Sea Islander memorials in Australia has partially documented our heritage across the eastern seaboard of Australia to Northern NSW, although this latter area was not central to her work. (Fallon 2016) Even more recently, Julie Mitchell's 2019 doctoral thesis in archeology is framed by memory studies and has charted Australian South Sea Islander 'sites of memory' across Queensland and NSW. (Mitchell, 2019)

As well, the Gold Coast Council produced a booklet *Sugaropolis: the Australian South Sea Islander story of the Gold Coast Region,* which accompanied an exhibition in 2013 to mark 150 years since the first Pacific Island labourer was brought to Queensland. This has some valuable photographs and material on the Tweed area. (Raines, 2013).

A later generation of scholars since the 2000s – historians, anthropologists, archeologists and political experts – have now contributed through their research to an extensive history of the Pacific and a broader understanding of the Melanesian region. This includes investigation of the 'labour lines' not only with British colonisation but also to British colonial Fiji and French New Caledonia. This research positions the Australian experience of dispossession and its impact on South Pacific Island life in a more comprehensive perspective.

Tracey Banivanua-Mar, of Fijian ancestry, was the most prominent and her work in this field enriched the earlier tradition of scholarship immeasurably. Her first book, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue, The Australian Pacific Indentured Labour Trade*, which was based on her doctoral thesis at the University of Melbourne, concluded forcefully that 'the labour trade was more than a regrettable historical accident or aberration. It was constituted by the legal, political, economic and philosophical infrastructure that has operated continuously from the nineteenth century to the present' (Banivanua-Mar, 2007) Banivanua-Mar understood the concepts of remembering and forgetting in relation to South Sea Islanders very well.

She says that 'the engineered forgetting of their presence, service and treatment during the nineteenth century was contested, but the campaign to be remembered would take another hundred years before being formally successful'. (Banivanua-Mar, 2007) She is referring here to the movement for recognition granted federally in 1994. Throughout this thesis I kept in mind Tracey Banivanua-Mar's suggestions that locating and gathering traces, images, voices and presence of Islanders 'leaves a collection of detail that can be placed together in relation to one another and their historical context'. (Banivanua-Mar, 2007) In *Violence and Colonial Dialogue* Banivanua-Mar focuses on the actual biographies and voices of Islanders from royal commissions, coronial inquests, court and police records, and the many taped interviews in the Black Oral History Collection (James Cook University: BOHC). Her research provides historical voices of Pacific peoples that operate in relation to those I have gathered in this thesis.

However, it is important to note that the twentieth century histories of Australian South Sea Islander communities in NSW have major gaps, and many accounts are only sketchily known. Patricia Mercer wrote her doctoral thesis in the early 1980s on the history of the North Queensland South Sea Islanders community survival from deportation to 1940 and there are many resonances with the NSW story, though not its particularities (Mercer, 1980). She describes how the Islanders 'built their own world within Australian society; partly in response to restrictions and racism, but also as counter to the widespread assumption by Europeans that their presence was only temporary and the few who settled here would die out within two generations'. In fact, according to Mercer, they not only quickly adapted to Australian habits but 'clung tenaciously to their own "custom" ways' (Mercer, 1980).

The slavery Debates

My own family and oral history research builds on and complements the work already carried out by scholars who have gone before me. But there is one area that is central to my argument where accounts by our community orators are markedly different to some of the academic historians' interpretations and is a matter of continual controversy in Pacific Studies.

This is about the meaning of our historical experiences, our continuing collective memory of slavery. Until very recently there has been little political consciousness of slavery in Australia.

Yet its practice was central to the British and other empires for over four hundred years. As Georgina Arnott in the August 2020 *Australian Book Review* notes that 'slavery informed Britain's idea of itself in the world and gave shape and substance to an ideology of white supremacy it harboured' (Arnott, 2020). Some of the British population's support for abolition has obscured Britain's and its colonies' continuing role in recruiting 'unfree labour' after the Atlantic slave trade ended in different parts of the world, especially the Pacific Islands. In all, an estimated 280,000 Micronesians and Melanesians worked as indentured labourers in Queensland, Fiji, Samoa, Hawai'i, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Nauru and Peru between 1840 to 1915 (Arajuro, 2012).

As I have emphasized this is not just a British or Australian phenomenon, but one involving many parts of the world and other colonial powers. In recently reviewing three books on the subject Ulbe Bosma claims that 'the slow death of slavery and the persistence of coerced labour in many forms and shades is a central, and presently perhaps even the most debated, topic within the field of global labour history (Bosma, 2018). Bosma links the works under review by stating that they all explore the nexus between slavery and indentured labour, 'opening up new perspectives that encompass both the many problems that once surrounded the implementation of the abolition of the slave trade and the current glaring lack of protection for international migrant workers, which entails for millions a "new slavery" ' (Bosma, 2018). It is certainly well known that coerced labour was utilised for a similar purpose as slavery: to solve heavy manual labour shortages while keeping costs very low.

Historically slavery is now a recognised term with academics and the broader communities that were affected, and it has gained wider currency since the 200th

anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007, and the emergence of 'modern' forms of forced labour, now characterised as 'slavery' (see extensive resources at the UTS Anti-slavery site http://www.antislavery.org.au/).

Australian South Sea Islander descendants of the trade who were recognised after much community consultation under this name by the Commonwealth in 1994 (and in Queensland in 2000) were inspired by a prolific grassroots movement that exercised resilience and leadership to assert a stand on human rights and social justice (Knaap & David 2015).

In 2013 NSW Parliament gave bipartisan support to recognition of the slave trade, supporting a motion by Independent Member for Sydney Mr Alex Greenwich supported strongly by the Greens NSW state Member Mr Jamie Parker and the Member for Barton NSW the Hon. Linda Burney (ASSI.PJ web 2013. See Appendix 1). Parliament followed suit with an apology and bipartisan slavery debate during September 2014 witnessed by Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson descendants Ms Shireen Malamoo, Mr Graham Mooney and (Waskam) Emelda Davis (ASSI.PJ web 2014).

The abolition of slavery occurred throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, and often in stages, with different laws between colonial powers and their colonies. There was a slow transition from slavery to indenture, and as I have noted, often the distinction between the two was blurred even in contemporary times.

As the movement of slaves from Africa ceased, the slave system was transformed into indenture, which operated in much the same way and was cheaper. Indentures had been used to bind workers of European origin in North America for centuries, and the system was easily extended to incorporate non-white workers. Even in British areas, ex-slaves often had little choice but to continue to work for their ex-masters on the same plantations, bound by apprenticeships or indentures (Arajuro, 2012; Bosma, 2018). Supporting this were articles written even at the time in *The Anti-slavery Reporter* which first publicised the kidnappings of Pacific Islanders in the 1860s, portraying it as a 'veiled slave trade', despite the earlier abolition of slavery in Britain. Writers agreed that the traffic was alternately characterised as 'a clandestine slave- trade', 'worse than real slavery' and 'slavery in disguise' (Palmer 1871). Narrators of the second and third generations, indicate overwhelmingly that their ancestors were kidnapped and forced into slavery (Saunders, 1974).

The definition of slavery is today a much broader category than it was in the 1970s and 1980s when earlier historians were researching the labour trade and there is a great deal of ongoing research emerging about the nature of slavery and its impact.

Definitions of modern-day slavery are mainly taken from the 1930 Forced Labour Convention, which defines forced labour as 'all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily'.

New definitions, including trafficking, have emerged to cover changing circumstances of enslaving in the modern world. Some of these are:

Bonded labour: people become bonded labourers after falling into debt and being forced to work for free in an attempt to repay it. Many will never pay off their loans, and debt can be passed down through the generations.

Forced labour: where people are forced to work, usually with no payment, through violence or intimidation. Many find themselves trapped, often in a foreign country with no papers, and unable to leave.

Descent-based slavery: where people are born into slavery because their families belong to a class of 'slaves' within a society. The status of 'slave' passes from mother to child.

Trafficking: the transport or trade of people from one area to another and into conditions of slavery.

Child slavery: children are in slavery as domestic workers, forced labour – in, for example, the cocoa, cotton and fisheries industries – trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation, and used as child soldiers (*The Guardian* article by Anne Kelly April 3, 2013 https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/apr/03/modern-day-slavery-explainer).

All this has helped to strengthen our understanding as a community that our forebears experienced slavery. This is partly because we refer not just to the time when coerced labour operated, but the continuing effects across many years for children and grandchildren.

It has become central to our identity and the political campaign to seek justice for our people.

Clive Moore (2015) has written a historiographical article which attempts to resolve this ongoing contentious issue by positioning academic historians as more reasonable, based on evidence that the labour trade was 'indentured labour' (as history) where Islanders were often willingly recruited. He argues against Islander voices claiming that it was 'slavery', as well as media and public representations (as memory). Moore tries to reclaim historians' authority in an era where the 'witness' or those who were there, and their descendants have become vitally important to public culture (Bradford Vivian, 2017). This is understandable for some historians who have spent many years researching the field using state records. However, history and memory are always closely entangled and not divided so neatly in this way, as Moore himself is aware because he has been involved in the valuable collection of interviews at the National Library of Australia done in 1975-6. The archeologist Julie Mitchell remarks that 'the problems involved in separating memory from history highlight the close interaction between personal and collective remembrance. While individuals interpret raw experiences and give them meaning, society as a whole provides the frameworks that allow individuals to construct and maintain their identities' (Mitchell, 2019).

The dynamics of the process by which historical representations reach wider publics either in media forms or any others is a complex process. Not all academics share Moore's views. Banivanua-Mar's interpretation is much more nuanced and a new generation of scholars, not necessarily historians, have used a Memory Studies frame to explore how Pacific Island memory is represented in material form (Fallon, 2016) and heritage (Mitchell, 2019).

Moore is also aware of the highly political nature of the slavery argument by our people fighting for justice. In fact, the best comparison to illustrate this point is the trajectory of the 'stolen generations' narrative for Indigenous Australians and how it gradually came to be understood as a collective memory (Atwood 2005, 2011). It was adopted by the whole community, even though not everyone directly experienced it. Australian South Sea Islanders continue to challenge the use of the term 'indenture' because many oral history examples describe how children were stolen off beaches, unaccompanied by parents. Also there are accounts of bankruptcy and unfair treatment of labourers where their earned salaries were unjustly taken from them and indiscriminate deportation occurred for Australian South Sea Islander families and First Nations peoples.

Women

The photograph at the front of this Introduction is not just a wonderful picture of some NSW Australian South Sea Islander women walking in the 1940s. It is part of a family archive donated by Krystal Brown, who is Lola Noter's great-granddaughter. Thatimage is one of many located in personal family collections kept throughout the community and taken by Australian South Sea Islander members. It convincingly reminds us that although a substantial majority of the South Sea Islanders who came to Australia were men, some women figure in the 'official' photographs in Queensland's Oxley Library taken roughly between 1880s and 1900. There are photographs taken by government authorities and kept, but with no contextual information for identification or reason for doing so (Banivanua-Mar, 2012). Curiously, while the majority male enforced labour had been the primary subject of study, it is their female descendants that played the most significant role in rebuilding communities; and in NSW it was women who have been largely involved in activism for the Australian South Sea Islander cause across the twentieth century. In the absence of many written records, Tracey Banivanua-Mar has carried out a visual analysis of some of the collection in the Oxley Library, asking questions about how Australian South Sea Islanders engage with these photographs in the context of the colonial moment. She notes, as have other scholars, that while Indigenous women were scrutinised carefully by the state, Australian South Sea Islander women were largely ignored. Apart from showing evidence that women were involved not just in domestic service, she noted they were engaged in a range of diverse occupations, such as cutting and planting cane, Banivanua-Mar notes that 'still our historical analysis [was] mostly limited to observing [not what women did but only their presence i.e.] that women were there too' (Banivanua-Mar, 2012).

If, as Banivanua-Mar argues that 'women's contribution to colonial and colonised societies has been subjected to the violence of structural amnesia', (2012) then this is doubly so of the women who helped build the Australian South Sea Islander community in NSW. The only existing scholarly material relates to women in Queensland. There is some early work by Kay Saunders (1980), who was the first to explore the gender dynamics of the labour trade. Saunders found that despite labour laws of 1868 requiring only men over 16 and accompanying female partners to be captured, in fact men and women of all ages came, partnered or not.

Carol Gistitin has carried this further with oral histories in Central Qld (1993) and a thesis which became *Quite a Colony* (1995), but I have gathered evidence from a range of personal sources, my autobiography and my mother's biography, that tell us something about the lives of Australian South Sea Islander women in NSW after the deportation process was complete, which begins to fill these gaps. Only Faith Bandler, born in northern NSW but interviewed extensively during her lifetime, has left some insights into lives lived under the radar from state authorities. Her memories combined with two little known interviews with women from the NSW Bicentennial Collection, Isobel Slockee and 'Gladys' in 1988, have complemented my own interviews. Under these circumstances, the memories we already have through writing or interview are important sources for this study.

Source: Oxley library collection. QLD ASSI women working in the cane fields n.d. c 1890s

Structure

The thesis is divided into two sections:

- Memory work 'is the emotional and physical labour involved in the quest to learn about and comprehend one's own past as well as that of family and ancestors' (Fischer, 2015). Chapters 1 to 3, the main part of the thesis, explore my own past through autobiography; my mother and her generation's memories of life and activism; and draw these together with a study of the Tweed through the oral histories.

- Memory Activism 'is the work involved in bringing previously unrecognized memories and histories into public arenas, usually for purpose of advocating for social justice' (Gluck, 2007). The final chapter explores how I mobilise the past in my own work as an activist, also documenting the many who have assisted in this enterprise along the way.

Nina Fischer teaches in Jewish studies and has written a book, *Memory Work: the Second Generation* (London Palgrave, 2015). While not the first to coin the term 'memory work', she uses it in relation to her study about children of Holocaust survivors and I have adapted it here.

She builds on Marianne Hirsch's well known concept of 'post memory' (Hisch,2008), which was first used to describe how trauma was carried on through the generations, both consciously and unconsciously. The most important part of Fischer's work is that she stresses aspects of memory work and its possibilities for changing people's lives. For her it is an active and positive process 'only memory work can ultimately change the author's relationship to the past … by finding elements of a usable past' (p12).

'Memory activism' is a term originally used by Carol Gluck, an American historian, when writing about the process by which the Korean women who were victims of military sex slavery during the Japanese occupation of World War 2 brought their cause for justice to the attention of Koreans and internationally over a period of years, including recent histories (Carol Gluck, in Jager & Mitter, 2007). It has been developed further more recently by Yifat Gutman and her study of Palestine and Israel:

> Memory activism ... the commemoration of a contested past in order to influence public debate, primarily towards greater equality, plurality and reconciliation. The interaction between past and future that characterizes memory activism in comparison to more traditional social movements, highlights some of the normative assumptions, tensions and difficulties of addressing a contested past in public. More generally, it helps us understand how the past shapes our shared perceptions of the future and vice versa (Gutman 2017).

Gutman here emphasises the way the past is central to current political advocacy, but both case studies remind us that memories in public are always changing and being contested. In this context, Australia's Australian South Sea Islanders are able to bring their ongoing claims for social justice on the basis of past histories, to be considered within much wider public debates. It used to be that what was officially accepted about Australian South Sea Islanders' past was only what was known in the historical record. However, this has now changed with the acceptance of oral and written accounts of Blackbirding by everyday Australian South Sea Islander people's accounts, recorded from their knowledge keepers, their family members and communities' spokespersons who had memories to share about their associations with the Australian South Sea Islander Blackbirding history.

A comment by archeologist Lincoln Hayes speaks to the issue of Australian South Sea Islander invisibility. He says:

> 'because they were marginalised politically and socially, they ultimately disappeared from historical records and from public consciousness.

> Their identities blended into those of the local Indigenous communities, with whom many of them intermarried. By the early 1970s, the Islanders had been, to all intents and purposes, absent from written records for over 60 years (Hayes, 2002, p77).

In this thesis I don't use these interviews as 'data' in a social science way because my frame is Standpoint Theory. Rather I see our exchanges as part of a conversation, so that I can place both my own and my community's accounts on to the public record. I have not separated out the extracts from the orators as 'quotes' but have tried to integrate them into the text for the same reason. Though much of this memory is orally transmitted between members of the community, they are nevertheless translated into writing for the purpose of the thesis, so I am aware of this double process and my role in making an intervention into this already fragmented remembering by various people in my community.

Oral history was first developed as both a community tool and by the academy in the 1960s and 1970s to claim a place for ordinary people in history, which had traditionally only focused on the lives of those who had power in societies. At first the focus was on recording individuals 'as a witness to the past', but by the 1980s it had shifted to look at the character of the stories that people told and the ways 'that a person's memory is socially and culturally shaped' (Portelli, 1991, Hamilton & Shopes, 2001). So it moved from what people spoke about, to how and why they remembered or remained silent in particular ways. These days, says Penny Summerfield (2019), 'it is more closely aligned within the framework of Memory Studies'.

Sometimes oral history still acts as 'recovery or rescue' history when events or experiences have no other means of written or other documentation, like the Australian South Sea Islanders in this thesis. In these cases, oral histories become both a form of documentation and an interpretive act of remembering at the same time. Just as Ann Cvetkovich in her book *An Archive of Feelings* (2003) about lesbian histories, I feel that memory has a very important role 'in compensating for institutional neglect' of our people's history after deportation. 'Like other archives of trauma' including slavery, says Cvetkovich, memories 'must enable the acknowledgement of a past that can be painful to remember, impossible to forget, and resistant to consciousness' (Cvetkovich, 2003).

It is also the case that oral history is now being valued as a central tool for building social movements. So Loose and Starecheski argue that 'Oral history's personal nature

can foster relationships, and the collective identity and emotional connections that facilitate and sustain collective action … narrators invite their listeners to join an imaginative space and be active participants in the story' (Loose & Starecheski, in Srigley et al, 2018,). An important element in Australian South Sea Islander memories is that while interviews are usually with individuals, in fact our memories are told through referencing a whole community or series of large families. Such examples are the Togo, Enares, Corowa, Mussing, Noter, Slockee families, to name a few. Family is central to how the memories live on and how they have been adapted and passed on. Family memories and stories are told in very different ways about the past than formal histories, which rely more comfortably on a linear chronological understanding of time. This creates tensions in storytelling as family stories and memories are often told for a very different purpose than the writing of histories.

I conducted 14 conversational interviews in the Northern NSW region during 2017 and 2018 and I have supplemented these with others done for a different purpose. Clive Moore and Patricia Mercer carried out a major project in 1974 and 1975 doing interviews with Australian South Sea Islanders from Queensland of the first and second generation peoples. These are now held in the National Library Australia, Canberra. Further, there were some interviews done for the *NSW Bicentennial Oral History Project* in 1987 and 1988, which were with two Australian South Sea Islander women. The most documented NSW South Sea islander of all, Mrs Faith Bandler AO, has several interviews for television programs such as *Australian Story* online, but by far the most comprehensive are the 29 recorded tapes she completed as a life history with her friend Carolyn Craig in 1997. They have recently been uploaded to the State Library of NSW *Amplify* program (amplify.gov.au)

While Memory Studies works across discipline-based methods, there are two main works which have emerged to now accompany this developing research infrastructure – they exist as a separate area of research.

The first is by Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering, *Research Methods for Memory Studies* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013) The most recent book is *Doing Memory Research: New methods and Approaches* edited by Danielle Drozdzewski and Carolyn Birsall (2019). I have supplemented these with more in depth work on photographs and social media when necessary (Banivanua-Mar, 2012; Arnold de Simine & Leal, 2018).

However, I have also drawn on visual memories in the form of historical photographs,

as well as some documentary film and social media sites. Photographs have also been central to my research, serving as resources which facilitate more comprehensive understandings of Australian South Sea Islander histories because they make genealogies and biographies visible. The historian Jane Lydon, in writing about First Nations photographs and their recirculation for family reunification, speaks about 'broader historiographical implications, suggesting their utility in destabilizing "structures of forgetting" that excised Aboriginal people from the national story' (Lydon, 2012). The same is, of course, true for Australian South Sea Islanders.

As mentioned previously, the thesis draws on a range of personal memory sources, such as oral histories, autobiography, biography.

I have written an autobiography as part of the process, or autoethnography as the social scientists call it, as an approach that explores personal experience in order to understand wider cultural experience. More importantly it doesn't separate me out as the researcher from the Australian South Sea Islander community people I have worked with and who normally might become the 'subjects'. Instead it places me in a relationship with them. This is in accordance with the Australian South Sea Islander Standpoint, demonstrating a cultural protocol of identifying, not as an individual, but as one of the mob.

The campaign for justice

Australia needs to reconcile with the truth of this nation's record in relation to providing equal rights and opportunity to First Nations peoples and equally to the descendants of the Blackbirding community. The great irony of our history is that in providing recognition of disadvantage for First Nations in 1968, South Sea Islanders were not named, they were omitted from the legislation and this position remains the same to date.

Since then Australian South Sea Islanders are only eligible for compensation and services if they successfully claim Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island ancestry. Over the past fifty years, the denial of our Australian South Sea Islander heritage as being of value to our peoples and to the Australian people more broadly, as well as the fragmentation of our identity, represents a form of cultural genocide of our Australian South Sea Islander histories. The Australian South Sea Islanders have shared in the disadvantages experienced by generations of the First Nations peoples of

Australia. However, unlike them we have further issues of disadvantage, because we have not been able to share in rights to land as laid out in the 1992 Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Report (The Call for Recognition). Historically, most of our peoples lost their customary land entitlements once they left their islands of origin during the Blackbirding era.

The 1992 Call for Recognition led to the 1994 Commonwealth Recognition of Australian South Sea Islanders as a 'distinct cultural group' by then Prime Minister, Mr Paul Keating. This was followed by similar acknowledgements by the Queensland government in 2000 and NSW government in 2013.

All motions and bipartisan support by government officials have been welcome, given the years of hard work to maintain a voice to Parliament through individual organisations, but there has been little if any traction through targeted legislation and policies that have now been absorbed under multiculturalism.

In August 15, 2013 the State Library Queensland, which archives the largest South Sea Islander/Australian South Sea Islander collection of materials for Australian South Sea Islander descendants of Blackbirding, launched a video online series of voice recordings from first to 8th generation Australian South Sea Islanders to mark the 150th year since the Sugar Slaves were bought to Redcliffe, Queensland in 1863. Ms Nasuven Enares, my mother's sister, is a first-generation, Australian-born South Sea Islander. She was involved with the 1992 recognition campaign alongside some formidable Australian South Sea Islander leaders from the northern rivers, her siblings Mrs Phyllis Corowa and Dr Faith Bandler. Nasuven also collaborated with Tony Burton (designer), on the initial design for what we know today as the Australian South Sea Islander Flag.

She shares her perspective here in an online interview:

> *… In 1968 Indigenous Australians were granted special benefits and the right to vote. Australian South Sea Islanders thought that they were part of the Indigenous community, until they had to identify. Identify by proving bloodline through Indigenous heritage. Today, the division remains. Too many Australian South Sea Islanders are identifying as Indigenous Australians. This amounts to political suicide in statistics. Statistics determine the level of services awarded by governments. This disaster scenario can be resolved by allocating the same benefits, except land rights, to Australian South Sea Islanders as those afforded to Indigenous Australians* (Nasuven Enares, 2013).

Through the continued lobbying of the 21st century born organisation, Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson, in 2010 with support of Mr Alex Greenwich, the Independent Member for Sydney, the NSW Parliament recognised the 25 August 2013 as Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day. This date coincided with Queensland's 150th Anniversary Commemorations of the arrival of the first South Sea Islander Blackbirding ship (see Appendix 1 for Greenwich's speech).

The motion forged a partnership between Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Community Relations Commission, which led to investigations of the Australian South Sea Islander demographic In the Australian Census of 2011. Very few Australian South Sea Islanders participated and there were only small numbers recorded.

This led to mobilising where possible Australian South Sea Islander grassroots participation as part of the then imminent 2016 Census. This saw a major increase in the numbers of people identifying as Australian South Sea Islander, up 133%, and participation was also elevated through placement under the 'Ancestry' question. Although there was an impressive increase in participation for the 2016 Census, Australian South Sea Islander communities feel the numbers were considerably low, even for those growth regions for Australian South Sea Islander communities such as Tweed Heads on the northern rivers.

More work needs be done with the support of government agencies, the Electoral Commission and the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the collection of these statistics. I recommend the same methods for gathering that the '1992 Call for Recognition' used: working in with the people, going into their communities and assessing face-to-face with the support of good governance procedures and applying culturally specific protocols and practices to clarify research questions. The 2016 Census had an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander checkbox, with an explanation as to what an Australian South Sea Islander is. As our own communities don't necessarily understand or know of this evident history and kinship that binds us as the first multicultural community of this nation, this wording needs to be revised in questions asked. Only through government support for local knowledge, surviving clans and our cultural maintenance community groups will we be able to encourage greater participation and accuracy in assessing the Australian South Sea Islanderdemographic.

Conclusion

My thesis incorporates understandings of Australian South Sea Islander ways of knowing, being and doing through a Melanesian Standpoint framework. My theoretical structure is drawn from the area of historical Memory Studies. I have used a variety of methods to present the Australian South Sea Islander viewpoints, but this study mainly highlights the role of oral histories as a vital resource for Australian South Sea Islanders' own voices, our own making of histories and memories and also rebuilding communities in the present. I claim that our complicated multi-identities over many years, together with other Pacific and First Nations people, are grounded in a collective memory of slavery and our lived experience, accounts which have been passed down through the generations of families. The next chapter begins the process of storytelling located in place, that is the northern rivers NSW.

28th April 2016: Australia Bureau of Statistics meeting today with National Census Program Head regarding the prominent inclusion of Australian South Sea Islanders on Question 18 for the 2016 Census form.

We discussed the ABS strategies and roll out from an electronic and community education perspectives.

In the photo (left to right) Graham Mooney (BASSIMWG), William Swain – (ABS Indigenous), Duncan Young (National Census Program Head), Liz Bolzan (Director NSW/ACT Census Regional Management Unit), Zac Wone (ASSIPJ Deputy VP), Alex Greenwich (Member for Sydney), behind David Keys (Manager – Targeted Strategies (CaLD), front Shireen Malamoo (ASSIPJ Board), Marie Geissler (ASSIPJ Strategist), Emelda Davis (ASSIPJ Chair).

Section 1 Memory Work

Tink Baot (Think about)

This section of the thesis has three chapters that explore different forms of my family and community past, some of which focuses on the local place. The first is a chapter where I use the autobiographical mode to document and remember my own growing up during the 1960s in Chinderah, a small town in the Tweed area between the river and the coast. I use the personal voice as a strategy here because I am addressing what Arnold-Silke calls the 'relational dynamic "in which my personal voice" holds both a personal history and also a collective one' (Arnolde-Simine & Leal, 2018, 5). In the second chapter, I explore my mother's biography and her involvement with the activism of the generation before me who fought for black rights in the 1960s and 1970s when she lived in Sydney.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Chairwoman of Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) (ASSIPJ)

Nakamal

(Waskam) Emelda Davis

women Tanauta (formerly Tanna island Vanuatu) Ambae, Santo
skin name Lubuman – Wadeye NT

In the final section I bring the personal together with a study of the Australian South Sea Islander community in general through a focus on those who lived across the region of South Tweed: the communities at Fingal, Cudgen, Chinderah, Lismore and Murwillumbah. Ours is a history that reflects colonial exploitation and victimisation of Australian South Sea Islander peoples, but my study reveals that it is much more than this: it is the story of how we survived and flourished against the odds. For this section I have drawn on memories in oral histories which I and others have carried out over the years. Like all memory methodologies they have limitations but their significance should not be underestimated: they are essentially the voices of my ancestors across three or four generations, as well as those still living in community telling their own stories. These stories are of course filtered through the mode of telling itself, whether they are written or told to interviewers, but their pride and perspectives shine through across the centuries into the present.

Chapter 1
Wanples (One place)

Nanna Enares Home, Cudgen Rd Chinderah
Family archive image by grandson and first
ASSI photographer Tony Davis, 1980s

I was born in 1961 and my parents are Nellie Elizabeth Kiaś Enares and Clayton Augustine Davis. Mum was born and raised on a farm in Eungella, which is an Aboriginal word meaning 'honey eater'. The farm is situated in northern NSW just ten kilometers inland from Murwillumbah, which is traditionally known as the Bundjalung nation. I will refer to my mother by her custom name Kiaś, as it suited her unique. I didn't grow up with my father, but my brother and I got to know him over the years and were fortunate to see him perform his cultural music from the Caribbean.

Clayton was born on an island in the Caribbean called Grenada and lived in the township of Crochu, St Andrews. Clayton's heritage is a result of the African slave trade culminating in his bloodlines from seven African countries, which have been identified in tracing our family DNA / heritage (see Appendix 2). After leaving primary school at the age of fourteen he worked as a shoemaker and started driving taxis, then eventually ended up in London in 1957 working in a biscuit factory called MacFarlane Lang and Co.

In the evening Clayton would work as a musician playing trumpet and double bass. Jamaican drummer Ben Bowers spotted Clayton's talent and asked him to go on tour to Australia as a trio with Trinidad pianist Burt MacLean. In 1960 the trio stayed at the Hampton Court Hotel in Kings Cross for a week, then drove to Canberra to perform their first job at the Civic Centre. Given Clayton had no idea where Australia was initially, he saw the experience as a great success. Clayton said the reception was tremendous and he believed that most of the audience had not seen a black band in Australia playing jazz before, so they were astonished. People were coming up to them and wanted to touch their hair and faces and other parts of their skin … 'they mainly wanted to see for themselves if the black does come off our skins...'.

After one show they drove back to Lennon's Hotel in George Street, Brisbane where they played during the test between Australia and the West Indies cricket team in 1960/61 and it was here where Clayton met his best friend and famous cricketer Sir Wesley Winfield Hall and the rest of the team that played in this historic test. Clayton was fond of telling the story of how he met Kiaś and gave her a complimentary ticketto the Ben Bowers trio to watch him play and in true Kiaś fashion she turned up with all the family. I was born in 1961 and Uncle Wesley, as told to Kiaś, is my informal godfather as they never got to do the official ceremony because of his travelling. In my teens whenever the West Indies cricket team came to Sydney there was such generosity with free tickets and Clayton would ask us to attend the games with him on many occasions and it was then we got to also meet fast bowler Joel Garner aka Big Bird, Sir Clive Lloyd and the greatest batsman of all time, Sir Vivian Richards.

Clayton performed on the Gold Coast for eight months as he was contracted to perform at the Lands Office Hotel in George Street Brisbane, and ended up staying for four years. Clayton and Kiaś lived in Coolangatta for a period and would commute to Nanna's house regularly as she would be looking after my brother and I on occasions. Clayton would sit on Nanna's balcony and practice his trumpet playing, as recalled in one of my interviews with Geoffrey Togo. The echo of him playing could be heard all over Chinderah. In 1965 Clayton moved to Sydney where he formed a solo act for eighteen years then established his own Caribbean show in 1983 called 'Caribbean Carnival' touring the RSL circuit and clubs for the remainder of his life, some thirty odd years.

Nicknamed ‘the smile’ Clayton was always joking and laughing and was accessible to world renowned artists who became friends such Harry Belafonte (Jamaican American). He and Clayton were in the film ‘Island in the Sun’. First Nations musicians Bidjigal man Vic Simms and Birri Gubba man Uncle Johnny Nicol, all have fond memories of Clayton on the music scene as being gracious and ‘a very polite man’, said Johnny Nicol. As a common practice in Australian South Sea Islander culture after a few years I was placed with my grandmother, who raised me while my brother, born in 1963, stayed with Kiaś in Sydney. Kiaś named him James Anthony David Davis (Tony) and I was named after Clayton’s mother, Emelda Mitchel, and my middle name is Mary after my white godmother, who was a close friend of the Enares family and lived in Kingscliff.

Clayton Davis & Emelda
1962 Gold Coast apartment
image from family archive

Tracing my parent’s relationship, I discovered that Clayton moved to Sydney in 1965 and Kiaś did also in pursuing a nursing career, but they were separated by then. I stayed with Nanna Enares in Chinderah and eventually went to Cudgen Primary School. I loved going to school and would have to walk on a daily basis over two kilometres up the dirt rocky road and back again in the afternoons. So many Australian South Sea Islander kids went to school with me and we all knew each other hanging around at lunch breaks, especially playing on the monkey bars and talking ‘smack’. I eventually was given an old pushbike but can’t quite remember where it came from, but that bike represented a new kind of freedom and I would ride bumpy old red dirt Cudgen roads while ducking and weaving away from the magpies in the sweltering heat (Davis personal archive).

I still have a scar on my shin from being attacked by one just outside Nanna's driveway. Nanna's home on Cudgen Road was a family home but also served as a home for our SSI cane cutter men to come for respite if they were sick and, in some cases, they would pass away and were buried in the back yard under the mango trees. This is something that the family spoke about freely with no hesitation as it was the norm and black people were considered heathens by white fellas, therefore were not awarded the same rights to be buried in the same graveyards as white people.

1970 Cudgen Primary School - Class 3, 4 & 5B *image provided by Lance Skinner*

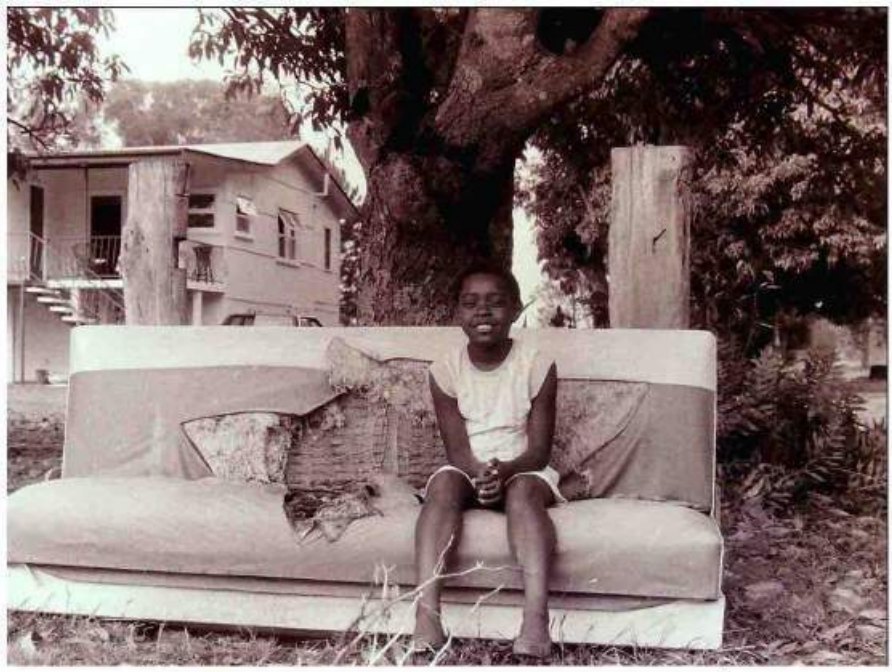
My memories of Chinderah are of a sleepy big backyard filled with four or more massive old mango trees that were eerie at times especially at night as they stood taller than the house itself. The trees were my hiding place on hot summer days to laze around when escaping the daily chores or eating fresh mangos when in season. The backyard was huge and would have spanned two or three housing blocks. At the far end of the back yard there was a chook pen situated not far from the old wooden outhouse, which had a toilet can with a worn-out wooden seat. There was a chicken pen made of chook wire attached to wooden posts with a rickety old shelter for where the hens laid their eggs. Feeding the chooks and collecting the eggs was my responsibility and a chore I didn't like as it was stinky and scary as the chooks would peck just that little too close to me when feeding time came around. Nanna's vegetable gardens lined one side of the property on a block of land to the left of the house (in the image below my cousin Emily is sitting on an old lounge in the backyard).

It was there that Nanna grew pumpkins, taro, potatoes, carrots, lettuce, you name it, she could grow it. Closer to the back steps there was an old copper boiler that hung over an outdoor fireplace. Next to the boiler was an old tree stump where the axe would be embedded, as it was also the chopping block where the chooks for dinner lost their heads. An old fashioned wooden clothesline was a few meters away from the boiler on the left of the house near the weeping willow tree and that's where Nanna would hang the dead chooks by their ankles for a short time to drain their blood before scalding them in the copper pot of boiling water. Then came another stinky chore as it was my job to pluck the feathers off the dead chickens. For life in general though, as a child I was happy and comfortable, but we didn't know luxury or opportunity as we do when we are older and I guess what you don't have you don't miss. We didn't have money and Nanna was always positive as a role model, always providing food, she could grow anything and bake and cook anything. What is fascinating today is we embrace soul food as a delicacy. Nanna cooked the fish head soup, pig trotters, ox tail, liver all the offcuts and so much more. We were made to eat everything on our plate without objection. I always looked forward to the desserts, such as pumpkin pie, sweet potato pie, sago pudding and creamed rice pudding made of leftovers.

Nanna was a resourceful woman. Some days we would go to Kingscliff to dig for pippies and she would make pippie curry. Living on the Tweed River there was fresh seafood and being a stone's throw from Kingscliff there was fish, mud crabs and oysters off the rocks. My uncle Zane (Robert) Corowa was a fisherman who would share generously his catch of the day. Nevertheless it was all hard work. Nanna, though very kind, was strict and I never went to people's homes without her or was allowed to have friends over, as family were our friends. Walking to Aunty Elsie Ling's (Nanna's sister) house in Cudgen was allowed as she would take me to Sunday school after sleepover. My cousin Lynette Long and I would have a ball rolling down the steep grassy green hill in the front yard before church and I would get in trouble for pinching the bullseye lollies out of the cupboard and Aunty Dorothy Ling would literally squeeze it out of my mouth as she was so strict about no treats before we do God's work.

Nanna would send me to the Chinderah corner store with a few pennies to purchase household staples and I would be allowed to walk to the corner store through the back yard past the chook pen under the barbed wire fence that sectioned off the neighbour's property.

Nanna timed how long it would take me to run that errand and if I wasn't back on time, I would get a spanking with the willow tree whip or cord off the electric jug, so I knew what time it was. The backyard was a haven and I was allowed to run without a care and played house under the house making mud pies, climbing mango trees, tying white sheets on my head that would flow as if I had long hair which I fantasized from watching the old black and white Doris Day and Elvis Presley movies. I remember Nanna had a piano in the front room, which I don't recall her playing, but I used to play Chopsticks. We had an old retro red plastic lounge with wooden armrests. The house was a creaky old house with wooden floors and sometimes at night I remember lying there and just feeling someone is walking around here because the boards would creak but then as I got older, I was a bit more comfortable with it. Days were extremely hot on the Tweed and still are and Nanna would allow me to walk to the Tweed River and swim while she was at Jenner's Corner store or she would visit my Aunty Phyllis's place across the road. I would be with my cousin Janeese and local kids down there swinging off the trees and dropping into the water off an old car tyre that was hanging on a rope, playing for hours, no food, just water and laughter – it was a real treat.

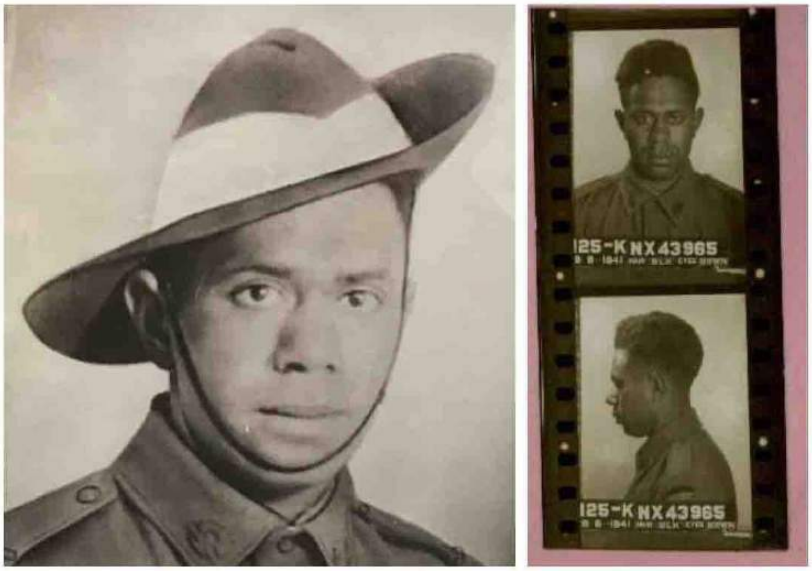


Emily Corowa on a makeshift outdoor lounge
Cudgen Road Chinderah
image: by Tony Davis

I especially liked living in Chinderah on Cudgen Road with Nanna and remember clearly her house, which was eventually raised on stilts as it was a flood zone where we lived. I recall the floods would rise so high that we could take the tin boat out and float all

the way down Cudgen Road to the Tweed River. I lived at Chinderah with Nanna and Uncle Diking (Daniel) who was burdened with a mental illness from the age of 18. It's believed that he was drugged through island magic man they called 'puri puri' and this ended his chances of a scholarship to travel to America and study. There were no doctors available to assist his diagnosis but the family knew of what was believed to be coming from a family that he spent time with and he was tricked into drinking a potion of sorts that sent him insane, such a brilliant mathematician. Nanna was relentless in looking after Uncle Dan and cared for him, as she did with such passion all those cane cutters that found respite at the home. My Aunty Phyllis Corowa, Nanna's eldest daughter, was close by just around the road from us on Wommin Bay Road, Kingscliff. I remember the love of my Nanna and the care she gave me, it was always something that was so special for me. A gentle, softly spoken, kind soul. This was something that I remember as clear as day.

Nanna was a quiet but stern woman who was dedicated to her family in every way, especially taking care of Diking and her other son, William, who died early from mental anguish and health issues due to his service in World War II and what is now known as post-traumatic stress syndrome. William Diaho Enares, born in 1916, was one of eleven siblings. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Paddington in Sydney on 29 August 1941. William was also known as 'Bill' or 'Bill Enares', and was discharged in Brisbane after service in Morotai, Borneo on the 4th of February 1946. A decorated soldier, William received medals such as the 1939/1945 Star, Pacific Star, War Medal and the Australian Service Medial. Five years of service in the Australian Army saw him train with the 9th Pioneer Training Battalion then he embarked at Sydney for service overseas with the 2nd/2nd Machine Gun Battalion per H.M.Transport "LL" on 2nd November 1941, served in the Middle East from24th November, 1941 to March 1942, New Guinea 29th October 1942 to 20th February 1944, and Morotai, Borneo 8th June 1945 to 4th February 1946. He disembarked in Brisbane from Morotai, Borneo on February 4, 1946 followed by his discharge from the army on the 15th March 1946. Geoffrey Togo spoke of Uncle Bill as a kind and funny man who never really recovered from the things he saw and had to do in the war. That was the defining factor and he ended up drinking a lot of alcohol when he returned to try to forget the experiences in fighting for our freedom.



Private William Diaho Enares born in 1916
Image: provided by the Australian War Memorial

There are many Australian South Sea Islander men that gave their lives to this country as young men, despite the racism and discrimination against their people. The *Tweed Daily* wrote an article in recognition of Uncle Bill's heroism on the 27th October, 1941 and a memorial to Islander participation in wars has been set up at Kingscliff. It wasn't just me that spent time at the house in Chinderah, there were my cousins Janeese Corowa and Houkje. Houkje was raised under cultural adoption by Kiaś' sister Naru and her husband Yelta, a Dutch ex-serviceman. Nanna as the matriarch of our family provided what I saw as a haven for the family and we were fond of her home cooking with the bountiful backyard as our playground. In my interviews I asked Aunty Lola Jascek (Noter) what my grandmother was like:

> *She was more of a lady, you know how the young girls, our lot too we had all girls, I remember little Granddad didn't like to tell the fathers if the girls – not played up – but if they weren't home or something they'd always try and make it good without telling the father. And that's the same as Mrs Enares, she'd always say, 'Don't tell Moses'. Some different things like keep secrets like that, yeah. I thought that's funny because Little Granny did the same thing.* (Noter 2017)

On reflection today, growing up on the Tweed, not that I knew any different, but it was a life of hard work and daily chores. It was a life of cultural maintenance in the sense that Nanna had customs and beliefs with how her house was to be managed and she embraced all community in her own way in relation to who visited and how many people came through the house and those that did come were all about kindred. There was no

drinking of alcohol or drugs of any sort to be brought onto the property and as superstition has it my Uncle Jim had beer under the house one Christmas and sticks started flying off the trees at the house that night with no wind but we all knew what it was. Nanna's home was a sacred place for healing and nurturing weary souls that in some ways never left. I recall Uncle Ben Long coming down every Sunday like clockwork riding his bike down from Cudgen hill to spend time with us on the balcony, just chatting away as he and Nanna drank cups of tea on the hottest of days. I would eavesdrop on their banter then skip off and busy myself around the house with my imaginary friends and daydream about nothing really.

Other family that would visit were Uncle Arthur Toar, his son cousin Richard and his sister Wilma and Christmas was the best as we would see family come from Sydney and Canberra to spend time at the house with Nanna and me. Those memories I cherish today because so many of our families are now spread over long distances and we do not see each other anymore.

One of my earliest memories of Kiaś is standing on my Nanna's back steps as Nanna told me my mother was coming to visit and I waited and eventually saw her walking slowly up Cudgen Road, Chinderah, with a small bag in hands. In that bag was something I had never seen before, a pair of beige satin-like pyjamas. The few days that followed she was loving and generous and I know she helped Nanna with money for the house, as all of Nanna's children contributed for repairs, and support for Diking Kiaś brother, who had a mental disability. I was eleven or twelve years old and knew something wasn't right after she visited. However, I was too young to understand that Nanna was ill and they kept that from me, as they did a lot of the hardship faced by our family.

A few weeks later mum arranged for her sister, Phyllis Corowa, to take me to the airport and it was then I said goodbye to my Nanna and boarded a TAA plane to Sydney by myself. Arriving in Sydney, it was challenging to say the least, as life was very different and I had to go to a new school with no friends, and they were white and some very racist people. It was great to be with my brother, Tony, though, as he went to the same primary school. He was two years younger than me and lived with Kiaś all his life. Sydney was busy, but I soon adjusted to the lifestyle and navigated my way around. Kiaś had a partner who I did not like much, and I began to act up not long after my

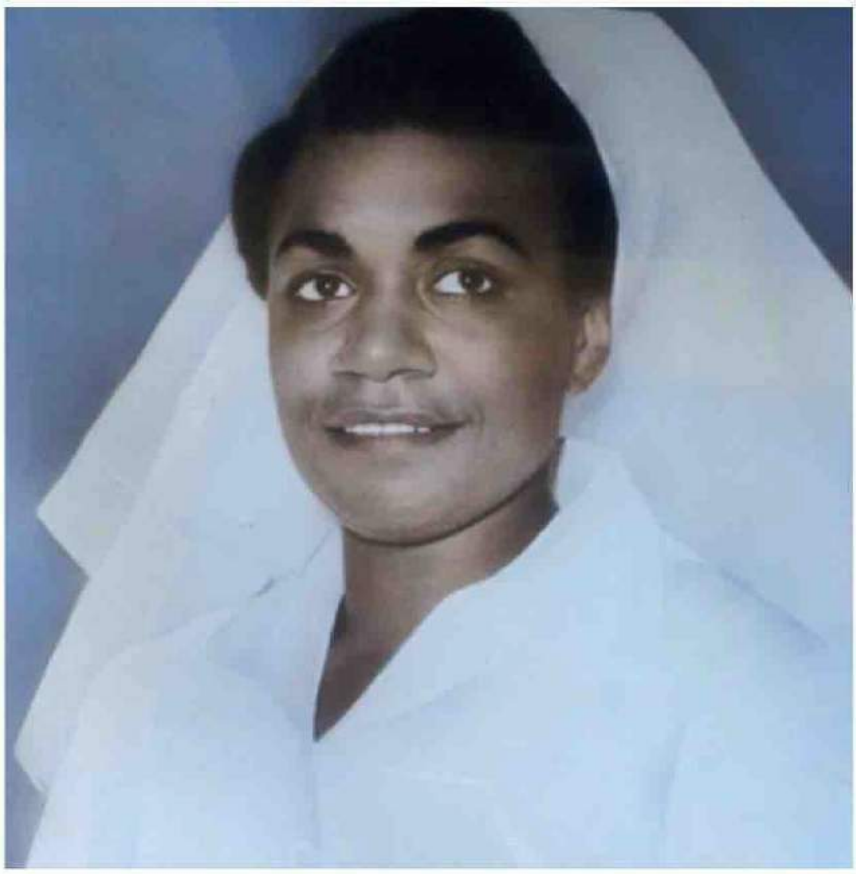
Nanna died, which was devastating for me as she raised me from a young age. All the sisters in the family were only too ready to help each other. Although we have grown apart today, then we were a clan of not only family but best friends. I was eventually sent to Canberra, where I lived with my cousin Houkje and Aunty Naru for eight years. I have thought back to my days in Canberra in the 1970s. I lived with my Aunty Naru and when I was eighteen, I moved to the Aboriginal girls' hostel in Ainslie. I remember it was there I stepped into my Black political self, independent of family influence, realizing that I liked the freedom of social justice consciousness and Black community determination, enabling me to explore and assert myself with words and not violence.

We hung out at the tent embassy in the 1970s, participated in marches, travelled to Brisbane on a chartered bus for the Bicentennial protest in Musgrave Park – I was liberated. Described as a 'watershed' moment in history, the 'Is there anything to celebrate in 88' protest reinforced the power of the people in working effectively with collaborators and organisers to reinforce the truth telling of a nation and there are friends out there that can help.

88 Documentary
Emelda Davis (pink) - 7:30 Report ABC TV
image: screenshot

Chapter 2

Stori Blong Kiaś – Truth in Activism (Story belongs to Kiaś)



Nellie Elizabeth Kiaś Enares (Innares)
image: from family archive

I am powerfully drawn to reconnect with my South Sea Islander (SSI) ancestral heritage to understand customary practices for several interconnected reasons. These relate to my grandmother and mother's people for whom I had a loving relationship and fond memories, as being stoic women and especially proud of Vanuatu. Grandfather Moses died in 1961, the year I was born, therefore I grew up with a strong female influence that is obvious today. It is part of my 'knowing', a vital part of my cultural upbringing as an Australian South Sea Islander. My mother's story highlights some of the ways in which Australian South Sea Islander women of the generation before me were able to make a life.

My mother Kiaś was first generation born in Australia, a descendant of the Sugar Slave trade. Against the odds under the White Australia policy and as a Black single mother of two, Kiaś worked her way up to being a triple certificate nursing sister. Kiaś was a 19-year-old girl when she left home to start a nursing career in Brisbane, traditionally

known as Turrbal country. There was nothing shared with me about this time in Kiaś life, but my observation as a child of my mother's determination in 'just doing'. This commitment anchored her soul and was inspired by the teachings of her parents, which allowed her to ride the wave of poverty and hardship that faced her. Soon after Kiaś's graduation in 1957 from the Brisbane General Hospital, she travelled to Sydney in 1958, where she started a successful but demanding nursing career that spanned some thirty plus years. Establishing a single-family home in Sydney, Kiaś courageously steered a course in providing for two dependent children and her disabled brother Diking, who lived with her mother on the Tweed.

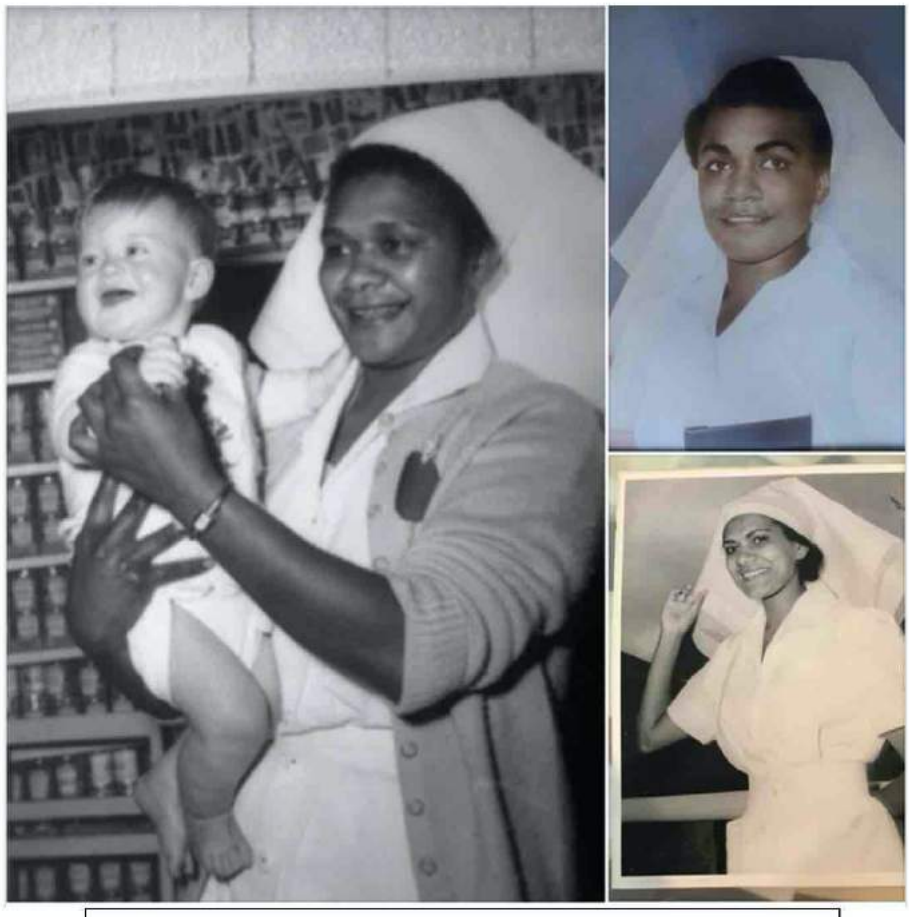
Kiaś was resourceful and intelligent. She focused on part-time studies and worked in nursing across major hospitals such as Eastern Suburbs Hospital, Brisbane Women's Hospital and eventually did eight years at the Kia-Ora Nursing Home, where she became the Deputy Director of Nursing. My memories of the later years at Kia-Ora were spending time doing night shift at the age of 15-16 during school holidays, nursing and feeding the elderly. Kiaś also did part-time jobs to make ends meet, as a part-time telephonist with Taxis Combined, Youth Services, and hostel manager, while eventually qualifying as a triple certificate nursing sister. Kiaś created a greater sense of purpose in a home for the next fifty-four years in Sydney.

The naming of my aunts and uncles are unique to us in Australia, other than my mother's name Kiaś and Naru. I have noticed names may have various spelling, but are pronounced the same, the others are not used in our Australian communities and I have yet to trace these names back to Vanuatu. The traditional middle names of thechildren are William Diaho, Phyllis Netouka, Emily Youko, David Nakapuai, Joyce Youma, Naru, Neru (twin sister deceased at birth), Daniel Diking, Nellie Kiaś, James Naliene and Nasuven. The custom names for their eleven children are of cultural significance and in memory of families and loved ones left behind.

On May 13th 2020 Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson marked international nurses day with a facebook post recognising the contribution of nursing sister Emily May Youko Enares who was the first Black women to graduate at the Brisbane Hospital with high accolades in the 1950's followed by sister Kiaś in 1957 then their cousin Aunty Delma Edwards (nee Long) some years later.

May and Kiaś dedicated some forty years to nursing and travelled to Sydney NSW in the '60s' working into roles as matrons of major hospitals. Kiaś (Nellie) acquired tripple certificate nursing certificate which equates to general, midwifery, psychiatric and other range of certificates.

These are just a few matriarchs in my life who have demonstrated pride determination and Black resilience despite the odds. Tweed Gold Coast Australian South Sea Islander room situated under the Tweed Heads Council hosts a beautiful memorial exhibition of imagery from some of the most influential community leaders and families who maintained the memory and defiance for displaced communities.



(bottom left) Emily May Youko Enares 1950 (bottom right Delma Edwards (nee Long) Kiaś (top right) 1957

(left) Naru, Nasuven, Youma, Kiaś
Northern Rivers somewhere
image from family archive

From some of my interviews I was able to glean information and perceptions of my mother that combined with my own memories, helped to give a broader understanding and perspective of who she was.

As I remarked in the Introduction, there is still a great deal of research work to be done on women in the Australian South Sea Islander community, since little is known about those who came from Vanuatu and other islands or whom the men married. The vast majority of those enslaved were men, which has obscured the presence of women, who did a variety of jobs both in the canefields and elsewhere. It is possible that the impact of intermarriage or partnerships with First Nations and others, and their work as domestic servants or housekeepers, maids in people's homes, contributed to this invisibility. Yet, since Australian South Sea Islanders have a strong matrilineal tradition, it is mainly women who have survived and rebuilt the community since then.

Only recently have the women started to come into full view through a prolific increase of consciousness and self-determination as a result of the revival of the call for recognition.

The Northern Rivers was home to some of the more well-known human rights activists families such as the Corowa, Enares, Phillips, Togo, Bellear and Mussing families that include Faith Bandler (nee Mussing), just to name a few. All of these families contributed to the development of the Black Civil Rights movement in Sydney traditionally known as the Eora Nation (Cook & Goodall 2013). Although Sydney was the main area of Black activism, where political collaboration with trade unions and philanthropists sustained a 1970s Black Power movement at large, such activism was not limited to Sydney. It also directly and indirectly influenced the development of the modern Australian South Sea Islander political movement (Moore, 2015). Families and community leaders advocated in solidarity with First Nations Peoples to be recognised while working in parallel to establish a strong movement that pointed to government accountability and challenged the colonial denial of truth-telling to the nation about the complicity of Australia in the history of slavery. Dr Faith Bandler and First Nations leaders headed up the 1967 Referendum 'Yes' vote that saw Australian's First Nations Peoples included in the census. Bandler was a proud descendant of Vanuatu 'Woman Ambrym' and close family friend of Kiaś and the Enares family (Maynard 2007).

Against the complex historical background in the fight for social justice, Australian South Sea Islanders have been unwavering in their attempts to gain an understanding of place and identity and apply sovereignty over the issues faced by our Australian South Sea Islander collective communities. People such as Aunty Lydia George, Lorraine Corowa, Joyce Enares and her sister Kiaś especially were unconditional in their support in mobilising community and supporting key leaders of the Black consciousness movement in Sydney. Women from the Tweed also used their kin and social networks to work collaboratively as part of national platform heading up the 1992 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report research that mobilised Australian South Sea Islander community demographic participation and assessment. This in turn led to the 1994 Commonwealth Recognition as a 'distinct culturalgroup'.

Aunty Lydia George is the first Torres Strait Island woman to graduate from University of Technology Sydney with a Bachelor in Communications and her ancestry is from Mogor Village, Erub Island (Darnley). She is a Kupai Omasker girl, which is the customary title for cultural adoption, a common practice amongst the Torres Strait Islands which has many similarities with Australian South Sea Islander communities (George interview 2020). In an in-depth interview Aunty Lydia generously shared with me her details, as being a descendant of the peoples of Solomons, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Rotuma (Fiji). Travelling to Sydney at the age of nineteen, Aunty Lydia met the Enares girls, Kiaś and her older sister 'Joycie' who lived with Kias in Sydney. Aunty Lydia was quite fond of Joycie. The wonderful connection for them was through the Black Theatre Redfern and spending time together as friends for many years. The political Black civil rights movement was always integrated into the background of her day to day living and helping community families. Aunty Lydia described Patricia Corowa, Kiaś Enares, Nasuven Enares and so many South Sea Islander women as 'strong' 'very smart' 'assertive' and she saw the movement as a 'Black people's movement', 'as we were one' with Aboriginal and Torres Strait and South Sea Islanders.

Some of the second and third generation Australian South Sea Islander oral histories are useful in illuminating details of some of the more obscure and still clouded stories of the Australian South Sea Islander women. Through our community 'oral historians' the stories of women and children being taken as young as eight years old have surfaced in relation to them being placed on plantations and farms as house servants or maids. Granny Toar was my great grandmother, a house servant taken as a young girl from Ambae. She gave birth to Nanna Enares (Kiaś mother) on a farm called Irrawarra Plantation in Maryborough, south-east Queensland. In the 1995 documentary *Sugar Slaves,* directed by then ABC TV producer Trevor Graham, Kiaś's sister Phyllis Corowa speaks of Granny Toar, who always refused to speak about her island home when asked 'what were the islands like?'. Aunty Phyllis believed this was a sign that she was missing her family, as there was a silence that would come over her. Without doubt there was trauma associated with the loss of family and the community she once knew.

Australian South Sea Islanders have demonstrated a stoic and courageous ability to 'move with ease' across a foreign land in bearing the burden of grief, loss and trauma while redefining, rebuilding community and maintaining customary practices.

In my mother's generation the focus of activism shifted from the Tweed area to Sydney, where my mother moved.

Kiaś's friends and family were a collective of strong and defiant and hard working Melanesian women on a mission in Sydney to build and sustain an Australian South Sea Islander community. Black self-determination underpinned their political agendas.

Kiaś's biological sisters also migrated to Sydney along with her cousins and childhood friends. They were a constant in supporting all sorts of ventures as part of an emergence of Black Power in the late 1960s, 1970s and beyond. Peniana came from Fiji to Australia in the 1960s and she met Kiaś on the street in Bondi when they both had young children. Kiaś introduced her to a new and extensive social circle. Kiaś was well connected as one of the many Black women that had a dynamic and endearing personality and my memories of her were that she was so busy and interacted with many nationalities, across all types of community. In her interview with me, Peniana discusses how she met many people through Kiaś. One of those she met was Faith Bandler:

> *… I think she rang up your mother, 'Bring some black people here' and the mother said, 'I've got one friend, I can bring her.' Yeah, so then she told me straight away what she wanted, the Black people for, to back her up for what she wanted to do, you know? That's what I was thinking, 'Okay' she wanted to get to parliament I think, yeah* … (Peniana Haines interview, 2017)

They went to Faith's house in Balmain.

> *… 'We went there and she cooked for us. I think her daughter cooked, I don't know, but we went there and got a lot of other people there. We had dinner and we talked about what she's going to do, that every meeting we go to her place or somebody else's place, it was from that group* … (Peniana Haines interview, 2017)

Sydney Nightlife 1970s
(top left) Kiaś, Carriette, Peniana.
(bottom) Peniana
image: family archive

Peniana was also a self-trained disco dancer and Kiaś introduced her to Black Theatre Redfern and Tranby Aboriginal College. Industrious thinking women, they were employed by night to manage a specifically Black entertainment scene that catered to the American servicemen known as 'R&R' men who were on leave from the Vietnam War in the 1970s. The club's name was Harlem Hideaway at Coogee, owned by the notorious Australian businessman Abe Saffron. Peniana comments on Kiaś working there.

> *… Nellie also worked there. She doesn't get involved with a man like me and them, she just got the job and she set her mind into the job. She brings a lot of people into the club and she even advertised when we finished work, 'Come, these are the cards for Harlem Hideaway'. Everybody in the bus or everybody in the street, everybody we knowshe would give them cards; the place was packed out every night …* (Peniana Haines interview, 2017)

Underground clubs such as the Harlem Hideaway provided a sense of freedom and social inclusion as the place was hopping with the sounds of 'Blackness', a vibe that inspired Australian South Sea Islander women particularly to overcome their fears and assert identity and independence as part of the emerging consciousness of Black self-determination within Australia and the 'Black is Beautiful' entertainment scene. Peniana was in her late seventies when I did this interview in 2017 and spoke fondly of Kiaś as her "best friend" who she would never forget. The trials and tribulations they overcame throughout their fifty-year friendship saw them at one point inseparable. Both were nursing sisters, hardworking single mothers and sociable. I have many fond memories of when I first came to Sydney being taken here and there for dance classes at Redfern, and to ABC TV Countdown performances with Peniana.

As the interview went on it bought a glow to her face to reminisce about a time that had great political impact in creating change through the arts. Peniana was billed as a 'Go Go Girl' and danced in a cage. She also did disco and burlesque dancing and Carriette, Kiaś's, cousin was billed as the exotic 'African Queen' burlesque dancer. Unbeknown to audiences at the Harlem Hideaway, she was an eccentric Australian South Sea Islander country girl from the Tweed.

There was another constant with Kiaś, and this was her resourcefulness and adaptability. She changed course seamlessly and applied this practice to her distinct commitment to social justice for First Nations and Australian South Sea Islander peoples. In the 1970s, she focused her energies on Tranby College, says Peniana:

> *… Glebe, yes, there. Then Tranby started up, I was there and your mum got involved with every little thing that goes on in there because of Kevin Cook. They are the defence, Black Defence. As soon as something happened in the theatre, the movement, they call and sell the idea they're all coming at once, da, da, da, da, 'Tomorrow we go' they said to me, 'Come' 'What for?' 'There's a big, big demonstration for Tranby College.' That's the first I know ...'Yeah? Where?' 'At the Town Hall.' 'Okay' 'Everybody's going to get up there and block the street. They did, they blocked the street, yeah, and everybody who got involved in the Tranby College they stood up and they talked.' 'But I'm going to give them the money for their funding.' Kevin Cook was very good and your mother behind him. They became very good friends. So, them both together, they did a very good job and so did other people who worked there and the Italians and the migrants, they built it up, they built Tranby College up, you know, it was good here …* (Penania Haines interview 2017)

Tranby Aboriginal College was a political hub of diversity in that if a person, community or cause was in need, Kevin Cook and his cohorts such as Bob Pringle of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) were front and centre.

Lorraine Corowa was a dear friend of Kiaś's for over thirty years and they both came from the Tweed to Sydney and provided for their families back home. Proud First Nations/Australian South Sea Islander woman, they frequently worked together almost as a tag team, as I recall, where if one found additional employment, they would get a job at the same location for the other. This was the case with working for Aboriginal youth services and Taxis Combined as part-time telephonists.

The same went for their support for activism, as it was known that if the phone should

ring you would be there on the front line to support of all kinds of social justice movements in Sydney. Kias's kind of activism wasn't boisterous and not generally on the forefront of the political struggle. Kiaś was the one who organised bail for those who were jailed during the anti-Apartheid struggle; she followed up the Tent Embassy marching with food for the protesters; she got people together and organised the meetings, but she was not the main speaker for her people. Rather she shone as a silent partner for the struggle as a 'quiet activist.' Lorraine describes Kiaś as knowing all walks of life.

> *… Yes well, yeah, I mean, you know, when you look back now and you think, 'How stupid was I?' To be right there in the frontline at some of the stuff but, you know, I think it was pretty naive about a lot of stuff too that was happening. But yeah, she'd just ring up and say, 'Such and such is happening' and no, 'Are you coming' or anything, 'I'll meet you at such and such' or whatever. And you'd go and it was the thing to do. When you look at it, you know, a lot of different walks of life the people that she had in her life and I think it was all about fairness and, you know, and the way she went about it wasn't about over the top stuff ranting and raving and screaming. It was good, really, because when you're around someone that's calm you don't get het up, it was good, it was good to be in that company and I mean we went to a lot of different things, we met a lot of strange people* ... (Interview Lorraine Corowa 2017)

Lorraine goes onto describe Kiaś

> *… Motivator I'd say, yeah, because I mean you knew that they were televising, you know, the demonstrations and marches and everything and I used to say, 'I wonder what Les Corowa would be thinking if he could see me on this thing?' But I think he would have enjoyed it because that was his thinking at any rate* … (Interview Lorraine Corowa 2017)

I use Facebook regularly to reconnect with family and kin through photographs. The image below was posted to assist identifying the women in the floral dress and halter neck. Which turns out to be Kiaś sister Naru (floral), the man in the middle is Wally Mussing and his sister on the far-right, Mrs Faith Bandler. The image is possible taken at the Tranby Aboriginal College where Nasuven Enares was registered as a student. Walling Mussing was the caretaker for some ten years of the students.

(left) Zane (Robert) Corowa, Nasuven Enares, Wally Mussing, Naru Ligthart (nee Enares), Faith Bandler (nee Mussing) image: *via Facebook ASSIPJ network*

The Black Precinct was a hub of civil rights identified as part of the CBD region that extended from Tranby College in Glebe to the Black Theatre in Redfern and across to the Aboriginal Medical Centre in Redfern and surrounding suburbs. The Black bohemian community worked in synergy as a collective of First Nations, African, Melanesian diaspora peoples and was inclusive of other peoples of colour with whom they worked towards the advancement of more progressive policies for Indigenous peoples.

Aunty Lydia George, a Torres Strait Island women and community leader, shares her impression and fond memories of Tranby College as part of this height of activity and in particular fond memories of Mr Mussing.

> *… I never considered myself as part of the establishing it was about sistership, about needing service ... the discovery of who you are your identity the 1970s was a melting pot of ideas Her home was home for a lot of people ... (meaning Kiaś's) I was a host for uncles and aunties coming from interstate ... I would sew traditional dress costume for Black Theatre ... AIDT, Cheryl Stone and Silvia Blanco. Wally Mussing shared a room with my brother Harrison George. Wally was the house manager at Tranby who played for St George and was*

> *from Tweed Heads. We laughed a lot making tea and putting salt instead of sugar and my mother came down and was the cook for Tranby ... Tranby was responsible for growing and educating people from the Pacific and reconnected South Sea Islanders with their people from the islands. A true cultural hub* ... (Interview Lydia George 2020)

Aunty Lydia goes on to speak with emotion about the Australian South Sea Island community in Tranby Aboriginal College after the 1967 Referendum.

> *... The tension around 'identity' where access to scholarships divided by identity when in the institution that should have been home... Being asked are you sure you were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander... young people were broken by this divide... using the philosophy of the bamboo I questioned where to from here and most of the time we were in survival mode… There was a knowingness in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as to who was South Sea Islander and we always knew our bloodlines it didn't need to be said but I believe 'Australian South Sea Islanders' need to be recognised and respected as we are distinctly different with very similar culture connection as we are all Melanesian people raised on country*… (Interview Lydia George 2020)

Politik (Politics) – Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson)

Like mother, like daughter. Kiaś was also intimately involved in my own journey into activism. In 2009 I received an email from Patricia Corowa and there were half a dozen people or so included, suggesting that we establish a Port Jackson branch or we re-establish the Port Jackson branch for Australian South Sea Islanders. In previous years there was an Australian South Sea Islander United Council office (ASSIUC) based in Chippendale, Sydney and I remember all my aunties were involved. So, we started meeting again in 2009 with my mother Kiaś, Shireen Malamoo, Graham Mooney and after several meetings moved to the Pyrmont Community Centre.

In this new era of Black empowerment we were fortunate to have Aunty Shireen Malamoo. She was well connected politically having served as our first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner. At that time she was on the tail end of her term on the Indigenous Advisory Panel to the City of Sydney. I was blessed to be surrounded and supported over this time by other formidable Australian South Sea Islander/First Nations women and Uncle Graham Mooney, a man who dedicated his life to the human rights struggle and led the case for the 2020 Native Title recognition for the Yuwibara clan lands of Mackay in Queensland. Working with such Elders and their front line activism meant

that I was surrounded by a sense of excitement as I worked with them on their many issues, firstly as a member of their group and later, stepping up to be a leader amongst my people. There was enormous reassurance and power in hearing such mentors say let's 'work on this, unleash the reins'. I knew nothing of the tenacity these aunties possessed. My mother Kiaś and Aunty Shireen, both strong Black and proud, and Uncle Graham joined our meetings in 2010 and rekindled memories of earlier political movements and changes for our people underway as an almost weekly conversation, till the early hours of the morning in my lounge room. Kiaś, Graham and Aunty Shireen called on 'the mob', spreading the word for people to attend some of our first meetings. People who come from regions of the nation in Queensland and NSW but were based in Sydney travelled in to join the meetings. I knew Kiaś could mobilise encourage, engage and inspire people, but I noticed she was the quietest amongst the community. Yet she spoke when necessary, especially if something needed to be reinforced or if there was too much humbug going on at meetings.

I have been mentored and supported in terms of culturally appropriate endorsement from my generational Elders to do the leadership work I have since been engaged in over the past ten years. Doing what needs to be done with no objection and knowing if I am on the wrong track to 'sniff the wind' and 'stand still', which is a fond metaphor by Aunty Shireen Malamoo for 'nuff' now. The amount of refusals that we've had over the years has tested our commitment to the cause. But I draw on my childhood most definitely because of what I perceived as a life of an Australian South Sea Islander and that 'hardwork' is the ethic that was instilled in us, as was a belief in customary practices. A tough, unyielding approach kicks in when moving the agenda forward, especially with lobbying governments and building community partnerships. This work is very important and I respect Aunty Shireen's spiritual and wise words when she says:

> *… the ancestors are breathing on you … the ancestors are breathing on you, get on with it love … no one else can do this …* (Malamoo 2010)

Davis archive

In drawing on social media as part of my research I came across a symposium that consisted of a panel of respected activists in the long struggle for social justice and equal rights in self-determination for First Nations Peoples.

I want to share Dr Gary Foley's words in particular, because they ring true with me in my work to promote and make visible the formidable Australian South Sea Islander history in social justice activism. He said:

> ... If you look back at the '67 Referendum, I'm a historian, I can tell you about the '67 Referendum, in 1967 that referendum came about at a time there was massive support in the broad Australian community for the proposition of justice for Aboriginal people.
> It came at the end of a 10 year concerted campaign by people such as Faith Bandler and Kath Walker and an army of the old guard activists of that era, an intense and highly organized and brilliant campaign. It came at the end of that. In excess of 90% of the Australian people voted yes in that referendum, which enabled that constitutional change to happen there and then… (Foley, 2002)

Dr Foley reiterates the Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson perspective on First Nations thinking … of learning from the past and looking to our future, in saying:

> … It's a question of Aboriginal political activists in Australia today doing what we did in the late '60s and early '70s and that's forming alliances with likeminded groups within the Australian community and battling

away to bring about and effect change. But all of this requires people to have some sort of analysis and understanding of the nature of Australian society, how we arrived here at this point in time, the structures … *(*Foley, 2002)

Kevin Cook CEO Tranby Aboriginal College & Kiaś (Nellie Enares) 1970s George Street Sydney Political March. *Image: family archive*

The rare image of Kias above marching with Kevin Cook from Tranby College in the 1970s up George street and past Gowings on Market Street corner can speak to us fifty years later about her commitment to social justice. But that is not all my mother did in relation to her heritage and identity.

Bak Tu Vanuatu – (Back to Vanuatu)

In 1980 Kiaś travelled back to the islands for the inaugural Vanuatu Independence Day celebrations with my brother Tony, who was seventeen years old and had just started a career in photography. Tony was born in 1963 and he moved with mum to Sydney and I stayed with Nanna on the Tweed. Tony grew into a handsome young Black man and trained as a photographer in the darkrooms at University of Sydney under the mentorship of Jon (Johnny) Lewis in the 1970/80s.

Jon was also a staunch environmentalist and human rights activist, also the founder of Greenpeace Australia Pacific 1977. Tony spent a few years learning the fine art of photography and I am pleased to use some of his photographs for the first time as part of my research in this thesis. Devastatingly, Tony passed away in 2004. At the funeral, Lindy Moffat, sister to First Nations artist Tracey Moffat, gave my mum an historical image taken of a very handsome group of people that included Tony as part of the first 'Indigenous' photographer's exhibition in 1986.

The image included Tracey Moffat, Bronwyn Bancroft, Michael Riley, Mervyn Bishop and others. Kiaś was determined to immerse herself in her Melanesian culture and Tony documented their journey over the years. Kiaś was proud of her Vanuatu heritage, which was culturally specific to her upbringing and identifying as 'Woman Tanna', her father's heritage. Her grandmother's heritage is from Ambae, Vanuatu, and her estranged grandfather's heritage of the Santo families of Queensland, namely those in the Hervey Bay, Townsville and Bamiga regions. (AIATSIS 2019).

Kiaś tri-cultural heritage is from within Australia's 'Melanesian region', which has been created both by indigeneity and forced migration known to her people as Sugar Slavery from the eighty islands of Vanuatu and the Solomons. Kiaś was 100 per cent 'native' to

the Pacific, but the definition used here includes Aboriginal Australia's Cape York, the Torres Strait Islands, the Australian territory that became Papua New Guinea, and also the islands of Vanuatu and the Solomons including the Loyalty Islands, the latter now within the French territory of New Caledonia.

Historically, this region is home to some of the world's most complex societies, speaking close to 1,000 languages. The identity of displaced peoples of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander descent has in many cases been complex and uncertain for their descendants due to what is termed 'cultural kidnapping' and the displacement of entire communities, leaving severe cultural and generational disconnection and trauma as a result of racist policies and ongoing discrimination since the impact of colonisation from 1788. One's heritage and identity from these regions can be seen as subjective, depending on the community demographic, mindset and cultural significance with which its members were born and raised. Kiaś's traditional name, given to her by her parents, is clearly an indication that her father and mother, although conforming to an oppressive colonial regime for the remainder of their free lives, nevertheless asserted their sovereignty in the naming of their children with custom names as a form of hope that would span generations, a blueprint for reconnection giving them a greater sense of identity and belonging. Kiaś was one of eleven children and as I have explored this family history it is evident across many Australian South Sea Islander stories that there is a code of silence in many cases, a 'knowingness'.

Sometimes silences can be defiant, but it might also be involved with cultural protocols around maturity in that some things are to be kept quiet or that there's a time to speak up. It can also be related to shame or trauma.

I wonder what were mum's parents and grandparent's thoughts, dreams and aspirations, as there was little shared of such ambitions in growing up, but I observed that they would 'just do' things to progress their living situation in working as a collective family.

Through the experiences I witnessed as a child and adult with Kiaś and her 'just doing' philosophy, I identify in particular a resilience as typified by those of our people, derived through the generational experiences of Australian South Sea Islander communities, mainly women, who were largely responsible for salvaging and sustaining what wasleft

of our customs and cultural identity under oppressive circumstances.

In 2016 Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson and the Tweed Heads Community centre hosted a three-day youth workshop that brought Elders, families and Australian South Sea Islander communities together in a shared environment for the first time to experience a unique exchange in Bislama language (that was created in Bundaberg Australia by Kanaks in order to communicate with the whites), shared local knowledge and cultural perspectives of a thriving community. The Australian Museum shared specific Vanuatu custom documentaries on arts and life in the islands that gave people a stronger sense of identity and understanding of our homelands. Uncle Geoffrey Togo (Tuku) is a former community liaison officer and community historian. He shared the story of his family's first contact in coming from the islands to Australia. Going back home to experience his homelands was something that is deep seeded in his soul and he will never forget his family and retracing his grandmother's footsteps through his family's oral account of a small girl stolen off the beach:

> *… Phemie Togo was born in 1880 on the larger Vanuatu island called Santo. As a young girl she was taken away from a small beach inlet called 'Rose Point' … and we were taken to Rose Point and shown exactly where she was taken from … not far from her village, she was carried away … James Tuku was born around 1865 on the island of Ambae in Vanuatu and both met in Australia and were married in 1909.*
> *After some years living in Sydney, the pair heard that there were many of the Island people who had made their homes on the Tweed, and friends had said to come up where their country people were living. So, in 1915 they decided to move to Tweed and make their home amongst the Island families in Cudgen, predominantly up in Forest Hill, the Islanders' village. When they arrived, Phemie wanted to build a grass hut, like the ones they so fondly remembered, growing up as children on the islands … (*Geoffrey Togo interview, 2017).

Geoffrey Togo with his wife Jackie McDonald travelled back to Vanuatu and he describes his experience which I witnessed in myself as the plane touched down in Port Vila and the grounded sensation that follows when first walking on country. It evokes so much emotion – it's almost like a flashback in our ancestral and spiritual being
– a bewildering moment in time. Geoffrey describes his experience.

> *… I had the opportunity in 2005 to go over to Vanuatu, we flew to Ambae and we were greeted by the most amazing people. I think I cried for three days. It was just so emotional, I couldn't stop my crying. I seen people that looked like my father. I seen people that looked like my*

> *brothers and uncles and that, it was … everyone just came up and cuddled me, it was so emotional. Everyone, nearly half of the island, was related to me, you know, so, god only knows about the other outlying islands, but on the island of Ambae everyone was related to me and it was just so emotional, even thinking about it now I'm getting a bit teary … but yeah, that's the way it affected a lot of us who went over there that year …* (Geoffrey Togo, 2017)

Non-SSI descent ABC radio journalist and friend Fiona Pepper visited Vanuatu with Josephine Gideon, a Tanauta 'Napen Napen' custom woman, to assist with access to Blackbirded family descendants' histories. She was documenting the stolen generation experiences, of those who lost their women, men and children to slavery. Oral historians that are of ni Vanuatu descent speak of a collective community memory dating back near two centuries on Tanauta Island. One of our sacred sites of great significance is the 'Howling Rock' near Blackman's Town main wharf

Howling Rock sacred site of significance (Tom Kaltoy) 2019.
location: Tanuatu Vanuatu
image by Fiona Pepper

There is a rockpool where the women from the village would walk to and search for the skeletons of their children and men. It is important to note that only certain clan are allowed to share the full extent of the story. Those who visit the rock feel the energy of sadness and the overwhelming emotion of the people still today. It is a place to grieve, hence the name Howling Rock, and those cries of the ancestral women beckoning their return can still be heard. After the first big trip to Vanuatu Kiaś, Tony and a significant number Australian South Sea Islanders went back for independence celebrations almost annually for some families. On Kiaś's return to Sydney her 'Cultural entrepreneur' thinking was anchored through the profound connection she made with her people of Vanuatu and by staying connected with the community. Kiaś eventually set up a Pacific import-export business in the later 1980s called Pacific Island Imports, based on King Street, Newtown in Sydney. This business was an extension of what Australian South Sea Islanders organically aspire to in maintaining our cultural

grounding and evolution with the ability to educate and share their pride and passion as descendants of Sugar Slaves. I recall the locals in Newtown enjoyed unique food, imports of yams, taro cassava, spices and variations of coconut oils/milks, and objects such as weaved pandanus goods and fabrics in the way of sarongs. All of these items are of customary significance and traditionally used and accepted as currency or trading as part of a kinship system. Aunty Lydia George reiterated that the yam is of great significance in Torres Strait Island Culture and is like a currency for weddings. Not many people realise today that this was a South Sea Islander customary practice (George 2020). I asked Aunty Lydia about some of the 'metaphoric customs' around plants and beliefs and she gave me a beautiful example of bamboo from our Melanesian perspective.

> *… The bamboo is a symbol of growing up as a strong person … you be like a bamboo. You can be a skinny bamboo or a big round bamboo, you carry water, you can do a lot of things in there. You can also drum on the bamboo for create dancing movement and all this, you know ... you didn't have to speak or talk about being South Sea Islander, we just know it's in the blood. No need to read a book about it, it was right in front of you …* (Interview Lydia George, 2020)

Kiaś's story reinforces those of many an untold history about what was once seen as a fading intermarried community in reaffirming that Australian South Sea Islander women, like First Nation Australian women and their communities, are proud of their dual or tri-cultural heritage and have left substantial cultural legacies for their

communities. This adds to the enviable social justice legacy achieved by many of the women I have encountered in my immediate family and over recent years, such as those who have worked closely with me as part of Australian South Sea Islander representative organisations. Ms Binette Diop, Ms Shireen Malamoo, Melina Fakatava, Professor Gracelyn Smallwood (Smallwood 2011), Dr Bonita Mabo (Cabinet 2018), Fiona Mount and Robyn Watego, to name a few (News 2013). Over a longer period, women of Australian South Sea Islander heritage who took up public leadership roles on the front line, such as Mrs Faith Bandler, Mrs Evelyn Scott, Ms Shireen Malamoo, Mr. Margaret Togo, Ms Naveen Enares, Mrs Phyllis Corowa and Ms Patricia Corowa were equally supported by social activist women such as Kiaś, Aunty Lydia George, Joyce Enares and many other female advocates.

These women understood ways of doing in what I see as a customary role as a silent partner in mobilizing and resourcing the menial but equally important tasks that progressed the movement towards demographic assessment for Australian South Sea Islanders as the next step towards commonwealth recognition in 1994.

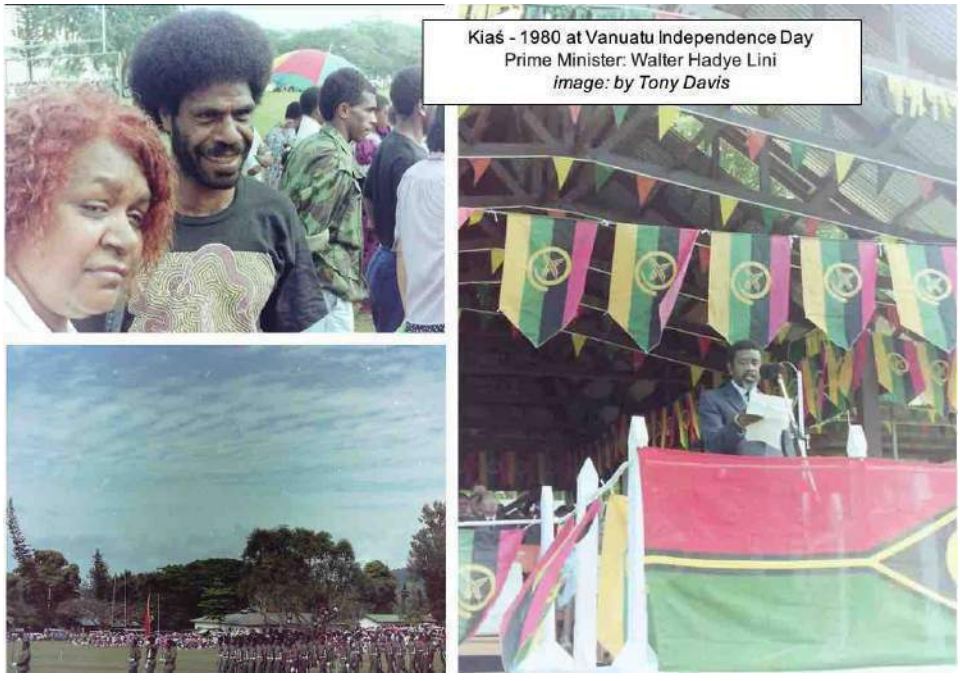
I have wondered about the islands and the privilege to travel back to Tanauta, Santo and Ambae. Ambae has just been repopulated after the volcanic ash disruption in 2019.

To travel back and live amongst the people would open up a whole new perspective for me, particularly in experiencing our communities and the lives of this resilient race of people who have survived the generational unrest and displacement, but on the other hand have been selfless in establishing the economies of Pacific countries and residual wealth for the British empire and its global communities. Entire populations of small-scale islands, in particular those that lost their men and provided resistance during the years of colonisation to maintain their local customary practices. This work is about understanding my sense of place, where I belong and the displacement that has affected Australian South Sea Islander identity. It has been about learning how to be comfortable in my skin as person with multiple cultural identities and giving me and others like me the capacity to understand the consequences of colonisation and share with others an Australian South Sea Islander cultural standpoint or perspective.

Melina Fakatava (nee Tuku/Togo) born in Sydney is the daughter of Carriette Pangas (nee Togo) and Kiaś's niece. As the next generation she shares her cultural upbringing and the Tuku family's determination for reconnection with kin and love for Vanuatu and their families.

> *… My mum and Aunty Nellie met Lemarah (I think Pakoa) when she came into aunty Pacific Island shop in Newtown (maybe in 1989) and as Lemarah was a Ni- Vanuatu they talked about family history. Lemarah told my mum she knew members of the Tuku family in Port Vila and if we organised a trip, she would be happy to make the introduction and also offered a couple houses for everyone to stay in her village (Pango). So my mum spoke to her family and organised with some of her sister's brothers, some of their partners, some childrens, two of my great-uncles, Les and Harold, in total there was approximately 50 of us that made the journey in 1990 to spend the 10th anniversary of Independence and meet family for the first time since my great- grandparents were taken/left Vanuatu. I remember my great-uncles being interviewed by a radio station at the time, as there was big mob of us that had travelled to meet family for first time. When we arrived, we were given two houses to stay in Pango Village, there was 26 of us inside the house I was staying and two in an outside tent. For me growing up in Australia my whole life and my first time travelling overseas at the age of 17 this was a big eye opener. The children in the village used to walk up a hill and carry water in buckets down to the house which we used for showers outside, we had an outhouse toilet, which was way down the back past the pigs, which was a big hole in the ground. Kids as young as 5 were walking around swinging machetes and where I first learnt about tropical weather as it would pour at night but by morning it was so hot, everything was practically dry. Since that first time when Aunty Nellie came with me, I have returned many times to carry on our families' connection to these islands …* (Interview Melina Fatawa, 2017)

The next chapter draws us back to Northern NSW from Sydney, where I explore the South Sea Island community in the Tweed, drawing particularly on memories of my Elders from the 1920s and onwards.



Chapter 3

Chinderah Pikinini – Chinderah Kids

'*An old lady told me that there was a lot of bones at Fingal on the other side of the lighthouse and the wind would uncover them. And when we were kids we used to walk along there and we'd find almost whole skulls there'.* (Isobel Slockee, 1987)

This chapter draws on the interview material and other personal sources I have gathered to give a sense of our community history in the Tweed during the first half of the twentieth century. It is written to be alongside my own story and that of my mother, Kiaś, in the previous two chapters. There is some speculation about how and why the Tweed region was settled by the Australian South Sea Islanders. At first they helped to clear the land of valuable red cedar, black bean and teak. The cedar was taken to Chinderah by horse and bullock team and loaded on to boats for Sydney. These boats were the main means of transport up and down the region for many years. A recent history of the Tweed area by David Rae suggests that many hundreds of our people were also recruited from Queensland by Robb and Co Sugar Mill, which took over from the original Julius Mill at Cudgen, where there was fertile volcanic soil in the 1880s (Rae, 2019). In his estimation, over 500 Melanesian men were employed in the mill and plantation towards the end of the nineteenth century. Clive Moore offers a couple of possibilities:

> … they realised that once they crossed the border the Queensland laws specifically designed to control their lives no longer applied. It may also be that they were exploring the possibilities of a new southern area … the wages were better and they seem to have had more freedom in the Northern Rivers. (Moore, 2019)

But the viability of the sugar industry was seriously affected by the deportation of Australian South Sea Islanders under the White Australia Policy from 1906, with the exception of those who were married, had lived in Australia for 20 years, or owned land. The official number of those allowed to stay were 1,654 but Rae estimates the actual number was higher, probably more like 2,500.

Among those who stayed were the families Bellair, Ling, Long, Moss, Paulson, Redman, Slockee, Sye, Togo, Watego, Wogas and Itong (Rae, 2019, 123-124). In 1916 the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) took over Robb's sugar mill. The business became

gradually more mechanised and moved to other places. Johnny Itong's father Jack was one of these who worked in Bundaberg on plantations until he came with his employer Robb to the Tweed.

His son Johnny wrote his memoirs when he was in his 80s and gives us some useful insights on which South Sea Islanders remained, some of whom took up working in banana plantations on a share farming basis. He worked on a cane farm in Eviron, living in a bark hut and eating only herrings in tomato sauce. He later milked cows in Mullumbimby as more economic dairy farms took over from the cane (Rae, 1919; Itong, 1995). South Sea Islanders also undertook drainage works in the Cudgen and Chinderah area. They had gardens of nuts and vegetables and were keen fishermen (Sugaropolis & Australian heritage database). Gradually across the century the beauty of the Northern NSW region became harnessed for tourism. Many of the daughters of subsequent generations worked as domestics in accommodation provided for visitors and also in picking the small seasonal crops. It was difficult, though, for young men to make a full time living from work in this region, so they moved up and down the coast as itinerant workers and often found full-time work in larger towns. But the community in the Tweed became so important to our people that some of the Togo and Watego families moved from Sydney to join the larger group which had settled largely in Cudgen, Chinderah and Fingal Head. (Rae, 2019, 124; Togo interview, 2017) One of my interviews was with a couple from Chinderah (the Indigenous name for the red Tamarind tree). Mr Angus Pearson, a former Tweed councillor, and his wife Jennifer, a former Australian South Sea Islander United Council president. Both are Anglo Australian and spoke fondly of their involvement with the Australian South Sea Islander community and in particular Kias's sister, Phyllis Corowa. Angus donated the photo below that lay on the table during our two- or three-hour chat as if we were old friends and, in a sense, we were, as he ran as a young boy with all my uncles and aunties that he identified in the photo while remembering back to that time.

> *… they were a little bit older there but they were Chinderah kids, we was always in groups like that and we were all doing the same thing, we're all thinking the same, we're all doing the same, there was no black, no white, no anything, it was just Chinderah kids. Look at these things and half of them are dead and half are them are from dysfunctional families and I look at it and I know every one of them and I grew up with every one and I was close, they were like my brothers, the whole lot of them. But they're all wonderful people and when I grew up there was no bad people around, you can't say that anyone was trying to do something to*

somebody else, people were surviving, that's all … they're all over the place now' … (Pearson interview, 2017)

The Chinderah 1946 - 47 Community picnic Lennox Head
image: donated from Pearson archive 2017

This Chinderah picnic photo taken in the mid-twentieth century might be called 'a social performance of memory' (Arnold -Silkie & Leal, 2018, 2) now circulating across different media platforms. In the early to mid-twentieth century, the growth of the Australian South Sea Islander population in the Chinderah community as part of the Tweed Heads area coincided with the gradual expansion of the camera as a mass market object and photography as an everyday practice.

While picture taking at this time was not extensive, Australian South Sea Islanders used opportunities, either consciously or unconsciously, to document their lives visually, to make themselves remembered and visibly in existence. It seems no accident that my brother Tony Davis became a professional photographer.

As Mary Fallon wrote in her recent thesis on the Australian South Sea Islanders, 'Purchasing their own cameras, developing and printing photographs of their own family, community and environment was, and is, an act of taking control of their own representation, an act of socio-political agency, a cultural survival strategy' (Fallon,2016, 20). She likened the photos to the prevalence of drawing up genealogies as

reminiscent of the traditional 'genealogy books' created by Islanders on home islands so they could work out who was related to whom. (Fallon also refers to Noel Fatnowna, whose son Christy took and developed a lot of photos for the Queensland Australian South Sea Islanders). Now these photos and genealogies are a tool for remembrance. The clearly happy moment of the Chinderah community in this photo reminds us of the past but also conceals a lot: 'They gloss over not just death and loss, but also unspeakable family secrets, feelings of alienation and pain, anger and bitterness,' says Silke Arnold-de Simine and Leal (2018, 3) but photos rarely reveal this kind of history and the memories I have gathered of this place where I grew up also make few references to the difficulties in South Sea Island lives across the twentieth century.

Connecting places and Australian South Sea Islander stories

The oral history part of my project and other interviews with Australian South Sea Islander people covers three generations of Australian South Sea Islanders born in the Tweed area from the 1900s through to the present. As Emma Dortins reminds us, 'the heritage embodied in historical stories … is not a completely conscious chosen heritage, like the canonical "national inheritance" that formal histories represent, rather it is a "commonsense" in which family, local and national concerns are combined in social cultural and historical knowledge; and is played out across local landscapes' (Dortins, 2018). In Australia the Australian South Sea Islanders think of our ancestry as descended from a particular person, usually a young man who was enslaved by the British and brought to Australia in the 19th century, so here I speak about the second to the fourth generation since that time.

Some of these narratives of 'displacement survival and adaptation' have been studied by literature scholar Carine Davian, who notes that our 'life narratives conjure up the importance of the community spaces' where we were raised and 'developed a unifying community consciousness' (Davian, p62).

Not that we were aware of it growing up, but in many ways the poverty and marginality of the Australian South Sea Islander community was mitigated by the unique geography and widespread beauty of the place from the coastal border of NSW at Tweed Heads, through Fingal down to small towns by the river.

Towns such as Chinderah and Cudgen that were sandwiched between the Tweed River and the seafront were idyllic. Mango trees are an evident landmark across NSW and Queensland, they identified South Sea Islander town camps for their makeshift

community homesteads that were clan specific relating to islands. Some said this subtropical environment reminded them of home in the Pacific, but others felt that NSW provided 'greater freedom' than Queensland, where the majority of Australian South Sea Islanders who were not deported had stayed; that they fled to NSW away from the gruelling life and oppressive regime in Queensland.

Like Angus Pearson, several of the people I spoke to remembered a strong sense of community and a childhood where the several family groups themselves with many children provided the entertainment and socialising from the church to beach parties. Born in the 1940s, Diana Skinner responds to a question about her childhood from me.

> *… Oh, growing up on the Tweed was fantastic. We had down the Chinderah River, all the Chinderah kids learnt to swim in there by themselves off the derrick, you know, where the sugar cane trucks come down. We used to live right near the sugar cane line and we'd be on them every afternoon pushing the trucks down, on the trolley, eating sugar cane, eating guavas, climbing mango trees. That was our life …* (Skinner, 2017)

Many of the interviewees described themselves as part of a Chinderah community, all growing up together, not separated by outside imposed divisions of race and class.

This reflects the way in which Australian South Sea Islanders built a life for themselves with large families, separate from the mainstream as a kind of protection against a hostile world. Chinderah was in fact a town camp on the outskirts of the Tweed and Angus Pearson says in those days 'no one would want to come out to Chinderah'. As an Anglo-Australian he knew us but also knew how the outside world worked.

Mangoes and Taro

Just as I remember my grandmother's house having four to six mango trees in the backyard, so others in my interviews mention them, as closely identified with the Australian South Sea Islanders in that place. They became intrinsic to the landscape, Lola Noter recalls:

> *… It's great too, you can … always tell, especially around the Tweed, up Cobaki Road, up Cudgen, wherever there was a mango tree, Chinderah, South Sea Islanders lived there, you know, because they always had their mango trees and their taro growing in the backyard, things like that. But always mango trees'* (Noter interview, 2017).

Mango flourishes in the warmer climates of Queensland and the north of NSW, and was probably common in backyards even then, but the taro was introduced to Australia by

the Pacific Islanders, so the combination of the two probably evokes this memory. It is a sweet, luscious fruit that has a flavour of nostalgia, revealing a longing for the lost sense of community after people grew up of these generations and moved on.

Today there is only one surviving sibling of Moses and Emily, who must be nearing 80. She was the youngest, born into a life that was marginally better than that of her siblings, who have all (10) passed away between the ages of newborn then between 60- 76 and one at 95. In these small scattered towns almost everyone knew each other or were aware of their kin relationships. Some community members also stood out in the memory. The most striking image for me is of my grandfather, Moses Enares, walking down the street, tall and well-dressed. Geoffrey Togo says:

> *… I can remember Emelda's granddad, a very proud man, used to walk down Cudgen Road in his white suit … with his walking stick and his boater hat strutting down the road down Chinderah, Cudgen Road, to go to the shops and that … Moses was grumpy and you couldn't understand him because of his accent and we called your nan Mrs Enares, a lovely well respected lady …* (Geoffrey Togo interview, 2017)

Moses Topay Enares (Innares) & Emily May Enares (nee Santo/Sendy)
image: family archive

Lola Noter (Jaseck) also remembered Moses Enares:

> *… when we were driving, there used to be some funny little things they'd say about Moses. He'd always give whether it was May or … and he'd order them around, you know? But when I was talking to Cedric, he said,*

> *'Oh, I'll never forget,' he said, 'I'll always remember Moses and … going down Murwillumbah Street somewhere there.' Moses used to be telling them which way to go ... Everyone went to Moses as he was considered smart like a bush lawyer for us … (*Noter interview, 2017).

A generation before me, Isobel Slockee was another interviewee who rememberedthe closeness of the community for the NSW Bicentennial Oral History project. She was born in 1909 and was interviewed in 1987 when she was 78. Despite an intrusive interviewer who kept asking detailed minor questions that were impossible to answer from memory across a lifespan, the interview itself is a rare voice from that time. She had spent most of her life in the Tweed Heads region. She grew up in Fingal and then she married Les Slockee and went to live in Cudgen, where his and her relations lived across the street and two doors down. Harold Togo was born 1941 and he remembers the Slockees.

> *… We stayed up Tomewin and I think Allan had asthma bad, you know, so the doctor said to Mum, 'Oh you should go down where it's warmer.' I can remember coming back to Chinderah and Granny Slockee had her house there, but in-between Granny Slockee's and the Togos, Uncle Les had a big tent* (Slockee interview, 1987).

The Slockees lived in an army tent and Isobel remembers spending a lot of her married life raising children in large tents, so that they didn't have to pay rent.

The Origin Stories

The Australian South Sea Islanders have handed down stories for generations and maintained oral histories as grassroots history-makers. Cultural maintenance relies on strong narratives for a range of purposes – for family reconnection, to create intimacy between people, for musings on human nature, to advance the recognition cause, to demonstrate survival. These stories then become, as Emma Dortins notes, 'ambassadors between the present and the past on several levels' (Dortins, 2018). As I have mentioned previously, the 'historian orators' of the Australian South Sea Islander communities have a personal memory and a collective memory, which is handed down to us that describes our experiences of slavery. As an origin story of coming to Australia it has the same resonance in our culture as the 'stolen generations' does for First nations culture – it is a powerful statement of the meaning of our heritage. All of the Australian South Sea Islanders I spoke to from the Tweed could locate themselves genealogically as a descendent from someone who had been kidnapped and enslaved

and brought to Queensland in the nineteenth century. Their origin stories always began with the name of the original island from which they came, stressing both diversity in their heritage but similar experiences because they were forced into a generalised 'Kanaka' identity encompassing a huge area of the Pacific. Since forced removal involved loss of identity and the violent process of dehumanisation, Pacific names too often just became Anglicised versions indicating geographic origins. Lola Noter, for example, comments about this:

> *… Because there were two brothers and over there they didn't have surnames, when they got into the canefields the government put Jim in front of one brother, Noter, they called him Jim, and Corowa they called Jack, [but] they should have been just two brothers. Made it difficult too for the family because they're like, yeah … I think they were brought to Queensland to the cane, yeah, at the time. I think they had to do three years and then after that some went back home, the Islands, some went different places, but these two brothers made it down here to Cudgen and then from Cudgen to Mullumbimby and Billinudgel had banana farms … (*Noter, 2017, p.69)

For these stories, the Islands were always depicted as a place of abundance, satisfying all their needs, in contrast to the harsh conditions they were experiencing in Australia and the profound dislocation in a strange country, being completely unable at first to understand those from other islands and understand the colonialist language. Increasingly some had begun to explore the roots further by going back to the Pacific Islands themselves, which was an important and usually an emotional time, as we have seen earlier in the essay on Kiaś in this section. They seemed to know more than Europeans about their ancestry (my genealogy is included in this thesis as an appendix) Shireen Malamoo (nee Henaway) was interviewed by Clive Moore in 1975 (oral history, NLA) she could tell him proudly that on her side of the family, her mother was from the New Hebrides, Tongoa and Ipi Islands. Her father was was half-Aboriginal and half Santo. Her husband's mother was half Santo and half white and his father was from Tanna now Tanauta islands of Vanuatu. This description highlights the importance of orally transmitted genealogical inheritance, which is a significant feature of both Torres Strait Islander and Melanesian custom. Faith Bandler's (nee Mussing) father was a man who knew the details of his capture and passed it on. He was a tall man at 6'4" and large for his age, even at 13. It is worth hearing Faith's voice through writing here, telling the story to Carolyn Craig in the 1990s about her father some time probably in the late 1920s.

> *We'd all gather around the fire, we'd all put in for our favourite story, and I had one and if he told it, he told it a thousand times. And I would say to him tell it again and tell it again and tell it again. So, he would tell us these stories, and there would be times how he would want to illustrate, for instance, how it was when he was kidnapped and taken in the boat by the slavers and what it was like in the boat coming over from his island Ambrym, in the New Hebrides and how rough it was. And how they were all held in the hull and how sick they were, and those who died were thrown overboard, and how it was when the boat would arrive in Australia and how strange everything seemed to him.*

[Carolyn] 'Can I ask you there, what year it was when he was taken from Ambrym, and also how old was he and what were his reactions as a presumably very young man?'

> *[Faith] So he was about 13 1883 when he was captured and brought to Australia. He landed in Mackay … and I shall always remember him telling us, that, how strange it was to see these huuuge animals, like the great draughthorses and uh, and all the beautiful birds that were strange to him, and cows. And you know it was tell again and again … and, what we'd like best of all was we'd say, 'and didn't you know there were cows?' and he'd say 'no', and 'what did you think of the cow and he'd say 'oh well' he you know, he'd see cows calving. And he couldn't believe this, that this baby cow came out of the mother cow. See, he was a boy of 13 or 14. Such a large animal … so of course in many ways they were forced to lose their identity, so he and his brother and their sister Kate spent twenty years working. After some years they were paid, but paid very, very little.* (Faith Bandler tapes, no 1 side A amplify.gov.au)

Both Faith and her father were centrally important Australian South Sea Islander historian orators and had great skill in storytelling. Faith emphasises her father's physical strength which helped him survive 20 years of brutality working in sugar plantations in Mackay before he came to the Tweed, but also the way he made his disorientation and bewilderment into narratives for passing on to later generations. In the final part of this story, Faith mentions her father's sister Kate, who worked for the employers as a housekeeper:

> *… but her story is only slightly known and we don't know how she came to be with him, so we would beg for the same stories again and again and he'd talk about oh, life in his village, the village of Biap. I went to Biap later and it was still, after all those years, just as my father had told us around the campfire.*

But she goes on in the interview with an undertone of long held anger:

> *'So I don't want historians and I don't want anthropologists telling me how my father got here and how he worked, because he told me and that's good enough. So, he worked for nothing for years and years and years. It wasn't indentured labour, he'd signed no papers, he was enslaved …* (Faith Bandler tapes No 1 side 3, amplify.gov.au)

On May 3, 1995 Les Togo shared an interview at Pottsville Waters, NSW to be included in an Australian South Sea Islander educational resource. This interview is part of the Australian South Sea Islander United Council archives which I collected from my Aunty Phyllis Corowa's estate after she died. Uncle Togo was 70 at the time and it is here he shares a detailed narrative of the island clans he grew up with and speaks of custom practice and shares moments of Bislama language, while explaining the desperate poverty he witnessed and experienced. He reiterates Harold and Geoffrey Togo's oral histories that I gathered and shares a powerful and detailed insight into his family history as a first generation descendant. It is worth listening to the flow of the language transformed into writing, in an extended quote:

> *… My mother's and father's names were James and Fanny Togo. Dad's real surname was Tuku. I was brought up under traditional Island custom and culture. I got that through sitting and listening to the old Island men who were brought to Australia to work. My father came from Ambrym in Vanuatu, which was formerly known as New Hebrides until Independence in 1980. I first went to school at Duranbah. There were five boys and one girl in the family. We were expelled from Duranbah School because we were playing up. We continued our education at Cudgen School. We did not have much of an education. I left school when I was 14 to work in the bananas in the mountains. Dad was away at work; he was a drainer in Arlinds Flats. They tried to grow sugarcane in the flats but the soil was too sandy. My mother used to do washing for farmers. Dad lived close to his work at Arlinds Flats and he built a house out of tea-tree bark. The house that I was born in was made of grass, blade grass, similar to the Island Longhouse in Mackay, Queensland. Our house had layers of thick grass bound together forming the walls of the building, with an iron roof. The kitchen was outside in a smaller building. There were many Islanders living at Forest Hill Islander Village, who came from various parts of the exotic South Pacific Islands. There was an Aru family from Santo Island in Vanuatu who had two daughters. He took them back to Santo when I was little. Tom Spiro came from the Island of Pentecost, had two girls, and old David Santo was called David Tuppaway (Island name). There were families from Malekula, Maratta, Sandwich Island and Ambie people. Charles Grass was from Malekula. Tom Spiro was from Pentecost.*

We ate mostly Island-cooked food at the village. We played rounders, we rode horses and would shoot birds and dingoes and eat the birds.

We were always taught to respect the Elders. The old people told stories around the fireplace where they roasted yams over the hot coals. There were great times. These times I will always remember. My mother could never read or write. Mum came to Australia on a sailing ship called the Taunts. My father came out on a ship by the same name. My mother's maiden [name] was Batten Gowel from South Santo, in Vanuatu. Shewas taken away as a very small girl. She cried. She was taken to Noumea, New Caledonia. She worked as a house-girl. Where she was brought up, they all spoke French. They then took mother to Sydney, where she worked for a big French business, the Wunderlich Ceiling Company. The name survives today. Mum spoke French. She was a teenager when she came to Australia and later married my father at John Street, Ashfield, Sydney. My father attended a mission school in New Caledonia, then he became a deck boy on a ship. The ship traded all around the Vanuatu Islands. Then that ship sailed for Australia. After drifting eight or nine days at sea they were picked up by a pilot ship and taken into Bundaberg harbour, Queensland then the ship was repaired they sailed on to Sydney, where my father found a lot of his countrymen. He jumped ship and worked in Sans Souci on an oyster farm (and I am not telling lies about it). Then he became a gardener, got married and lived around Paddington in Sydney. The majority of the Islanders who were at Ashfield came to Australia to be house-persons or stable hands. I had an Uncle Jack, who was an Ambrym man and worked for P.G. Smith. My father was a nurse-boy in the Island, and then he looked after children until he came by ship to Australia. As a result of his work trading through many islands, he was able to identify which island a person came from in Vanuatu. Grandfather Undu used to tell tales. My sister Frances and I used to ask the Islanders questions like: What did you do over in the Islands? 'We make canoe, we take 'em taro, yarn, bananas, and we take long canoe and we go, go, go — and we stop here, not far away.' That's what they would do: trade their goods with other Islanders. I didn't know my father's age when he came to Australia.

My Uncle Mel Ambie, I asked him how he came to Australia, and he said: Oh, I came over, I go along beach and swim long saltwater', and he said to his friends, 'Hey, you come, big fella boat stop here. I go look now; hey, come, come, come with that boat now! I stop long Farleigh Mill, long Queensland'. I didn't know where Farleigh Mill was, at that time. I asked: 'What did you do in that mill?

He said, 'I worked long boiler', and I said, 'Smart'. I worked in seven acres of bananas and gotten shilling per week and tucker was damper, paddymelon, saveloy. I went to the other side of the border, into NSW,

and worked for Pearce's at Carool, next to Doug Anthony's father's farm. I also worked at Mount Cotton in Queensland, where they grew sugarcane. I also worked with Indians, where I learned to make Johnny-cake. Mix the dough and put on top of stove to cook and eat with curry. I almost spoke their language. The top wage was one shilling and three pence per hour. I got top wages. One shilling and fourpence per hour. I was a good worker and my boss told me that I could run his farm. My boss, Charles Pearce Sr, said to me: 'You should start your own farm. See all that hill over there? You can have that. I will give you that and will give you the plots'. Snow Long, Gom Mye, Alan Wategо and Joe Mye helped me. I planted the bananas. They grew absolutely beautiful. So, the next that happens is Australia declares war. So, I joined the army. I wasn't conscripted. I enlisted in the main street of Murwillumbah, in front of Rayward's and Jay's store. Went to the doctor to have a medical test, came home, told Mr Pearce: 'I am enlisted in the army'. He said: 'Oh, you shouldn't have done that'. I left everything with my mates, two revolvers, and went back to Forest Hill Village. I worked for Paul Barnes until I was called up for the army in 1940. About ten of us went to Broadmeadows near Newcastle. I had to re-enlist in Newcastle. None of the others had to do it. They had to march down some main street and go into this big building and see this guy who wore about a thousand badges on his uniform. When it was my turn to see this man, he looked at me and said: 'What is your name and what is your nationality'. I said, 'South Sea Islander'. He said, 'How did you get in the army?'. I said, 'I passed'. He said to me, 'You know, you are not supposed to be in the Australian Army!'

That was in Newcastle in 1940. He then said, 'Go on, I will let you go through.' They then shifted us down to Tamworth. I was in the draft to go to Crete, Sixth Division …

… There was not much transport in the days when I was growing up. We used to mainly walk. My mother used to walk from Forest Hill to Cudgen, approximately two miles [three kilometres], just to wash clothes at the farms. She really was a washing lady. Then she got a horse and sulky and she used to go to the dead-end of Duranbah.

Old O'Keefe owned all the land right out to Bogangar. He was a terrific man, an Irishman. He let all the South Sea people build houses around O'Keefe's paddock. Spiro, Am, Santo, Ambie and Marlo families – they were all there. It was an Island village.

The Dodds family, they were my father's countrymen. Man Ambie. Tony Slockee had a banana farm at Carool. He was a nice old man. A lot of Solomon Island people were there also, like Dinidi in Brisbane and all that. There were a lot of Island people living at Victoria Point near Brisbane. The mango trees that the Islanders planted are still there

> *today. South Sea Islanders used to play this game; it was called bobs. It was like billiards. That was at Tomewin. There were a lot of Islanders living at Tomewin and all shared Toms. The Islanders got on very well with each other. At Christmas there would be many gatherings. At Cudgen Headlands, Sandy Burra Burra had a big boatshed. He had a crook eye. There was also Louis Moss. We had a very big feast. They would take the boats straight out to the sea and come in with loads of fish. Blue fish. They cooked the fish Island-style in the ground and made soups. It was delicious. And a keg of beer would be over in the corner. And I can remember my old Uncle Willie Amos, from Santo, he would be there. He was short and baldy-headed. All the other Islanders used to make fun of him and they called him 'Willie baldy-head'. On Sundays you would never see a South Sea Islander working. They used to dress up, and those who could read would read the Bible or go to church. The religions were mainly Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of England; very few were Roman Catholics* … (Les Togo interview,1995 ASSIUC).

The previous interview for the resources kit we developed to supplement the school curriculum affirms the need for Australian South Sea Islander history and culture to be taught in its own right, but also as a permanent subject alongside our First Nations narratives of colonial dispossession. Importantly, it explains the complex nature of this history, and the resilience of Pacific Islander people in the face of the oppressive circumstances that occurred.

My mother's sister, Phyllis Corowa (nee Enares), was also interviewed as part of the (AusAid DFAT secondary curriculum 1997) educational resource and the interview was edited by her younger sister Nasuven. (ASSIUC) For the first time I have read an in depth account of my grandfather's kidnapping from Vanuatu and am able to fill out some of the family history. The edited narrative paints moments of success and grandeur for the public record, but the between lines interpretation emphasizes the extremity of the struggle, racism and a real lack of social justice and equal opportunity.

> *… Moses was playing on the beach with other young boys and girls one day when a big ship with white sails turned towards the beach, entered the bay and dropped anchor. The ship was the largest he had ever seen in his life. Moses and his friends could see white men walking on the deck and one of the sailors had binoculars. The boys were curious, and, as the sea was calm, most of them swam out to the ship to have a closer look at these intruders. They were greeted by calls and gestures by the white men to climb the rope ladder and come on board the ship. Moses and his friends were given guns, axes, necklaces made of beads, calico, bush knives and then told to follow the sailors who showed them more.*

Once the boys went down the ladder into the hull, the white men closed the hatch, the anchor was pulled up and the ship set sail for Australia. Moses and his friends were together with other young men from various Islands and they were all unhappy. At times the Islanders fought amongst themselves. When the recruiters saw the fighting, they were afraid to go down into the hull for fear they would be hurt and to show the power of the white man they fired gun shots into the opening. A lot of men were killed when they tried to escape and their bodies were thrown overboard. As food was lowered into the hull, the Islanders would try to escape. Those who did escape by jumping into the sea were never to be seen again.

My father did not understand much English but learned from another Islander that they were going to a land far away to work and that they were being held under force. Some of the Islanders would never see their families again, and my father was afraid and sad that he had left his family, friends and relatives behind. My father always spoke of his family with little tears in his eyes. He did not know whether he would see them again because he did not know how far Australia was from his homeland.

During the journey to Australia he was given two pairs of shorts, shirts and food that often gave him diarrhea. The conditions in the hull were not fit for human beings, with no proper washing facilities and, because of the overcrowding, the toilets were filthy and unhygienic. Father did mention working at Fairymead mill in Bundaberg shortly after he arrived in Australia. The other young men who came with my father were all young and strong. To prevent them from escaping on arrival at the port, the recruiters put chains around their ankles until they were sent to farms or sugar mills. My father would always wear short-sleeve shirts, which showed his left arm was 'tattooed' with a brand. Some Islanders were branded like cattle for identification purposes. My father would never speak about his brand; however, we learned about it from other Islanders. On arrival in Bundaberg the recruiters had an Islander who had arrived on an earlier recruitment exercise explain to the newly arrived men what they were there for and how many years they had to work for their new boss. My father was split up from the boys from his village and got quite homesick.

His first job was to dig the ground with mattocks and cut down trees preparing new soil for planting sugarcane at Bundaberg, as well as cutting cane and working at Fairymead sugar mill. He moved on to another sugarcane farm. Life was hard; they lived in a large shed and used hessian bags to sleep on the ground. Later they discovered in the fields blady grass, which they reaped, dried in the hot tropical sun, then tied the grass together in large bundles to make a mattress. They grew

Island vegetables such as taro, sweet potatoes and yams. The men worked for little money from daybreak to nightfall, and on Sundays they went to church where most of their money was put in the collection plate. My father knew he had to make a break from the harsh working conditions and he had a vision for a better life. My father and two other Islanders set out at nightfall and walked to Brisbane, resting during the day at secluded spots to avoid authorities.

They arrived at the Tweed River in NSW. They had word that a farmer Robb had a mill at Cudgen Village, about seven kilometres from the Queensland border. My father worked at Cudgen, clearing land for planting sugarcane. Robb's Mill was owned by the Colonial Sugar Refinery. Robb told the Islanders that, if they cleared the land, they would be given pieces of land. It was mostly hilly with large rocks that the men used to mark the divisions for their own pieces of land. The stone walls were up to two metres high.

Today some of these stone walls are still standing. When the White Australia Policy came into being, those Islanders who had been in Australia for a certain time and were married were given permission to stay. Others had to be returned to their home Islands. The recruiters who had to fill the ship with new recruits were ruthless and dumped some off at islands that were foreign to them and, as a result, some of them never reached their home Island. My father was not married at this stage and escaped to Sydney where he worked in a kitchen at a boarding house at Ashfield. He seldom left the house for fear that he would be seen and reported to the authorities, which would have led to his deportation. My father made enough money to take him back to the Tweed River. My father worked for Robb's Mill again and continued to go to church, where he met my mother, Emily May Sendy.

Her mother and father were also brought to Australia from the island of Ambrym in Vanuatu. My grandfather worked on the sugarcane farms and my grandmother chipped the weeds between the cane. My mother was approximately twenty years younger than my father. My grandmother had four girls and one boy — Ethel, Emily, Elsie, Nellie and Arthur — and my mother had seven girls and four boys, with Bill, David, Phyllis and Joyce being born at Coolangatta. Later the family moved to Ormeau near Brisbane where Father got a house and worked clearing land. My brother Daniel and sister May were born at Ormeau. When work was scarce, Father had to leave the family to look for work and was away for many weeks. Father returned home and moved the family to Eungella in NSW, yes, approximately six kilometres west of Murwillumbah. The house, located on the top of a very high hill, had sweeping views of lush green valleys, meandering water creeks and scenic mountains. It was a big farmhouse with four large bedrooms with

a verandah almost surrounding it.

The girls slept in one room, separated from the boys by a lounge and a kitchen. Mother always had a big stove, plenty of wood, and the stove would be on all day. The girls were taught at an early age to cook and we learned many songs at school. We used to go to Sunday school and, later, stayed for church. We were too poor to have a radio until many years later when Father brought home an old-style radio in a wooden case. There was no such thing as television in those days. However, after I began working I went to the movies in Murwillumbah. During my schooling my parents were too poor to buy sports uniforms so I did not play sports.

We had no toys — our own were made out of used jam tins and pieces of wood. We always had something to do, such as after school the older children had to care for the younger children and the boys often went fishing and bird nesting. My sister Joyce moved to Brisbane to work while I worked in Murwillumbah. Father prepared the ground for growing bananas and eventually had twelve acres. Later he employed other Islanders and Indians on banana-cutting days.

While the bananas were maturing he share farmed with Mr Marks, growing beans, peas, pumpkin, watermelons, taro, yam, sweet potatoes, watercress and Island cabbage. Father made enough money to buy his own cows for milk and made our own butter by leaving the milk overnight before skimming the cream off the next day. The children would then take turns to whip the cream until it became butter. Father also raised poultry for eggs. Since he farmed, we never wanted for food. Mother was a very good cook. She made our own bread and sewed clothes for the children by hand. She was a very talented lady. My brothers and sisters walked three kilometres to school. We were all happy living in this large house at Eungella, and there another four children were born – Naru, Nellie, Naveen and James. Racism was bad at the school and after school I would punch those children who called me 'blackfellow'. I passed my QC at the age of twelve, but since Father could not afford further schooling, I did not go to secondary school. The headmaster at primary school wanted to assist with the finance to send me to secondary school, but my father told the headmaster he had two boys that he could not afford to send to secondary school and would not send a girl because she would get married and have children. I never forgot that because I wanted to go to secondary school.

After schooling my first job was child-caring for the Everest family, who lived nearby. My younger years were hard at times, but they were happy times. I worked in Murwillumbah caring for an elderly lady, after which I was a laundress for Wrights' Laundry – Dry Cleaning Service in Murwillumbah. Murwillumbah was a racist town where jobs were hard

> *to get for non-whites. We were referred to as 'niggers' and 'blackfellows'. I then worked for a guesthouse at Coolangatta for the Orbansons. At twenty-five I married and later had three children. My husband Zane Robert was a professional fisherman with his own trawler and a property at Rainbow Bay. He used to go fishing every morning and catch all kinds of deep-sea fish, which he sold to cafes in Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads.*
>
> *I began purchasing my own house, out of my own earnings. At that time I was working for Wrights' Laundry – Dry Cleaners. Originally I paid five pounds a week rent and I did not have the sixty pounds to purchase the house, so I started to pay it off. It had only one bedroom and a sleepout. When my husband sold his property at Rainbow Bay, he purchased a forty-five-foot prawn trawler and employed two men. I played tenpin bowling for years before I started playing lawn bowls. As far as discrimination is concerned, in my younger years the picture theatre had a section roped off and the coloured people had to sit at the back of the theatre and could not be seated with whites. When the lights were switched off, I used to jump over the rope and sit with my white friends. Most of us had white friends. We would all go to the picture theatre together, but were divided by this rope. This was in the forties. During my husband's fishing days I would sometimes work as a deckhand. The decky got on the grog the night before. We would be at sea all night and when we returned in the morning, I would shower, put on my uniform and go to my other work. My mother used to care for my three children until I came home from work. At times my husband would be away fishing for up to two weeks at a time. My husband did cut sugarcane but thought there must be an easier way of making a living, so he decided to go fishing. My husband's father was brought to Australia to work in the sugarcane industry …* (Phyllis Corowa interview, 1995)

What is clear for me in terms of my grandfather's oral history is that the house in Ashfield, Sydney seemed to be a common house where SSI people could seek shelter and reassurance. It was a place where they came to share their hopes and dreams of a better life. Aunty Phyllis reiterated this in the 1995 Sugar Slaves documentary.

25 John Street Ashfield NSW 2131 ...

Location of house was redeveloped in 1978 *image: google maps*

Such genuine reflection without malice is a dignified act for many South Sea Islander/Australian South Sea Islander narratives that I have heard. These peoples survived the cruel impact of the generational displacement from their homelands and upheaval for almost two centuries. Ever present for our survival has been the need to decipher the complexity and uncertainty of our very existence, with no sense of really belonging in either the Islands or in Australia.

The history exists. Nonetheless it will not be buried despite the generational ignorance of it facilitated by consecutive Australian governments through deliberate acts of injustice under colonial rule. Today, the oral histories of Australian South Sea Islander survivors are resurgent and with these are voices demanding the right to live lives that will prosper alongside those of the more privileged races within the Australian nation.

Movement up and down the east coast

My interviewees were ambivalent about the border imposed by government between Queensland and NSW, which was only a few miles away. Some people who were brought up in the Tweed refused to cross it. They had heard stories about the trauma suffered by the majority of South Sea Islanders on the big sugar plantations in South East Queensland, Mackay and Townsville up to the 1880s when the sugar began to decline (Journeys to Sugaropolis, City of Gold Coast). But the majority paid it little

attention. This was partly because the various monoculture and agriculture industries didn't respect borders particularly. During the boom of the banana industry in the 1920s and 1930s, Tomewin, just over on the Queensland side, became a place where many Australian South Sea Islander families such as Togo, Sussyer, Mussing, Enares and Toar settled.

There was constant movement backwards and forwards when the community gathered together at church or in towns on Sundays or went up to see relations in Queensland.

Many Australian South Sea Islander families moved around because the employment was largely unskilled and reliant on an itinerant workforce, and there was no certainty in relation to length of time a job would last, nor provision for job protection. Lorraine Corowa, for example, was born in Murwillumbah in the late 1940s further down from the Tweed heads area, but her family moved around, according to her father Les Corowa's itinerant employment.

> *… So, he was a canecutter at Innisfail for some time when she was first born, then later he worked on the wharves at Bowen and was finally transferred to the Wollongong wharves in 1959 … In the meantime, his daughter Lorraine and her siblings gravitated back to Tweed Heads where she went to high school because there were so many relations with whom she could stay, her mother's aunts at Fingal, and it gave her some stability* (Lorraine Corowa, interview 2017).

There also seemed to be quite a few men walking through from Queensland coming to the Tweed and beyond. Nanna's home was also a place of respite hospitality to South Sea men who worked in the canefields and fell ill, like that of a few years earlier Faith Bandler's mother in the 1930s, who also looked after people passing through. She told a wonderful story about it which has the feeling of seeing it visually in her mind to her interviewer Carolyn Craig:

> *… And the house was a very open house, it had, um, this sick bay and I can remember how when these people who'd come from the islands and worked as slaves in North Queensland, came down to the Tweed. It was cold, and many of them got bronchitis, influenza and pneumonia, and they would come to our place and they would die there. Their last days, their last time in life, would be taken care of by my mother and all us kids! And we had to wait on them, my mother would, say for instance, cook them the evening meal and then she'd set up a great big tin tray, and she'd get us to take the meal into whoever was sick. And if they were very sick, she'd certainly tend them.*

> *I can almost remember her, um, with people who had a temperature and she'd take a dish of cold water and a small towel and cool them down, wring the cloth out and put it on their foreheads and their face and their hands and cool them down. Sometimes my father would call the ambulance and they would go off to hospital, but many a time they would just stay there, some were healed, mainly by my mother's attention and good care and they'd go off, but many died too. So, it's very fresh in my mind* (Faith Bandler interviewed by Carolyn Craig, 1990 available from State library at Amplify.gov.au).

Since South Sea Islanders were not accepted into the main wards of the Murwillumbah hospital but were treated in tents outside in the hospital grounds (Sugaropolis 2013), it is no wonder they set up their own networks for medical care.

Discrimination and Prejudice

There were a number of First Nations clan groups in the Tweed known as Bundjalung country and both First Nations and South Sea South Islander peoples have a long history of intermarriage and close relationships, though historically there is some tension between the two groups. Like so many diverse Pacific peoples, we were often thrown together under the White Australia policy because we were dark-skinned and suffered similar discrimination.

While there are some contradictory feelings between people I interviewed about the memories of prejudice and discrimination, some important features of it stand out. Firstly, following the introduction of the White Australia policy, the dominant population in the Tweed Heads area became Australian South Sea Islander, which meant they were to some extent cocooned from Europeans and the widespread hostility experienced at the time. Many referred to the fact that children didn't seem to be colour aware or didn't care about it. So, Diana Skinner claims that she experienced no prejudice.

> *… I think it's because there were so many of us in that community, you know, that's where a lot of them settled around that area and I think we just all got on together. It didn't matter whether your skin was white, dark or black, we all got on really good together. Yeah* … (Skinner 2017)

The following letter was reproduced in *The Tribune,* which was the Communist Party paper and must have had a tiny circulation, but it was originally printed in the *Tweed*

Daily News and reflects some of the frustration experienced by members of the South Sea Islander community in the 1950s, in this case Faith Bandler's brother, John Mussing, whose anger was not necessarily expressed in interviews with me about the Tweed area sixty years later.

Protest at color bar

TWEED HEADS resident John Mussing, brother of famous rugby league footballer, Walter Mussing, has written a letter to the Tweed Daily that should make every Australian think.

"At certain places," Mr. Mussing writes, "the colored population of this district are directed to a place reserved for the colored people alone, and are not allowed to sit where they choose, the same as the whites do.

"This act of segregation has been going on for some years."

Mr. Mussing explains in his letter how he wrote to Mr. H. L. Anthony, MHR, about the matter, but Anthony replied that it was not a federal matter, so he had forwarded the letter to Mr. S. T. Stephens, MLA.

Mr. Stephens passed the letter on to the Chief Secretary.

"I have come to the conclusion," writes Mr. Mussing, "that there has been nothing done concerning the matter. I'm sure the colored people of the Tweed district and Coolangatta are worthy of better treatment than they are receiving...

"Where is the democracy the colored men of both world wars helped to preserve.

"I may also mention that my brother, Pte. E. Mussing, 2/26th Battalion, 8th Division, paid the supreme sacrifice on the Burma Road, also that my nephew, Pte. D. Runge, 8th Division, had both legs amputated as a result of Japanese atrocities. Both boys were well known on the Tweed.

"Is this the type of freedom they were defending for the colored people?"

Secondly, in the stories Australian South Sea Islander people told me some recalled difficulties at school, others name calling in cities, but the memory which stands out for those who grew up in the Tweed area was the experience of segregation at the Empire Theatre in Tweed Heads. The seating was segregated according to colour. People were shockingly confronted with the visual and spatial evidence of white colonialist power, which their grandparents and parents had experienced in earlier times. It was not until the 1960s that this and other forms of public discrimination disappeared.

Sometimes even the First Nations people marked themselves out from the Islanders by yelling 'get back on the boat' as though their Blackbirding origins did not mark our

people out as different to any other migrant. Most shrugged off the racially based school bullying off, but 'Gladys', another interviewee for the NSW Bicentennial Oral history Project who went to Cudgen primary school in the 1930s, fought back.

> *… we got used to it … sometimes I know we held and fought a lady up here by catching her and pulling back her plaits. And a young boy at Cudgen school I sat on him and rubbed cowdung in his mouth'* ('Gladys', NSW Bicentennial oral histories, 1987)

Despite several public campaigns from the 1920s by white parents to separate the races in public schooling, these were unsuccessful, as the authorities saw no need for segregation (or the cost) (Rae 2019).

Harold Togo spoke about separate drinking places.

> *… Well more or less down on Tweed Heads there was one pub you'weren't allowed to go in, it's not there now, the Grand in Coolangatta. There were two pubs in Tweed, the dark blokes used to go in there and drink …* (H Togo interview, 2017)

It is clear from the stories in interviews that some people find it difficult to speak about moments in their lives where they had experienced blatant racism that was ugly or traumatic.

'Gladys' again says

> *… when I went to the pictures I realised, you know, because I always like to find out a lot of things for myself. And I was there and this coloured fellow got drunk and he'd brought up in the … and I thought to myself, 'well why not?' I wouldn't go to the pictures no more after that.'…*

This seems to be only a half story from 'Gladys', so we don't really know what happened, except that her silence speaks of a great fuss about 'breaking the rules' and it obviously had a significant impact on her. Bella Slockee recounted with some emotion, an instance where a South Sea Islander was dating a woman with much lighter skin.

On one occasion they went to the movies in Murwillumbah and she was permitted to sit with the white people in their section but he was prevented from doing so. They refused to be separated, holding hands and being pulled at on either side, causing a fracas and they left. They also did not return (Slockee interview, 1987). Lola (nee) Noter described segregation at the movie theatres in this way:

> *… Then if you went to the pictures they were cordoned off, that's where they … black and white sort of thing came in. We thought that was different, yeah. You couldn't go and sit in certain places, yeah, they'd take you somewhere else. Furthermore, it was cordoned off with a rope.*

Lola here emphasises the dividing line, the rope or the material used to essentially bar them from entry.

As Angus Pearson discussed in his interview with me, young adults from Chinderah had to travel away for work, where the reality of a racist society became more evident and very different from his memories as a footloose and fancy free kid.

> *…. Yeah. As far as I'm concerned, that's it, we're just a herd of mixed breeds, that was it, we were a herd you might say, or mob, whatever it might be. We never thought of anything like that, we never thought of anyone being sort of put aside or someone being different because of their colour …*
>
> *It was really just no different, absolutely not, you know? I suppose I couldn't come to grips with a lot of things that happened after that, like I remember Tooky and I'd go away working somewhere and I'd come back to Chinderah and we'd get down there and we'd have a beer down at the pub and he was talking about black power and I was like, 'What the hell is this?' I said, 'Tooky, what does black power represent?' Really? ...* (Angus Pearson interview).

From the Chinderah town camp community men and women were growing up and part of an influential group who became politically experienced through their travels down south to Sydney, bringing back ideas in relation to social justice and equal rights for their people (Noter, Interview, 2017).

Employment in Sydney and back

Because South Sea Islanders and First Nations people were discriminated against, particularly in the first half of the century, their means of employment were severely restricted. The Queensland Pacific Labour Act of the 1880s forbade them from working in the maritime and pastoral industries and they were not able to borrow money from banks. But NSW was less punitive and while many went into leasing small farms and market gardens, some also owned their own land and then began to employ other countrymen. My Uncle Zane (Robert) Corowa was one of these who was described by

others as owning a 'substantial business' in trawler fishing for prawns and other seafood. The Togo family also owned a farm. Those who stayed to make a living in northern NSW became the backbone of the community, providing continuity across generations with large families. Intermarriage occurred between them and many had children. There included families such as the Togos, Corowas, Itongs, Myes, Noters, Enares, Mussings, Toars, Appos, Iveys, Slockees and the Wogas, to name a few. From this environment came the first Australian South Sea Islander female activists discussed in Chapter 2.

For some reason the Australian South Sea Islanders in northern NSW have always been regarded as more radical than their Queensland counterparts, which may be due, according to Mary Fallon, to their 'greater freedom' and sense of 'choice' about where to live across the border, but arguably just as many Australian South Sea Islander female activists have come from the cane districts of Queensland. Some of the more prominent public names in broader society such as Dr Bonita Mabo, Dr Evelyn Scott, Ms Shireen Malamoo and Professor Grace Smallwood have all played an influential role in advocating for Australian South Sea Islander recognition, while also being on the frontline for Aboriginal affairs.

Historically the main source of work was casual and seasonal agricultural. Most left school. The earliest leaving age was 12 or 13 (not raised to 15 until 1947). David Togo, from the second generations of his family, spoke about early 20th century life.

> *…. We had our own farm, dad has his own farm. I think I left school when I hit 12, worked on the farm, yeah, had a small crop farm – beans, peas and that, yeah, Dad had bananas, milked cows, we had cows, pigs, horses, everything.*
>
> *Yeah, go down to the lakes, we shoot mullet with a rifle, shoot mullet, get oysters, get crabs, anything, yeah. I used to shoot ibises, Mum used to make curry, shoot spoonbills ... Well Dad said anything we shot we had to eat it. Yeah back in the day we even carried the gun around with us, shot swamp lizards, snakes, everything. I didn't eat the snakes. Dad had all the swamp area where Flame Tree [sounds like] Park is now. South Tweed Heads football field, owned all of that* … (David Togo, 2017)

Others describe itinerant jobs, moving in and out of a job market, employment by other Australian South Sea Islanders and a gradual spreading out as individuals left to work in various places. Angus Pearson described how precarious it was:

> *… We were paid in the hand every week with cash, the Cudgen farmers, they kept us all alive here in one way or another with the pea picking or canecutting or chipping cane or whatever we were doing. Pay day, they never dudded anybody, they didn't give you much, but they paid you. There was no holiday pay and no superannuation, you see, worked there, different families … Sometimes women and men did similar work. Across a long period from the 1930s both sexes were involved in the seasonal work of picking beans and peas.* (Angus Pearson, 2017)

'Gladys' from the NSW Bicentennial project remembers from the 1930s. 'My hands always used to be white and scaly, and me eyes. That's from peas. I used to get real itchy.' (Gladys, Interview, 1987).

I had a revelation when listening to 'Gladys' mention her backbreaking work as I used to pick peas with Nanna and from a young age like 9 or 10 I used to have to sit on Nanna's back and massage her every night because of her exhausted back, that makes sense. Oh, bless her! Nanna never worked me hard and I remember eating fresh peas, such a delicacy, and crisp straight off the vine. Seasonal workers still today suffer the consequence of physical labour with long term ailments. Lola Noter also describes picking after school.

> *… Well we went to school at Middle Pocket, which is a school of about 15 or 16 pupils, and we couldn't go into high school into Mullumbimby because we had to have a car, the bus didn't go right up. The bus sort of went halfway from Billinudgel but people who had a car would go meet the bus, transfer the kids and then pick them up in the afternoon. We left school at 15 and then we worked on the bananas, and for neighbours, we picked tomatoes and beans, a lot of the Greek and Macedonian people had small crops with bananas, yeah, but we always had work, especially when it was show time coming up in Murwillumbah, we'd go and do more work in the bananas for different people and we used to do, what you call, a contract. They'd measure out a certain area, you know, it might be half an acre or something and say, 'If you do that contract it's worth so much.' In those days, no, it was good money, yes, no you were paid equally, same as if it were a white person or anybody else, yeah …* (Noter, 2017)

I was impressed then by the stories of the women and their sense of purpose and strength in conversation with Jennifer Pearson during an interview in 2017. I remember acknowledging the feeling from my interviews when I was in the middle of them up in the Tweed area and said '…I'm getting a sense of real togetherness here for the Chinderah community…'. But what was it like for Kiaś and others going to Brisbane and

working under those conditions in the 1960s? I interviewed Aunty Delma Edwards or Long who is Kiaś's cousin and she was of the same impression. *'… that you just work, you work hard…'*. Her experience, her oral history, is that she worked hard and you just had to do what you needed to do to get the job done and that was the mentality in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Sydney Trail

As a result of their precarious circumstances, several of the people I interviewed said they left the Tweed area to find more secure work in Sydney when they were in their late teens and early 20s. Allan Togo left with his brothers and spent twenty years working in the Sydney building industry with men of many nationalities, before he returned to the Tweed. Lorraine Corowa mentions that sometimes they used networks of community members who preceded them to find jobs. For example, Kiaś was already there and found one of the Togo girls a job, which was still a common practice in the 1960s. Now there are a considerable number of Togos remaining in Sydney but the family insists 'There will always be a Togo in Chinderah' and a branch of the family returned there to work after Sydney or stayed all of their lives. Allan Togo marked out generations working in the same place.

> *… Yeah, like I said, we had to always work, you know, like you cut cane and then you've [Allan's father] got a job with JJ Richards in 1932 and he stayed there for 35 years, 38 years, I come along and I done 35 years. Now I've got my eldest son there, he's been there close to 30 and I've got my two grandkids there working now'. JJ Richards ran Solo, which was a waste disposal company* … (Alan Togo, 2017)

Lola Noter's (Jascek) trajectory was a female version of the cycle between Sydney and the Tweed. She went to Sydney in the late 1940s when she was 21. She worked first as a ward maid, then at the PMU factory (better hours 9-5) and her sister Lily came down from the Tweed to join her. Lola married Eugene Jascek, moved back to Tweed after 21 years in the 60s and 70s, had three children and then took on part-time work in prawning and picking beans and peas with other women.

> *… By this time the work was still casual and part-time, but the women seemed to have greater control over working hours … There was different relations and then sometimes their partner would be there working too. One particular fella, Aunty Stella, her husband's Freddy Marlowe and he'd work for the*

> *Macedonians and if we didn't have a job we'd tell Freddy to ask his boss to give us a contract at a certain time when we needed money. Then you'd go up to Murwillumbah and buy your outfits and we'd sort of compete, you know, we'd go across over the hill across the paddocks to Eungella to catch the train to Murwillumbah …* (Lola Noter, interview, 2017).

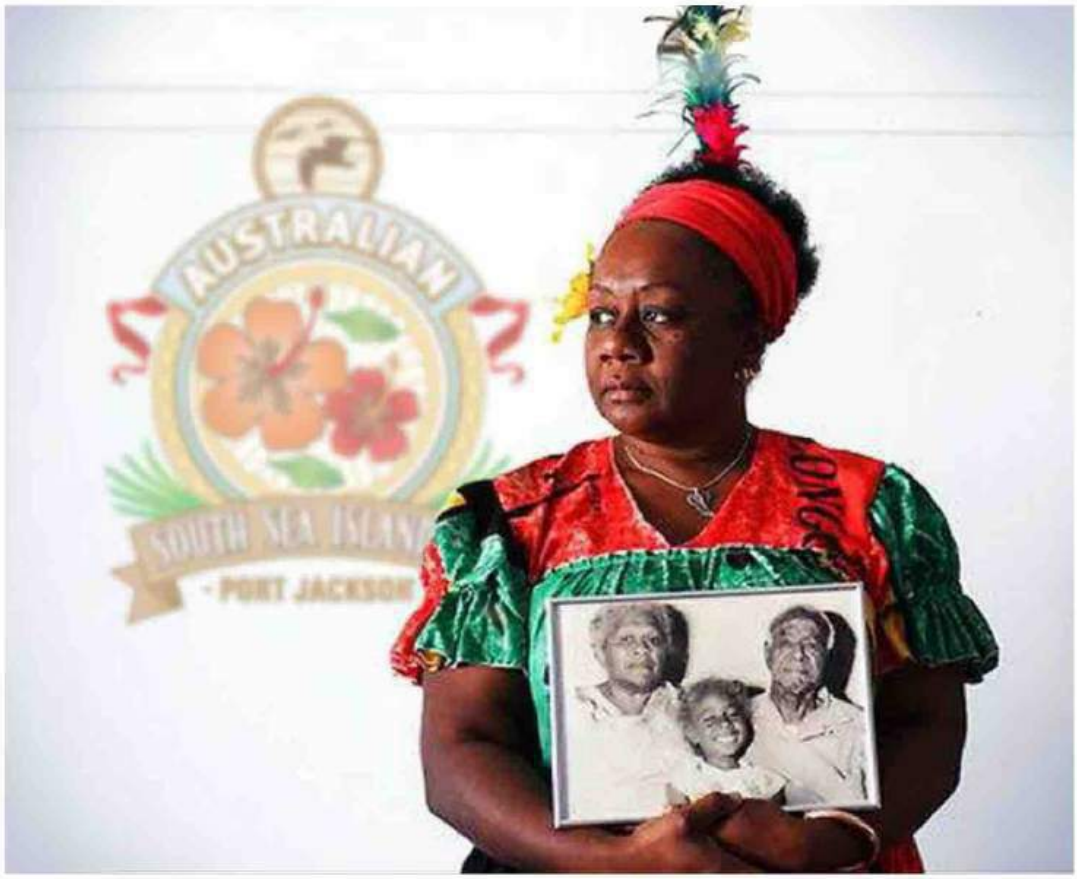
Much had changed since these memories evoked the Chinderah community up to the 1960s and 1970s, but although many of the people from that area, including myself, have moved away and lost some of that community closeness, there is still an important presence in the Tweed of generations of South Sea Islanders fighting to save their history and heritage, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Section 2

Memory Activism

'The duty of memory is the imperative of justice ... it is justice that turns memory into a project; and it is the same project of justice that gives the form of the future'

Paul Ricoeur, (1981)



(Waskam) Emelda Davis holding photo of grandparents Emily & Moses Enares (child) Janeese Corowa *image: The Australian (2013)*

.

Chapter 4

Commemoration and Heritage

(Permission to use image across ASSI social media public postings)

This last chapter on heritage charts a range of activities that mobilise memories and history, formal and informal forms of the Australian South Sea Islander past that commemorate or memorialise their experience. These are brought into the public domain for purposes of promoting social justice and cultural recognition for Australian South Sea Islander peoples. The number of memory activists who have been involved in this documentary process is legendary. Many are from the Australian South Sea Islander community, others helped along the way: journalists, academics, bloggers, filmmakers, writers, artists, to name a few. While individual memories have formed the basis of previous chapters, group memories and their representation in various forms such as memorials, monuments, art practice etc are mobilized in this chapter as increasingly there are urgent concerns in the present as much as there is a need for commemoration of past experiences. As the archeologist Julie Mitchell notes,

> For forgotten histories, such as those of the Australian South Sea Islanders, memory sites offer physicality, a translation of the immateriality of the indenture event from times past to places present, along with the enduring historical validation this provides in the present and future (Mitchell thesis, 2019).

As a result of the work of many, we have seen the gradual accrual of our stories in public across a variety of media and modes of communication. We know from the First Nations 'stolen generation' narrative, which focused on the taking of children away from their families, that it takes quite some time for what is characterized as 'unknown' or an 'untold past' to reach a mass audience (see Bain Attwood, 2005). So although we now have a considerable body of scholarly work on the Pacific Islanders by historians, this has only just begun to reach a wider audience. Also, as Doug Munro notes, there tends to be a focus on the nineteenth century importing of Islander labour, rather than those who stayed after deportation (Munro, 1998). So, despite gradually becoming 'public knowledge' there has been as yet little impact of our stories, despite newspaper articles, television, social media, films, artwork, photographs, exhibitions. However, it is the changing public context where social change may begin to happen.

The historian Paula Hamilton is one of a number of memory studies scholars who have charted the shifting terrain of remembrance, especially since the 1980s (Hamilton, 2011). The first and most important instigator of change 'is the turn to memory and commemoration as the main framework by which we understand the past', what she terms the 'memorial imagination'. We now have a stronger desire for connection

through a focus on experience and reliving of events. So how the Australian South Sea Islander experience comes down to us as remembered and commemorated both individually and collectively can often bear little resemblance to the professional historians' accounts and is constantly changing in relation to the present concerns.

In addition to this, Hamilton argues, there has been a massive increase in sites of remembering, culture of commemoration, and cultural representations about the past (Hamilton, 2008). How does this happen? Several scholars have identified approximately three categories of memory vectors: those initiated as official or state memories; those emerging on behalf of members of a group as public memories; and finally personal memories. Agents of memory or 'memory activists' in turn occupy positions either as first-hand witnesses, or bringing a group's memory to public notice.

They also intervene in ongoing continual contestation of memories. This chapter examines the work of people who I identify in this way, including myself, who since the 1970s have assisted with the development of a collective representation of our past. Cumulatively such memories represent a substantial body of lived evidence which can authoritatively substantiate a claim for Australian South Sea Islander histories to be regarded as central to Australian history and an essential part of the national story.

There is 'unfinished business' here with sites of spiritual and cultural significance. Our peoples yearn for the commemoration of the courageous deeds of our forebears to be showcased to all through memorialization of them in appropriate public ways in the twenty first century. 'Unfinished business' is the very purpose of why Australian South Sea Islander representative organisations are consistently driving a 'collective memory' that sustains social justice for the lived histories of our ignored community demographic.

However, says Hamilton, to identify various memory activists,

> gives no indication of the relative and changing influence of various elements in any public sphere, nor the different modes of circulation which have changed across generations with the emergence of digital media. While the process of memory transmission in any society is highly complex, the media occupies a central place in negotiation of current memory accounts, and obviously some voices have more power to be amplified than others (Hamilton, 2010).

Media bringing the past into the public

I am very aware of this as a long-time advocate and have considerable expertise in the media and use it to great effect for 'connective' dimensions of memory. First, as we have seen, I use Facebook regularly to reconnect with family and identify some areas of stories that are only half known. In this chapter I can only give some instances of how we operate within a global, particularly Pacific, and national landscape. For example, Fiona Pepper has worked for the BBC World Service and ABC Australia on a series of documentary programs called 'Shifting Cultures' where she has interviewed myself and a number of ni Vanuatu women and men. Each South Sea Islander/Australian South Sea Islander person's storytelling usually has a reference point from all the others available and there are now an increasing number put on social media such as the State Library of Queensland's excellent series 'Australian South Sea Islanders Having a Voice' which are accompanied by blogs.

(http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/assi/2019/03/24/australian-south-sea-islanders-having-a-voice/).

What I also see is the strong impact created by both sound and images which feature on websites or in television documentaries. YouTube storytelling interweaves images with contemporary video interviews; exhibitions and their virtual afterlives have text panels or sound grabs (see for example *The Guardian* newspaper reporting of a Queensland photographic exhibition on Australian South Sea Islander.

https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2019/feb/28/the-south- sea-islanders-who-shaped-australia-in-pictures

Widespread circulation of images through digitisation can have a powerful impact, especially since the advent of television.

The television series inclusive of Australian South Sea Islanders, *Pastures of the Blue Crane*, was produced in 1969 with the participation of my Uncle Arthur Toar, who played the important role of Ky. Uncle Arthur was 'discovered' on location near Murwillumbah and was asked by director Tom Jeffrey to play the intensely moving part of the dying old Grandfather Ky, whose presence and pride in his Pacific heritage carried strongly throughout the whole story, originally written by Hesba Brinsmead in 1964. For many of us back then it became our first awareness and understanding of the way racism shaped many Australian lives. Actress Jeanie Drynan wrote: 'There was one scene I shot with a lovely old gentleman who was a real Kanak. When he looked

at me and called me “Girlie” – no acting was required there – real tears!’

For those of us that watched *Pastures* early in our teen years this also left a lasting impression. Uncle Arthur Toar's own history correlates with some of Brinsmead's writings and his presence in scenes with Perry and Ryl is both memorable and deeply moving. Uncle Arthur Toar and my Nanna Enares are of the same mother, Sarah Booky Toar, who was brought to a plantation in Bundaberg as a young girl (house maid) in the late 1800s. Granny Toar’s parents are from Ambae. Uncle Arthur was born in 1904 and worked the canefields and various banana farms including Tomewin in the northern rivers of NSW. The organisers of the screening were honoured to have some of Uncle Arthur Toar’s family present along with members of the Gold Coast

Pastures of the Blue Crane, was produced in 1969 (ABC TV)
Above image: Jeanie Drynan (Ryl), Artur Toar (Ky).
Right image: Arthur Toar Freeman plantation, Tomewin, Currumbin Valley, Queensland, circa 1950 (photographer unknown)

Tweed Australian South Sea Islander United Council for the first ever cinema screening of *Pastures* in Murwillumbah last year (ABC North Coast, 2019). Dramatic fiction films such as *Pastures of the Blue Crane* can have a long-lasting emotional impact on audiences, but so also can documentaries for their ‘realism’ value. The *Sugar Slaves* documentary was produced in 1995 by ABC filmmaker/director Trevor Graham. The film features my Aunty Phyllis Corowa (nee Enares) speaking of her father Moses Topay and grandmother Granny Toar (Uncle Arthur’s mother) as well as her work as part of the Tweed Heads Australian South Sea Islander community. As an activist I posted *Sugar Slaves* via a You Tube channel set up specifically in 2009 to

promote the Australian South Sea Islander movement. I have applied my media skills in videography and networks acquired throughout my career to a form of non- intrusive education and to allow global access online for an untold history. Some 118,965 people since November 2009 have collectively viewed 111 videos relating to Australian South Sea Islander news, documentaries and community conferences, leaders and statements via my 'Emelda Mary Davis' channel with only 200 subscribers. Although the film itself has had 10,000 views in the past two years.

https://www.youtube.com/user/OnyxMedia1/videos?view_as=subscriber

Certainly, I and others have made sure that Facebook and YouTube have extensive coverage of Australian South Sea Islander stories and more participatory history-making. And there is no doubt that YouTube is one of the major channels of digital remembrance in the internet landscape, with people contributing memories as they come to mind or are triggered by others who have posted.

Given the usually domestic context of access through computers to these forums, a personal response is sometimes elicited from those who may feel excluded from more traditional forms of remembrance. One of the features of YouTube is the combining of official, personal and popular posts. Increasingly, two and three-minute extracts from television are also included in particular memorial topics. Yet more is at stake here than simply more available information distributed more widely in a 'culture of connectivity'.

Roger Simon argues that 'digital technologies offer a productive space for assembling diverse groups of people to engage in interactive practice of remembering together.' (Roger Simon, 2012) This is evident when I view the range of YouTube clips on our community, of which there are hundreds. They consist of some I have put there on my channel, snippets of silent film, documentaries using still photos and voice, video interviews etc.

The comments uploaded in response to them reflect a number of the issues related to memory transmission, especially the way that it operates as a conversation through the comment process, but also how people think about their past differently in relation to events they find out about on YouTube. The response to *Sugar Slaves* has been remarkably positive when compared with other 'untold stories', the truth or meaning of which are more openly contested in the news. So 'Buckeyedcat20021' in 2018 comments. … 'Great untold story. I never associated Australia with Black sugar

cane slavery. Human, (virtual slavery) remains a world-wide tragedy'… This respondent is placing the Australian South Sea Islander internationally within the widespread attention to the global memory of slavery by colonial powers that has emerged in the last fewyears.

Henry Darr in 2015 writes: '… Watched every second, didn't blink. Being disconnected from family is the worst feeling, I wish I knew my Islander side of the family … He reveals a sad longing for the stability that claiming a history gives to identity.

When there are official videos put on YouTube, such as that by the Queensland State Archives in 2013 to mark the 150th anniversary of the first Pacific Island labourer arriving in Australia, commentators contested their interpretation even though the archivists referred to kidnapping and abuse, with commentaries supported by academic voices.

Brian Larter writes:

> … Please do not imply to young researchers that these unfortunate wretches were treated well by landholders in Queensland or NSW. The accurate factual historical record needs to be put straight, thereby assuring readers that "Kanaka recruitment from Solomon Islands and New Hebrides group, (now Vanuatu) and possibly neighbouring Pacific islands was analogous to slavery. These men were chased, herded and forcibly brought aboard ships like cattle. It has been witnessed and recorded that some men were so heartbroken and inconsolable that they never recovered from the resultant depression, whether they returned to their homeland or not. This country owes these people a huge debt, for their blood & sweat and commitment to developing the agricultural resources of Australia. Please don't sugar-coat or gloss over thetruth…
>
> https://blogs.archives.qld.gov.au/2016/05/27/australian-south-sea-islanders-in- queensland/

Discussion forums are usually positioned as against official or state sources of history such as archives, libraries, and many of the younger participants contrasted the internet and television with the institutional histories they had encountered at school. They positioned the versions they saw in opposition to these, even though the memories presented may not have been all that different from their formal history curriculum. Some even saw the visual as a way of imagining themselves into the persona of the Australian South Sea Islander, as empathy.

In response to grainy silent video clip made in 1899 and uploaded in 2009, one of the earliest in the collection, Colin Gantigle responds.

> … What a bastard of a bloody job! Cuts to skin from serrated cane leaves, accidents with machetes, constant danger from snakes, spiders and dehydration, and that bugger of a foreman telling them 'More speed!' all the time. A superb historical clip. Thanks … (Gantigle, 2009 Davis site)

As well, the documentary titled *Footprints* has been viewed online by 1,500 people since April 2019. While this might be small in comparison to the *Sugar Slave* documentary posting of some 10,000, the overwhelming congratulations through phone calls and postings have been pleasantly surprising. Since then primary schools, universities and many other Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson networks have been able to use it as a valuable educational resource. The narrative comes from a strong Australian South Sea Islander/First Nations knowledge base and is endorsed by highly respected Elders Pastor Ray Minniecon and Aunty Shireen Malamoo. 'Hello Sunshine' 'Sugar, it's a natural part of life' are the words spoken in a commercial grab in the *Footprints* documentary by the producer himself, Warwick Moss. We pooled our archives and Warwick produced, directed, shot and edited the online educational video in a matter of two weeks. The *Footprints* documentary presents a new and contemporary perspective that highlights the Sydney Harbour 'Sugar Wharf' as a site of historical significance as a receiving port since the 1790s for our Pacific peoples that were deployed across the nation. Also for Australian South Sea Islanders it informs them about earlier instances of coerced labour when 119 Melanesian men were Blackbirded to Eden, NSW by Benjamin Boyd in 1847 (Dwight, 1983).

Boyd is immortalised through the naming of a national park and Ben Boyd Road is a major road that runs through Sydney's north shore. The documentary also shares oral histories and political perspectives by Pastor Ray and Aunty Shireen Malamoo, staunch human rights advocates for First Nations and Australian South Sea Islander peoples. Pastor Ray reflects on his father being a canecutter and the fact that high rates of diabetes occurred through the use of sugar and tinned sunshine milk as mission rations, and from their supply to reserves and farms. Pastor Ray reminisces in a deserted church from his childhood that is of great historical significance.

Overall the documentary echoes the same call to action in the twenty-first- century as

the 1995 documentary *Sugar Slaves,* highlighting the need for identified inclusion alongside our First Nations peoples. Aunty Shireen Malamoo is her forthright self when she also says: *' We are excluded from the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people, we are excluded from the recognition of the historical aspect of this country* …' (Malamoo, interview, 2018).

On release of the documentary via social media and e-data base distribution I received a phone call from the Mackay and District Australian South Sea Islander Association in Queensland. President Starrett Vea Vea commended us on just how comprehensive the video was and the importance of having all voices from our bloodlines speaking:

> *… Thank you for saying what I have been preaching all these years about our blood with First Nations mob. I can now use this video and distribute across schools and community workshops when I speak …* ' (Starrett Vea Vea, 2019).

There was also much online discussion and feedback. Joel Kalpram wrote 10 months ago: '… I've shared and will tweet this and will continue to do so in sharing the hidden information about #OurPeople. Thanks for sharing all your stories…' (Kalpram 2019). Megan Edmonds also responded at the same time: '… Interesting and informative. Some sobering truths indeed. But we need to revere this history…' (Edmonds 2019). Starrett Vea Vea wrote: '25 years of Recognition, but we still struggle for a foothold in a country we helped to prosper. This narrative peels away the scab that lays beneath. Thank you to our families in Sydney NSW… Tuff tumas!' (Starrett Vea Vea 2019). Finally Barry Fewquandie 2019 noted that 'What makes this video powerful is Australian South Sea Islanders sharing their stories and histories. To influence change, we need more Australian South Sea Islander authors and historians sharing/telling and publishing and creating our version of our history based on our lived experience and family history…' (Fewquandie, 2019)

Digital media applications have played a key role in assisting Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson members to design graphics that are quickly produced and circulated for networking.

Memorials and Physical Heritage

While social media has become an important means to bridge generations and educate people about Australian South Sea Islanders, there have also been several efforts to commemorate our past in some physical ways in the landscape with memorials and other material evidence. Memorials can be the focus in our rituals of remembrance, or anniversaries, which are in themselves important reminders of the ongoing need for cultural maintenance. These initiatives to preserve names and experiences through memory sites have been set up through a mixture of community initiatives and official action. Kathleen Fallon's doctoral thesis 'Hidden In Plain Sight', a collaborative project with a Blackbird descendant from Bundaberg, Mr Matt Nagas, documented some 190 sites from Northern Rivers to far North Queensland.

Kathleen describes the work as a labour of love for the SSI people first and foremost and told me it was just the 'tip of the iceberg' with 'still so much more to document'. The memorials and landscapes of the Australian South Sea Islander sites of significance spanned across country, mapping the historical trail and lived experience for the Australian South Sea Islander community. Although the research didn't bring them far south to Sydney, Kathleen mentions the notorious Blackbirder Robert Towns, founder of Townsville, as having SSI workers in his Sydney brewery. Like Julie Mitchell's even more recent doctorate of 2019 (Mitchell, Archeopress, 2019), although references are made to the Tweed area, most of the focus of the study is on Queensland, where it is considered that the majority of descendants reside. However, it is evident that the census does not accurately reflect the Australian South Sea Islander demographic of our nation and through local knowledge and our oral histories it is a fact that there are more than 9,000 Australian South Sea Islanders living in Australia as poorly identified across the 2016 Census by Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

There are a number of sites of significance in the Tweed area that have been set up to commemorate our people, to mark their memories in the landscape. These would not have emerged were it not for the memory activism of Phyllis and Robert Corowa, and Margaret and Allan Togo. Corowa Park at Chinderah was initiated by Aunty Phyllis as a memorial to her husband and his diligent advocacy work across the community. The park was completed with the assistance of the local government in 1986. The Chinderah cemetery was again brought to public attention under Aunty Phyllis's leadership as well as the Cudgen Burial Ground and Australian South Sea Islander memorial which is the most explicitly 'memorial' and again was set up by the Australian South Sea Islander community with various levels of government assistance at the local and national level.

Name	**40. CHINDERA COROWA PARK**
Location GPS data	-28 14.46 +153 33.07
Street Address	Terrace Street and Chinderah Road, Corowa Park
Date Recorded	13/04/2016
Place Category	Public park, urban
Form / style / fabric	Memorial plaque set on post
Designer/ Builder Name	Local Government, Tweed Shire Council
Dedication Date	Official unveiling 30th August 1986
Theme(s)	People, local history, connection to place marker
Inscription	COROWA PARK
Notes/ Sources	Corowa Park is named after the late Robert (Zane) Corowa, founding president of the first national body representing ASSI, established in Tweed Heads in 1975. His wife Phyllis Corowa also helped establish and opened the South Sea Island Cudgen burial ground at Chinderah cemetery in 1999. MA Themed People Sub-themed Indigenous. In the Tweed Heads area, Mr. Corowa was a driving force in many community organisations, especially the Twin Towns Pensioners Club. He was an inaugural committee member of the Tweed Heads Community Centre. At Saturday's Robert Corowa park dedication, family members of several generations joined his widow in a day of memories. At Corowa Park, Chinderah, from left, Tweed Shire deputy president, Cr. Tom Hogan, Mrs Phyllis Corowa, MLC Keith Enderbury and MLC Peter Watkins.
Image	
Heritage Status Listing	No
Current condition	Well maintained public park area.
Access and amenities	Public access, urban. No facilities.

Source: Julie Mitchell, Archeopress (2019)

Zane (Robert) Corowa was a first generation born South Sea Islander (March 8, 1908) in the village of Cudgen, where many Islanders were brought to plant cane. Robert's father came from Tanna Island in Vanuatu in 1893 to work firstly on the Ferrymead Plantation of Bundaberg. His mother came from St Helena in Africa with a French family and her father was from Madras in India, also brought to Australia to work on cane plantations. Robert worked on a dairy farm at an early age, receiving two pounds

per week, which he sent home to his mother to help with the family of five boys and three girls. At the age of 17 he tried his hand at cane cutting at Cudgen but the gang said he was too young so they made him cook, which he did well. After a couple of years in the cookhouse he ventured out to the world of canecutters in Townsville and Mackay in Queensland. Eventually he became involved in politics, the Communist party with political activist friend Kath Walker, who at that time was fighting for voting rights for Aborigines. In the 1970s he and his wife (Phyllis Corowa) travelled from Tweed Heads to Cairns, visited the South Sea Islander communities and helped organize them to fight for recognition as a separate Black group in Australia.

As a warrior for his strong culture, Robert was the spokesperson for the South Sea Islanders during the fight for recognition and visited Parliament House in Canberra many times with issues of concern for them. In the late 70s he became ill and had to resign from all his activities, which was a great blow to the Islander community. Robert was also a community worker in the Tweed district. He set up his prawn trawler, moving from Ballina to Gladstone in Queensland and back over the years of his working life. He was the head of the local All Blacks Football Club for many years and a good supporter for the Labor Party for 40 years. He helped people whether black or white and was very well respected in the town. He died in 1986 and the park was dedicated to his memory soon afterwards.

Daily News 4/9/86

COROWA PARK DEDICATED

Citizen remembered

Corowa Park in Cudgen Road, Chinderah, was officially unveiled on Saturday by New South Wales MLC, Keith Enderbury.

The park was created by the Tweed Shire Council to honor the late Robert Corowa of Chinderah.

Tweed Shire's deputy president, Cr Tom Hogan, said the park was council's way of acknowledging a man who lived and worked for the good of people.

Mr Corowa, who was known to his friends as Zane, died of a heart attack in March at the age of 78.

He was born in Cudgen in 1908 of New Hebridian parents.

It was Robert Corowa with his wife Phyllis, who worked hard and successfully for official recognition of the thousands of South Sea Islanders (called the Kanakas) who had been indentured to work in Queensland sugar plantations in the late 1880's.

In the Tweed Heads area, Mr Corowa was a driving force in many community organisations, especially the Twin Towns Pensioners Club. He was an inaugural committee member of the Tweed Heads Community Centre.

At Saturday's Robert Corowa park dedication, family members of several generations joined his widow in a day of memories.

● AT Corowa Park, Chinderah, from left, Tweed Shire deputy president, Cr Tom Hogan, Mrs Phyllis Corowa, MLC Keith Enderbury and MLC Peter Watkins.

Les, Phyllis, Ian, Joan, Emily, Robert jnr, Janese, Joan.
...are only some of the Corowa families in this photo
image: family archive

Robert's wife, Aunty Phyllis Corowa, was also a highly respected community member renowned for her no nonsense advocacy work. Phyllis came from a family of eleven siblings who became professional people, activists and community leaders in their own right. She constantly aimed to educate the broader community and lobby governments on the plight of her people to be rightfully recognised. When Aunty Phyllis passed she was given a guard of honour that saw the entire community stand tall with respect for a matriarch who was the centre of family and community.

Phyllis Corowa Guard of Honour
April 2014 Wommin Bay. Rd Chinderah
image: family archive

Phyllis and her husband Robert Zane Corowa were two of several founders in 1972 of the Australian South Sea Islander United Council (ASSIUC), known today as the Tweed Gold Coast Australian South Sea Islander United Council. Both Phyllis and Robert Corowa, with Margaret and Alan Togo, led the needs assessment of Australian South Sea Islanders across NSW and Queensland with Mrs Faith Bandler. They were supported by the University of Sydney and the Evatt Foundation. In the early 1990s Phyllis and Robert embarked on a caravan trek across NSW and Queensland to gather statistics needed to assess the social and economic needs of their community.

These statistics fed the 1992 Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Report (HREOC) (the Call for Recognition) which saw the 1994 Commonwealth Recognition of Australian South Sea Islanders as a 'distinct cultural group' within Australia. Today the continued selfless work of leaders within the Australian South Sea Islander community draws on Phyllis Corowa's foundational work and commitment to our First Nations and Australian South Sea Islander families and organisations.

Her work with others resulted in the landmark decision on August 15, 2013 whereby the NSW Parliament recognised the need for social justice for Australian South Sea Islanders through establishing government agency commitment. This was followed by the September 2014 Federal Parliament debate in Canberra recognising the beginnings of the sugar cane industry in Australia and of the indentured labour trade being recognised as slavery.

Chinderah Cemetery Islander Burials.
Norther NSW year unknown.
image: Andrea Deeley

Burial Grounds and cemeteries

The question of where Australian South Sea Islanders have been buried is an important one. It is believed over 16,000 of our ancestors are buried in Queensland and the Tweed area but very few have been found and recognised. For many people private grief about the dead is expressed publicly or is given permission to be expressed publicly – through burying in graveyards with placards, stones, or plaques in crematoriums naming them. But there are those who we not able to mourn. As Judith Butler says, an obituary, inscription in public of the fact of death is what allows a life to become grievable – the lack of a public place of mourning corresponds to the lack of a recognized life – a life unrecognized by the nation itself and existence not therefore acknowledged. This is why it is such an important issue for us.

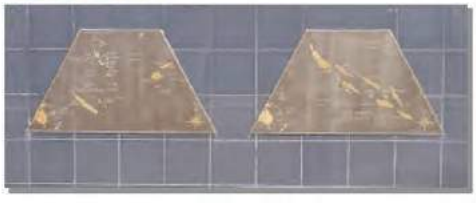
The Cudgen burial ground has had a chequered history. The Australian South Sea Islanders in the Tweed area have had limited success fighting to preserve their heritage from developers in that region. In the 1970s part of the Cudgen burial ground was recognised by the NSW government as a site of historical significance to Australian South Sea Islanders, but this did not stop it being concreted over.

Jonas Wogas and his wife are two of those lost graves in the Chinderah cemetery golf course crime that occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Wogas' family history is a fascinating one for two main reasons. The community was forced to agree to the demolition of a burial ground through a weak consultative process involving both the Tweed Shire Council and the Lands Department and the new owners of the property, the Brimsmead family, who were anxious to have all of the headstones removed so the land could be developed and turned into a golf course. Despite being advised that a large portion of land would be compromised in the future if graves were not relocated, the headstones were removed to an alternative small western site and the bodies remained buried, unmarked and unnamed at the eastern edge of the golf course. To this day, slabs of cement can be found hidden in the grass at the edge of the golf course where people nearby are blissfully driving their buggies and putting their balls in a manner so offensive to me that it makes my blood boil every time I drive past the grounds. The unmitigated grief that still is felt throughout the community is unforgivable and still no one has been held accountable for this act of disrespect.

The Northern Rivers area has become a major holiday and tourism centre, so developers moved in to maximise their money. Similar actions have been carried out at the Fingal burial grounds, where the developers were approved to extend the caravan park where we now see Winnebagos parked on top of buried ancestors. The Tweed Shire Council, together with associated developers and the Department of Lands, have over time treated the SSI community, their history and their dearly departed ancestors with utter contempt and disrespect. I have also since managed to obtain records from the scant cemetery files, which show many of the original named gravesites from the area which were desecrated and headstones permanently removed. Two are in fact, buried, unmarked, outside of the golf course, next to the road on the grassy verge area due to slight changes in town planning and road design), regardless of how this affected the descendants of those buried there. For this reason, on consultation with members of the Wogas family, I decided to offer a beautiful Islander frangipani tree to be planted in a ceremony to honour Jonas Wogas, and all his descendants, during the family photograph taken in the Chinderah burial grounds memorial.

The second reason the Wogas family became a fascinating point of history was discovering during an interview with the director of the Maritime Museum in Sydney, who mentioned that the now-deceased son of Jonas Wogas had told him that his father had built a large boat with a secret hold, which used to run up into Moreton Bay, Brisbane during the night. These clandestine nocturnal trips were made into the docks around the bay, where Jonas sought to assist those Islanders interested in escaping harsh indentures and treatment on the Queensland side of the border, back into the secluded jungle hills and peaceful village lifestyles that the Islander communities of the Northern Rivers region were managing to establish for themselves. Definitely an unsung hero of the time, Jonas Wogas.

But one should never underestimate the power of place to be a caretaker of memory. Phyllis Corowa was also the driving force behind the setting up of a formal memorial in the Cudgen burial grounds in the late 1990s. She wanted a memorial with 350 names etched in it of those who had been 'indentured', that included a map of the South Sea Islands to show their places of origin from the many different islands. This made it into a form of historical record etched in stone. She was awarded a grant from the Casino community benefit fund ('for and on behalf of the Minister for Gaming and Racing') to build it and she opened the memorial in 1999 (ASSiUC records in Davis collection).

Name	**42. CUDGEN BURIAL GROUND ASSI MEMORIAL**
Location GPS data	-28 14.86 +153 33.27
Street Address	Tweed Coast Road, Chinderah, NSW 2487
Date Recorded	13/04/2016
Place Category	Burial ground, urban
Form / style / fabric	Five brass plaques set on tiled brick tri-panelled wall memorial
Designer/ Builder Name	ASSI descendant group and local council with Australian Heritage Commission, and input by Tweed Shire Council and the Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW
Dedication Date	Registered on Register of the National Estate (indicative place), ID 19489, 24/06/1997. Actual Memorial dedicated10/04/1999.
Theme(s)	ASSI cultural heritage, local history, graves marker
Inscription (Proximity)	Cudgen Burial Ground South Sea Islander Memorial
Memorial Inscriptions	This Memorial was erected on unmarked grave sites of South Sea Islanders by the National Federation of Australian South Sea Islanders Tweed Northern NSW Incorp.in 1998. [Silhouette image of Islander Cane Cutter] This memorial commemorates the original Islander Pioneers of the Cudgen/Tweed districts who cleared land, cut timber and worked in the cane fields and farms of this area during the period 1867-1914. Followed by three entries of people involved in erecting this monument including ASSI descendants, Jack Woodwars Solicitor and Ethnic Affairs Commission NSW Tweed Shire Council's architect.
Left panel - top	
Left panel - bottom	Opened by Phyllis Corowa South Sea Islander 10th April, 1999
Middle panel - left	Map of Pacific Islands Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji in relation to Australia 

Source: Julie Mitchell thesis Archeopress, (2019)

The burial ground was registered with the Australian Heritage Commission as a placeof historical significance for South Sea Islanders/Australian South Sea Islanders as one of the few known burial sites Like many other memorial sites, Cudgen burial ground functions as a focal point for ceremonies of remembrance and every year the Australian South Sea Islanders celebrate the Commonwealth government's recognition of them with a flag raising ceremony here, as in Queensland and Sydney.

Preserving Walls Campaign

In 2019, the authorities in the Tweed area wanted to demolish 120 year old drystone walls, believed to been erected by Australian South Sea Islander labourers as part of clearing for a sugar plantation, to make way for a car park for the Tweed Hospital. Despite a campaign against destruction by the Tweed Heritage Matters Action Group and the Tweed and Gold Coast Australian South Sea Islander regional groups, claiming 'the walls represent the blood, sweat and tears of our forebears', their efforts failed. The rocks were removed and placed on the grounds to be utilised as part of an interpretation project. A committee was formed by the Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson, the newly formed Tweed Valley Australian South Sea Islanders Inc and the 50 years strong Gold Coast Tweed Australian South Sea Islander Association. They drew on the Historical Heritage Assessment document, indicating that the walls were of 'special significance' to the Australian South Sea Islanders and supporting letters from academics such as James Flexner, an archaeologist from Sydney University. (The NSW Health Infrastructure group has been involved in the 'planning of an historical South Sea islander display using the removed wall stones').

https://www.sbs.com.au/news/a-forgotten-piece-of-australia-s-islander-history-is- being-demolished-to-build-a-car-park

Many of the community were very upset. 'We didn't want them to touch the wall and move the rocks, we did want them to remain in situ because they retain their cultural value and meaning. Once they move them, they are just rocks,' Louise Togo said. 'They are destroying a unique part of our history, especially here in the Tweed.'

Historically along the east coast SSI men and women were buried in the farmland and beside the walls. Yet archeologist Julie Mitchell insists that there are almost no Australian South Sea Islander places registered on the Australian National Heritage List or the Commonwealth Heritage List (Mitchell, 2019 ch 1) and that 'being registered' does not guarantee protection from destruction. As we have seen, these battles still leave the Australian South Sea Islander cultural heritage very vulnerable and they remain intensely localized. But at least these memorials and commemorations amount to a physical form of remembering, in effect a kind of validation of our community in this region and our participation in the ongoing memories of the Tweed area as historically significant. In early 2020 NSW Health and the Tweed Australian South Sea Islander communities have since formed an advisory committee to assist with the development of a culturally appropriate heritage memorial.

The rock relics will now be included as part of the entrance and a memorial infrastructure set up drawing on Australian South Sea Islander artistry. We are also advocating for recognition of Australian South Sea Islander nursing sisters and greater inclusion of Australian South Sea Islander businesses and employment. It is important that meaningful community engagement will continue. Peak bodies the Gold Coast Tweed Australian South Sea Islander United Communities and the Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) have played a key role throughout all negotiations.

Aunty Lill Engstrom with a photo of her father by the wall he built about 120 years ago.
Source: Stefan Armbruster/SBS

Source: Julie Mitchell, 2019

.

Community Historians

There are other memory activists who have made important interventions on our behalf, some of whom are not of Australian South Sea Islander descent. Andrea Deeley, for example, is an artist, freelance photojournalist and passionate grassroots historian living and working in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. Andrea has long had a passion for history and strong interest in the SSI slave stories since growing up surrounded by the canefields of the Bundaberg region in Queensland, where she worked as a journalist for *The Guardian* newspaper, in a surrounding landscape steeped deeply in the history of sadness and exploitation of those brought out from the islands to work for the sugar industry.

Having strong family ties also to the island of Ambrym, Vanuatu, has allowed opportunities for her to further explore her passion for photography and portrait painting, with strong messages of the conflict and extreme differences between contemporary Western life and the traditional tribal ways. Andrea's recent focus has been towards establishing a more thorough investigation in the Tweed Heads region and exploring information, historical sites and government records pertaining to the local history of the South Sea Island slaves and indentured labourers. This has included interviewing from a different perspective many Elders in the area, which has also contributed to her recent body of work highlighting the importance of accurate historical maintenance, along with comparative studies of census information, church funeral records and cemetery maps and records. More recently in close consultation with the Tweed Australian South Sea Islander group, Andrea Deeley has done six months research consulting cemetery records and census records for Islander information around the turn of the last century and correlating particular family knowledge, wherever possible. Every name has been cross-referenced wherever possible for extra information, including some church funeral records which were very helpful about many of the Chinderah, Fingal and Tweed Heads burials. We hope this can continue to help many families in the area find out details that they were not previously aware of, and that these records can continue to be updated or corrected wherever necessary. They will assist in strengthening our heritage preservation claims. As Andrea Deeley says: 'This is the first time in this Tweed district that such a detailed register has been intrinsically compiled from various different sources of historical knowledge' (Deeley, 2019).

Andrea accepted my invitation to be coordinator for the plenary session on Blackbirding, a historical first for the International Conference for Indentured Labour and Post-slavery Recovery held in Fiji in July 2019. The Gold Coast Tweed Heads Australian South Sea Islander Association also were part of the Australian South Sea Islander delegation which endorsed Andrea's research as part of their ongoing cultural maintenance administration memory work. Andrea has been culturally adopted into the Koran family of Melekula. Her collaborative work in Vanuatu has seen the banning of plastic bags and disposable nappies, along with the distribution of educational postcards painted by artist and Ni Vanuatu son Robert Koran.

International platforms

One of the most important ways that my own 'memory activism' operates is through conferences, meetings, talks, lectures and commemorative ceremonies. In 2014 I was flown to Mauritius, an island off the east coast of Africa. I gave a talk at the Port Louis, Mauritius international conference 'Towards the establishment of the Indentured Labour Route' in acknowledgement of the 180th Anniversary of the first arrival of Indian indentured labour at Aapravasi Ghat on 2nd November, 180 years ago. Many people attended from international universities to speak and my talk was out of step in refusing to use the term 'indenture' and making a claim for Blackbirding as a form of slavery. All the while social media played a major role in keeping our board, communities and family abreast of daily talks and cultural events generating positive responses. During the conference I met Khal Tourabull, a Mauritian French poet who is a descendant of 'Indenture'. His father is of Trinidad, Caribbean descent and his mother is Indian, Malay. Khal coined the term 'Coolitude' as Indian labourers were

called ‘Coolies’: … Coolitude describes the cultural interaction of the Indian or Chinese "coolie" diaspora, and by extension also similar migrations. It refers to a transcultural process, articulating imaginaries and cultures in non-essentialist ways.

In 2018 I was again invited as a guest speaker by Khal Tourabully, festival director for the inaugural International Festival De Coolitude, and it was there that again I spoke on Blackbirding as slavery. Via Youtube I posted an impromptu interview after my presentation on feedback from Mr Doudou Dien. Mr Dien is the former United Nations Human Rights Council special rapporteur on Racism World Wide. He is from Senegal, West Africa and commented just how emotional it was for him to be in Guadeloupe in the Caribbean, for this is where his ancestors were brought as part of the Atlantic slave trade. Having worked for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for the past thirty years, Doudou launched the Slave Route Program in 1994 to investigate the deep root causes, the way it happened and present-day consequence of slavery. As the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) special rapporteur on Racism World Wide, Doudou has the power to enter any countries in order to produce twenty-five specific cultural reports. Doudou’s objective is to correct the inaccuracies of historical reporting and interpretation and reconnect communities who suffered the impacts of slavery. Of African slavery and victims of Coolitude and Blackbirding, Doudou says ‘… These acts have been separated by history through inherited racism. This has been a profoundly scientific and emotional exercise…’ (Doudou, 2018). Doudou aims to unite peoples by building a single and common memory together.

> … These people come out of a very terrible, tragic and violent place, where all their humanity has been denied and yet they survived. It means that they fought back! Not only physically but mentally, spiritually and culturally. So, they’re the bearers of human values and spiritual values which will transform the present-day contemporary societies … (Doudou 2018)

Doudou comments on Blackbirding:

> … Most of us are ignorant of what is happening to our brothers and sisters in the Pacific … Blackbirding is one of the most fantastic cultural and spiritual expressions of resistance marked by invisibility and silence of history. This initiative should be promoted worldwide. We would like to come one day to Australia to see who are your people and how Blackbirding has transformed them and transformed Australian society … (Doudou, 2018)

The international Festival De Coolitude gave me an opportunity to read poetry from two Australian South Sea Islander social justice poets and community leaders. This was also streamed via the Facebook page allowing participation for some 3,000 members. Ms Veronica Griffin, from Mackay in Queensland, wrote the poem 'Wantok had a Breakthrough' and Lesha Nixon from the northern rivers wrote 'Between Two Sands'. Both are indicative of the challenges and ongoing struggle for our people.

Wantok is a pidgin/Melanesian custom word that recognises kinship through a strong social bond and language. This term was adopted for a series of capacity building conferences that were designed to widely consult with the Australian South Sea Islander community demographic on a national voice to parliament and the development of a culturally specific designed national constitution. Some seven national conferences were delivered with the help of federal and state funding between 2012- 2014 in key sugar district locations such as Caboolture, Bundaberg, Brisbane, Tweed Heads, Mackay, Rockhampton and in Lismore, with a youth workshop titled 'B.L.A.C.K back on the Tweed' in 2016, which engaged some 1,000 participants. The Wantok conference videos and political voices can be revisited via our Australian South Sea Islanders Port Jackson website video page http://www.assipj.com.au/video/.

Below are the Wantok poems read at the 2018 Festival De Coolitude. In the 'Between Two Sands' poem, in particular, you can see how the story of our past remains central to current political battles.

Wantok had a breakthrough!

- written by Veronica Griffin © -

Wantok had a break through
Wow how's that
Wantok had a break through
Now a working group has been selected
Wantok had a break through
How deadly ...Oh how deadly
Wantok had a break through
My people from near and a far
Hey ... Wantok had a break through
Emelda, Graham and Michael ... all of us can relax
Cause Wantok ... had a break through
Our Kanaka voice will be nationally heard
Now that ... Wantok had a break through
Australian South Sea Islanders rejoice
We can never again be blue
Our ... Wantok had a break through
Will not remain silent we will be ever strong
Why? ...Wantok had a break through
My birthday 30th March 2014 will always be know as the date that ...
Wantok had a break through
From Mackay our progressive town where
Wantok ... had a break through
Let us hear loud clear voices ... hey!
Wantok had a break through
Shout it from every beat of your heart
Hooray...
Wantok had a break through
Go back to your family and your people and tell them...
Wantok had a break through
Teach the children... listen to the young folk and respect your elders be humbled by this thing.
Remember all of you the date the time the place ... when
Wantok had a break through.

' Between two sands '

- Written by Iesha Nixon © – (Women Ambae)

Time stands still as the blackbird continues to fly
I know not where mi blong
Therefore, clipped are my wings
On a land that does not recognise I

Restless the spirit becomes
Caught between two worlds
Lost in the unknown
Silenced voices unheard

Trickery, abduction, murder and dispossession
Sugary promises more bitter than sweet
Hope wrapped up in lies and deception
White Australia policies stuck on repeat

Skeletons in the closet of Queensland's sugar industry
Australia's dark history of slavery and exploitation
Sweet addictions to power, greed and money
Spreading their sweet disease all across the nation

To know where mi blong
Shines a light on where I am going
With the guidance of my ancestors
I crave the wisdom of knowing

Longing for blonging
I yearn to be whole and complete
To know who I am
To rise above defeat

It is time to rewrite the songs
It is time for change and for the blackbird to land
It is time to right past wrongs
So, we can stop wading in the water between two sands

bonita mabo

Victorian man Abraham Saylor, middle, with Calvin Stanley, left, and Suzanne Saylor.

Emelda Davis, left, with Celuia Mabo, the youngest daughter of Dr Bonita Mabo.

Joel Mabo with Layecharla Mabo, 7, and Amare Mabo, 5.

From left, Mayors Alf Lacey (Palm Island), Vonda Malone (Torres Shire Council) and Eddie Newman (Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council).

A celebration of the life of Bonita Mabo

Other Memory Activists

Dr Bonita Mabo (Aunty Bonita) was the patron of the Port Jackson organization until her passing and she had very close links with northern NSW because she had family there. Dr Mabo, (nee Nihau), was a proud Munburra clan woman and an Australian South Sea Islander 'Woman Tanna', whose father was taken from Vanuatu. Aunty Bonita lobbied for Australia's Blackbirding trade to be included permanently as a part of the national school curriculum to remember the 62,500 Melanesian men and women that were trafficked to Australia as slaves. Growing up in Townsville, Aunty Bonita lived with her husband, Uncle Eddie Mabo, at 23 Hibiscus Street, which was the home of the political organisation for real change. Aunty Bonita possessed a gracious and rare relentless spirit and wherever she roamed she was equally proud of her South Sea Islander heritage. She was part of the complexity of a Black Australian narrative that is often ignored, and one that has been forged through both the dispossession of First Nations peoples and the slavery of Melanesian men. Since her husband's passing, Aunty Bonita has focused on raising the profile of the Australian South Sea Islander community and was our Port Jackson national representative from 2013. A dear friend of Kiaś and her family, Aunty Shireen and Patricia Corowa especially were excited to revive the cause for Australian South Sea Islander advancement and I was equally honoured to be endorsed by these formidable women to chair Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson.

Dr Mabo's patronage endorsed the Wantok national conferences (2012-2015) and the wide consultation and development of the National Constitution across Queensland and NSW. Her patronage supported 2013 NSW Parliament's recognition of Australian South Sea Islanders. Although Dr Mabo's health was declining she lived to witness that the Inner West Council of Sydney committed to the annual raising of the Australian South Sea Islander flag at Petersham Town Hall on our National Recognition Day of South Sea Islanders. Furthermore, Australian South Sea Islanders educational resources are now to be distributed throughout the Inner West libraries of Sydney, and a public mural as a reminder of Australian Blackbirding history is in the process of negotiation.

The Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, highlights Mabo's role as a history-maker for our cause:

> … Dr Mabo was an 'unlikely giant'. 'I say "unlikely" because Bonita Mabo was not imposing, not physically… And yet this slight woman from Ingham would change the course of history… Bonita's story is powerful, It'll be told and retold as a beacon to generations to follow her lead … She empowered her people to speak from the heart and stand up for what they believed in … Mabo was a history maker in her own right, long before the High Court's landmark native title ruling, which forever and rightfully changed our nation, and long after her gentle compassion and courage, and her unwavering conviction to stand up for justice without hesitation, will continue to inspire us all … (Palaszczuk 2018).

Art and Re-enactment

Finally, I want to address two other more creative means of working as a memory activist. The first relates to re-enactments and the second to artistic practice. Julie Mitchell in her doctoral thesis discusses 'memory sites' in locations relevant to Australian South Sea Islander histories. She says:

> Memorials and memory sites, by their very materiality, provide intimate knowledge of how people have interacted with their physical environment and what they deemed important, representative and indicative of themselves and their communities. They involve various levels of intent, agency and effort to create a materialised form of what otherwise remains intangible: the memory of people, places, actions or experiences which in other circumstances may well pass with living memory' (Mitchell, Archeopress 2019).

But despite this, as we have seen with memorials and burial sites operating as Australian South Sea Islander 'sites of memory' in Northern NSW, not all sites of memory are located in place and visibly tangible. Some of the Australian South Sea Islander descendants have made powerful statements through their artistic practice, as have a range of Indigenous artists. Others, have called on ceremonies and re- enactments to keep alive memories of the Australian South Sea Islanders' past.

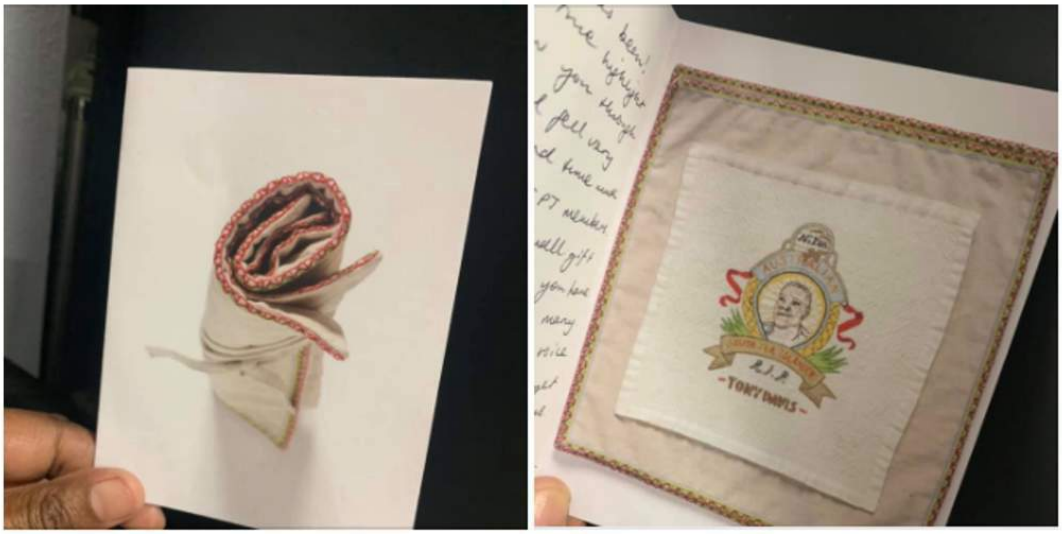
Jasmine Togo-Brisby is a multi-disciplinary artist from Murwullumbah, NSW, now practicing out of Wellington, New Zealand. She is a fourth generation Australian South Sea Islander with ancestral lineage to the islands of Ambae and Santo of Vanuatu. Her research examines the historical practice of Blackbirding, the Pacific slave trade, and the contemporary legacy that this practice has made on those who trace their roots to New Zealand and Australia through the slave-diaspora. She states her main purpose as:

> *… I'm interested in examining the effects of intergenerational trauma transmitted through ongoing oppression across several generations, particularly in contrast to the inheritance of wealth that has come to those who benefitted from slavery and colonization* … (Togo-Brisby, 2019).

(ASSIPJ archive, 2019)

In 2019 Jasmine was one of the Australian South Sea Islander delegates who attended the Fiji International Conference on Forced Labour & Migration Indentured & Pacific Labour trade 2019 and presented her works as part of the Blackbirding plenary. She also serves in a voluntary capacity on the Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson - Wantok Strategy Team.

There is also Helen Frazer, a non-Australian South Sea Islander woman who has been working with Australian South Sea Islander peoples to develop a social justice concept that draws on 'craftivism'. These means of communicating require a more obvious use of imagination and creativity as a factor in presenting the past. As we can see below in the images, Frazer's work is both personal to me, memorializing the passing of my brother Tony, and also has a wider community focus. Again, like social media sites, Helen Frazer positions her work against the silences of the formal histories represented by school institutions.



Tony Davis memorial in gifted embroidery & gift card by Helen Fraser. Image ASSIPJ archive 2019

This is a common response, or sense of betrayal, for those who feel they were 'not told' about Australia's 'dark' past. It is an important part of the process as the stories gradually reach more and more people and become widely public, to a point where they can forcefully challenge a politically fixed national narrative about a racist past thatappears benign and literally has 'white-washed.' Helen tells her story of the art piecefeatured.

> … My interest in learning the truth about Australia's slave trade history developed two years ago when I saw a call out to artists to join an international embroidery project on Instagram run by Craftivists Tal Fitzpatrick (Aust) and Stephanie Dunlap (USA). This evolved into the United Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Quilt project exhibited during 2019-20 at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Canberra … (Fraser, 2019)

Re-enactment and Commemorative Ceremonies

25th Anniversary Dignitary ASSI Flag Raising 2019 – Smoking Ceremony Welcome to Country Australian National Maritime Museum Sydney NSW

Mateo & Anton Togo in ASSI T Shirts, image ASSIPJ archive 2019

Re-enactment at ceremonies is something I have done on a regular basis and I recognise it as very much using the whole body for this activity of reimagining the past. Re-enactments have also been central to our commemoration and ceremony. They have important symbolic meaning in relation to a foundation event. There were re-enactments in 2013 when the media presence began to really build up that was reported in ABC news (15 August, 2013). More recently, I took part in a re-enactment for the 15th anniversary of recognition at the Maritime Museum in Sydney (August 2019). This was a ceremony commemorating the boat arrival in colonial times of SSI peoples to Australia, a reminder that we are not First Nations, but were forcibly brought to this country. The event began with a First Nations smoking ceremony. Re- enactments for customary welcome and 'Sorry Business' are an integral part of our Pacific and First Nations culture, seen as a sign of respect and blessing from our ancestral teachings.

The youth board representatives at this event were just one of many highlights as Binette Diop (my daughter), a founding member, had her first major public speaking role in reading the Napen Napen women's speech to the dignitaries. It was a powerful moment in witnessing the enthusiasm and goodwill of our predecessors.

Binette Diop carrying Tafea flag @ ASSI 25th Anniversary (2019)
Australian National Maritime Museum Sydney NSW
image: ASSIPJ archive

2019 marked 25 years since the 1994 Commonwealth Recognition of Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct cultural group and in honour of such a milestone Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) coordinated the inaugural SugarFest and a commemoration ceremony with Australian South Sea Islander flagraising at the Maritime Museum in Sydney (August 23, 2019). Sydney Harbour has been a receiving port for our Pacific families since the 1790s. The re-enactment was a powerful and important landmark as part of the Australian South Sea Islander political claims. There was goodwill in terms of Commonwealth participation in that the Hon Marise Payne, Australia's Foreign Minister, senior advisors and staff from across Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as well as the Vanuatu Foreign Minister, the Hon Ralph Regenvanu, and his delegation participated as part of the ceremony.

Australian Foreign Minister Hon Marise Payne & Vanuatu Foreign Minister Hon Ralph Regenvanu lay a wreath in recognition of man Tanna prior to ASSI flag-raising @ the Australian National Maritime Museum Sydney NSW 23rd August 2019 image by Lola Forester:

The remembrance began with a re-enactment that saw a pearl lugger boarded by myself, the Vanuatu Foreign Minister, female Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson board representatives and the custom women from Vanuatu Tafea, Malampa, Shefa and Penama provinces. (They had spent a good three hours prior preparing the women in our customary attire). The lugger pulled out into the harbour and the women began to sing as we approached the wharf, where we were greeted by the traditional owners through a specific smoking ceremony as a 'Welcome to Country'. This was an overwhelming moment for me and all of those who participated as a reminder that our forebears were not First Nations, but were forcibly brought to this country. The advocacy work in association with Australian South Sea Islander organizations and Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson as a national lobby group merits attention and support for our next generation to ensure equal opportunities in education and training, as this is where we suffer most, in the same way as First Nations Australians.

The Vanuatu Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honorary Ralph Regenvanu, concluded on the day:

> "We've been working with the Australian South Sea Islander community in Australia for a long time, to see if we can elevate the status of the community in terms of being able to effect policy and even legislation, which required government work, government level work. And so I think today was very significant, because of the presence of a senior Australian government minister for the first time. I mean it's the first time since Paul Keating talked about recognising the community 25 years ago.
>
> Here's another minister who's mentioning the same, who's talking about dispossession, talking about discrimination, and so that level of recognition from the Commonwealth Government is amazing at this point in time, and it aligns with, you know, the Australian Government's increased recognition of the Pacific Islands region, the Pacific step up that the Australian Government is now adopting, and I'm very heartened to see what's happening today because I think that the Australian South Sea Islander community in Australia is going to be part of the step up between the Australian Government, the governments of the Pacific and of course the South Sea Islanders here in Australia, as our biggest diaspora ... (Regenvanu 2019).

PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER RECOGNITION DAY
25TH ANNIVERSARY

From the arrival of the *Don Juan* at the port of Brisbane in 1863, generations of South Sea Islanders have had a lasting influence on the social, cultural and economic life of our nation.

Despite immense hardship and discrimination, the community's story is one of survival and resilience. It is a story worthy of reflection and remembrance.

It is also a story of contribution and achievement as well. Australian South Sea Islanders are today represented across many prominent fields of endeavour, and there is growing appreciation of the community's unique story in our nation's shared history.

We remember also the Australian South Sea Islanders who have served as members of the defence force in times of peace and war.

The Commonwealth's recognition of the community as a distinct cultural group was an important step in an ongoing journey of understanding, and affirmed the special place of Australian South Sea Islanders within the fabric of our nation.

As you gather in celebration of the 25th anniversary of that momentous day, I join you in reflecting with pride and gratitude on the immense contribution Australian South Sea Islanders have made to our nation's success and to the ongoing ties of friendship we share with the people of the South Seas.

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia

12 August 2019

Despite the fact that Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson 2019 25th Anniversary was attended by dignitaries of the highest order, plus a letter from Prime Minister Scott Morrison as seen above, there has recently been a major issue emerging with the current Coalition Government which undermines some of the positive political work. Early in June 2020 Mr Morrison commented on radio that 'there was no slavery in Australia'. This was soon followed by an apology. However, the media had a field day with it and one program in particular received over 85,000 views on the June 12, 2020 alone.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-12/call-for-scott-morrison-visit-bundaberg-to-learn-about-slavery/12

This incident which blew up and circulated quickly gives a useful insight into the way in which the legacies of the past, which in this case operate as counter-memories to the national narrative, are contested in the contemporary political landscape. ASSIPJ responded with a forceful press release:

MEDIA RELEASE (extract) response to PMs comment June12, 2020

Australian South Sea Islanders call on Prime Minister Scott Morrison to discuss the impacts of slavery in Australia for descendants of those Blackbirded from the Pacific (1847- 1908).

Chair of the Australian South Sea Islander Association, Emelda Davis, says, 'Australian South Sea Islanders call for a discussion with Prime Minister Scott Morrison to set the record straight, discuss the impacts of slavery in Australia and redress the disadvantage that our Australian South Sea Islander communities have suffered.'

As recently as 2013, Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson worked with Mr Alex Greenwich MP, Member for Sydney, and the NSW Australian South Sea Islander community in presenting a motion that saw their people acknowledged for the pain and suffering experienced throughout the labour trade and Australian South Sea Islanders wide-ranging and over 170 year-long contributions to the nation, as descendants of Australia's Blackbirding trade.

The Hon Linda Burney, MP then in NSW Parliament spoke in favour of the motion in acknowledgment of Australian South Sea Islander peoples saying 'It provides a long-overdue acknowledgment of the story of South Sea Islanders in this country … The idea that I studied Australian modern history in school but was not told of this story is a travesty'… (Burney, 2019).

Today Hon Ms Burney echoes the same sentiment in advancing our cause. The motion received bipartisan support and members of the Federal Parliament called for this history to be included as a prominent part of the school curriculum as well as to have the health and housing needs of Australian South Sea Islander people recognised through the Australian census so the Australian people could know the official statistics for the number of South Sea Islanders living in Australia.

In 2014 Federal parliamentarians recognised Australia had a slave trade and tabled a motion in the House of Representatives and again called for Australian South Sea Islander's rightful inclusion in the Census and for various actions to redress the injustices of the past.

(Waskam) Emelda Davis is a second-generation descendant whose grandfather was taken at the age of 12 from the island on Tanauta (Tanna) and whose grandmother's mother was stolen as a child from the island of Ambae (Aoba) in Vanuatu.

Emelda says,

For over a decade we have lobbied government representatives for the much needed support to establish a national representative organisation that will work in with government to support our marginalised communities that suffer the generational effects of the trauma suffered throughout the labour trade …

The employers of our peoples inflicted violence and degrading behaviour. At their hands, our forebears received poor food, clothing, rations, sanitation. They provided no industrial safety, scant medical conditions and the living conditions under which they were forced to live were inhumane, to say the least. It's all on the record. And when the White Australia Policy was introduced in 1901 some 7,000 South Sea Islanders were forced to leave Australia. Many could not return to their islands as they had lost their land rights in the islands they came from. Just like our brothers, the First Nations peoples of Australia, whom we have stood beside in our fight against the racism we have experienced since colonisation, we demand an apology for all that has happened to us.

We demand that the government face up to the horrors of our past treatment in this country and come up with some solutions for the economic, educational, health, social and cultural disadvantages, we as a community have endured and continue to endure in this country. It is a time for a rethink and action.

On the home page of the Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson website sits a signed letter from Prime Minister Scott Morrison in recognition of 25 years since Australian South Sea Islanders were recognised by the Commonwealth in 1994 as a distinct cultural group who value our cultural heritage and islands of origin.

Shireen Malamoo today is 84 years strong and is an honorary patron and Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson co-founder along with Dr Bonita Mabo.

Shireen is one of Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commissioners (ATSIC), whose grandmother was taken from the island of Tongoa in Vanuatu and her family hales from the chief line of Tom Tiplomata in Vanuatu.

Shireen says: … 'Racism is calculated and hidden, which is evident in the non- recognition of our South Sea Islander history. When you steal something you hide history. Tell the truth and we all grow up.'

Pastor Ray Minniecon, 70 years strong, says … 'Racism is ignorance and it's frustrating to work with a government that is ignorant of its history. I am the grandson of a slave who was forcibly removed from Ambrym Island in Vanuatu'.

Dr Lilon Bandler, daughter of legendary civil rights activist and human rights campaigner for the 1967 'YES' vote Mrs Faith Bandler AO, sent through a comment posted on twitter in response to a fact check …'There was slavery in Australia.' (Bandler, July 23, 2020)

Lilon's grandfather was also stolen from Ambrym Island in Vanuatu. Uninformed statements such as we have seen with our Prime Minister need to be retracted and apologised for. As a representative of our community and recent recipient of the 2020 NSW Premier and Settlement Services International Human Rights award for advocacy across the nation and globe for the plight of her people, Emelda Davis, requests an audience with Mr Morrison to discuss a way forward in these times of despair and uncertainty for her severely marginalised community, who suffer the same disadvantages as our First Nations communities.

Conclusion

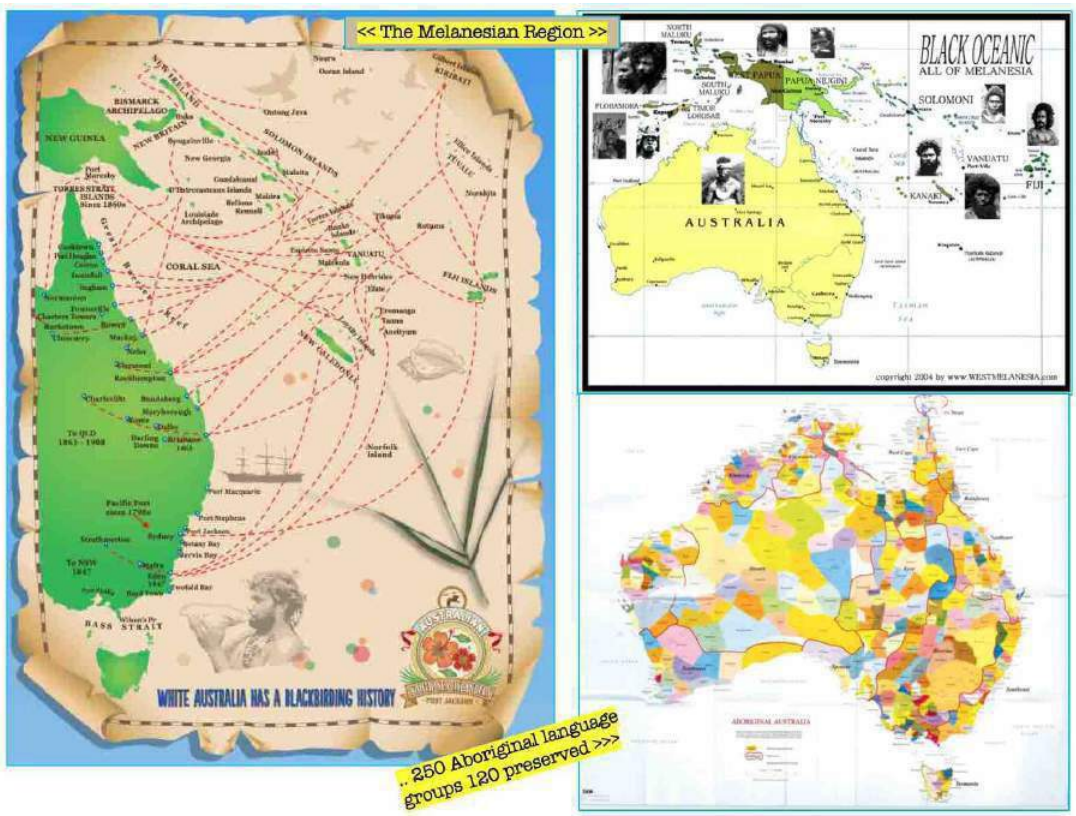
Just as Recognition in 1994 was only part of the way towards social justice for Australian South Sea Islanders, the promotion of a widespread understanding of our invisible and tragic Blackbirding history represents the next. In this context, the story of Australian South Sea Islander resilience and survival, emerging formally through this thesis, largely through the lens of the experiences of my Australian South Sea Islander community in the Tweed Heads region of northern NSW, represents the next chapter. Hopefully, the facts and insights of this investigation will facilitate the emergence of a revitalized Australian South Sea Islander voice to Federal Parliament and facilitate the addressing of past injustices to Australian South Sea Islander peoples and their culture by the Australian nation. It is to be hoped that since the Pacific and its peoples have recently become more important strategically to the Australian Government, given the growing influence of China in the region, the recognition of Australian South Sea Islander

peoples' rights, as noted in this thesis, might become of increasing importance to catalyzing much needed changes.

One of the key findings of this thesis has been the recognition of the importance in the wider Queensland story of Australian South Sea Islander Blackbirding, the importance of the Australian South Sea Islander communities of the northern NSW Tweed region in progressing the self-determination agendas of Australian South Sea Islander peoples. They are not a 'remnant' group or the tail end of a Queensland history that is not of 'national' significance, but have adapted and survived through resilience from a corner of NSW, with their own 'memoryscape', and while many have settled now in other states of Australia, this area needs to be acknowledged as a region of cultural importance to Australian South Sea Islander history.

This important Australian and Melanesian story remains unknown to the large majority of our nation. As we have seen, my 'Standpoint theory' approach has allowed me to acknowledge a mixed ancestry like so many of my community, but to draw strength from the South Sea Islander people and the place where I grew up that has helped shaped my identity.

As a result of the continuing impact of colonialism, it is not a Standpoint that can ever be exclusively Australian but encompasses a whole civilization, moving back and forth as I have in the thesis, as part of a broader Melanesian geographical area and kinship. It looks out from Australia, not inwards to a traditional understanding of nation.



I have also shown how despite extensive poverty and disadvantage across generations from the early twentieth century, South Sea Islander/ Australian South Sea Islanders have been able to organize and take their place as part of Australia's Black activist histories dating back to Federation as early as 1901 with the first Pacific Island Association formed in Mackay Queensland.

The continuum of advocacy work by leaders from this region began in the 1960s and has continued beyond, importantly, fighting in solidarity with First Nations people for justice. In the context of securing a stronger sense of our own identity and sense of place, the stories of this thesis have advocated strongly for the benefits of reconnecting with our islands and families.

Directions for future research and advocacy

This is the first academic study by an Australian South Sea Islander of the Tweed area, which lays the foundations for generations of South Sea Islander/ Australian South Sea Islander peoples to gain insights into Australian South Sea Islander Blackbirding history that relates to this period. It is Bbased on interviews of many women who for too long have had their strength and resilience in this history overlooked. We now have available a growing body of work on the women of the Pacific Islands, and some excellent work by scholars on the male experience in Australia, but gender remains a critical element in

the particular Australian experience of Pacific Islander people and their survival. A culturally appropriate ethics protocol needs to be developed and applied to future demographic research that includes and works in with South Sea Islander/ Australian South Sea Islander cultural maintenance community organisations. Research and development of a national 'South Sea Islander/ Australian South Sea Islander Cultural Protocol' guide as per First Nations Intellectual Cultural Property (ICP) processes should be developed in collaboration across key South Sea Islander/ Australian South Sea Islander organisations, recognized community groups and leaders. A South Sea Islander/ Australian South Sea Islander Cultural Protocol Guide would be inclusive of specific cultural practices derived from our islands of origin in creating a sound understanding of respect for community engagement practices and custom. We also need demographers who can target specific areas of research in order to build the Australian South Sea Islander profile.

Over the last few years, we have specifically targeted Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Electoral Commission collaboration with key Australian South Sea Islander registered organisations and encouraged community groups' research on Australian South Sea Islander community demographic, in order to generate political consciousness and build our community profile. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community demographic has been highlighted through the research of Clive Moore as being some 40% Aboriginal peoples having South Sea Islander / Australian South Sea Islander direct bloodlines or intermarriage on our mainland.

Furthermore, given the influx of SSI into the Torres Strait Islands through fishing industries and the work of the London Missionaries as early as 1860 at a guestimate some 60% of Torres Strait Islanders are of South Sea Islander/ Australian South Sea Islander descent. My definition of the Melanesian region in this research strengthens our Melanesian kinship derived through some of the oldest living societies and cultures in the world. So we also need more work on our ancestry and history, which is entwined with First Nations people.

People of mixed descent have long been a source of great anxiety in Australia, which has led to concealment of relationships between these groups and their mutual kinship and heritage, especially in some of the missions and reserves such as Cherbourg in Queensland and Palm Island. It is apparent from Chapter 4 that we need to continue to

fight for our heritage. Memorials and 'the duty to remember' have now become key components of the transitional justice movements around the world. They are part of the global movement to commemorate injustices that has become important to healing and reconciliation for peoples for whom trauma caused by wars and colonialism is still with us in the present.

Finally, I want to emphasise the importance of passing on an inheritance to younger generations of ourAustralian South Sea Islander ancestry. These are the important goals we have outlined to strive for with our memory activism in the future: the establishment of an Australian South Sea Islander research centre in support of social justice advocacy in all areas; education and scholarship, connection to Islander culture,

our heritage reflected in documentation, clear vision, a reconnection to country and culture, one voice national body, equal opportunities, education, inclusion of the South Sea Islander history in the curriculum, dual citizenship, national database and register of South Sea Islanders.

My son, Shola Diop born in 1988, has the last word:

> *… Yeah so in terms of the legacy I guess … you know, this is something that's been in our family for a long time, but I think that, just kind of, you know, working with Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson, working under Mum, has just been, like, one of the biggest inspirations. You know, founding the organization back in 2009 with Mum, and my Grandma, who's now passed, Nellie Enares, just seeing like, the pure passion from a grass roots, from you know, a grass roots perspective, and the fact that, you know, they did this, and Mum has been doing it, and she's put all of this on today, and into the future, pretty much running off nothing, running off fumes, you know, getting, you know, help where she can get it, but pretty much just labouring away in the front room, you know, of the house that, you know, we've lived in for the last 25 years, and she's just doing it out of pure drive.*
>
> *You know, she gave up, you know, her career, she gave up her life, a long time ago to be able to service her community, and this is the type of thing that … the values that she put into me and she put into my sister, she's put into other young people in the community, and which is why, you know, I've done my career in finance, but just by, kind of, being around Mum, and other Elders in*

our community who've fought so hard, it's kind of instilled in me that, you know, I can't just do this just for money, I have to take what I've learnt, take what they've enabled me to be able to achieve in the world, and kind of put that back and to be able to help in my community in the way that I can. So the way that I see it is that, you know, Mum, and you know, people like my Grandma, they have always been the activists and they've kind of had, you know, that community passion, but the way that I see it is that they've done that for the last decade to enable me to come into a position where I can make some influence, especially in business and especially in finance.

So I see my career, or I see, you know, what I'm able to do, or my potential, that's what I see as their legacy and that's what I'm most grateful for and that I hope I can live up to, and do some good with, yeah.' (Shola Diop, interview, 2020)

My daughter Binette and I farewell my son Shola. Shola Diop is the first Australian South Sea Islander to be accepted by the University of Oxford in 2019-20 (Said Business School) in the United Kingdom to acquire a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) on 'Impact Investment'. Shola was selected as one of the 20 students across the university to participate in the 'Impact Leadership' course, 'Mapping the System' a global competition. He also made the Oxford Blues Men's Basketball team. The 'Said Business School' is a world-renowned institution in the furtherance of social enterprise.

APPENDIX 1

Extract of the motion below in NSW parliament:

(Motion, Legislative Assembly, NSW Parliament)

Mr. ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [10.32 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

1. notes 25 August 2013 as Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day, marking 150 years since about 50,000 people on 62,000 indenture contracts from around 80 Pacific Islands were recruited or kidnapped to work in sugar cane fields where they were exploited;
2. notes the Australian South Sea Islanders suffered inhumane treatment, the highest mortality rates of any immigrant group to Australia and mass deportations when the White Australia policy was introduced;
3. notes many of the 40,000 Australian South Sea Islander descendants who live in Australia remain marginalised and disadvantaged;
4. notes thousands of Australian South Sea Islanders live in New South Wales but an official number has not been established;
5. notes then Premier Carr's memorandum of understanding of 1995 called for adequate programs and services;
6. acknowledges the Community Relations Commission's initiatives in relation to South Sea Islanders and requests the Government to liaise with the National Body for Australian South Sea Islanders in preparing a demographic, social and economic community profile; and
7. acknowledges the contribution the Australian South Sea Islander community makes to New South Wales and its history in Australia.

I welcome to the Chamber Danny Togo, Shireen Malamoo and Lola Forrester, community leaders of the Australian South Sea Islander community. Today is an historic day for the New South Wales Parliament as we come together to acknowledge the suffering, the exploitation and the role in our history that Australian South Sea Islanders have played. First, I thank the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and his staff for agreeing to meet with the Australian South Sea Islanders and to work with them. I thank also the Government for its support of the motion. Between 1863 and 1904 about 50,000 people were recruited or kidnapped from about 80 Pacific Islands to work on sugarcane fields in Queensland on 62,000 indenture contracts. Ninety-five per cent were adolescent and young adult males; the rest were women. In the first two decades kidnappings and underhand recruitments were prevalent; and although recruitments became more common in later years, kidnappings accounted for about 10 per cent to 15 per cent of labourers throughout. I have heard shocking stories of islanders being coerced onto boats, having their canoes sunk and being detained through force. Even recruitment contracts took advantage of islanders, who came from small-scale societies, were paid cheap goods and legally bound in a way that they could not understand. Islanders were often cruelly exploited. They were beaten, starved and whipped. Rare police inspections were not unannounced. Justice was rare in cases brought to the courts. In the 1870s the Reverend J. C. Kirby described seeing a group of islanders walking through Dalby without shoes, accompanied by armed men on horseback, as a scene from Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Australian South Sea Islanders see themselves as descendants of slaves. Indeed, Many people regard this as Australia's slave trade. Coming from isolated islands, islanders lacked immunity to common diseases, including tuberculosis, pneumonia, bronchitis, dysentery, measles and chicken pox, causing massive mortality rates. Eighty-one out of 1,000 islanders died in their first year in Australia, and overall 74 out of 1,000 died. At the time mortality rates for Australian Europeans of the same age were nine or 10 in 1,000. While official records show that 14,564 islanders died, the true figure is likely to be more than 15,000, given data collection gaps. Yet the Australian Government continued the program for more than 40 years, knowing its impact.

APPENDIX 2

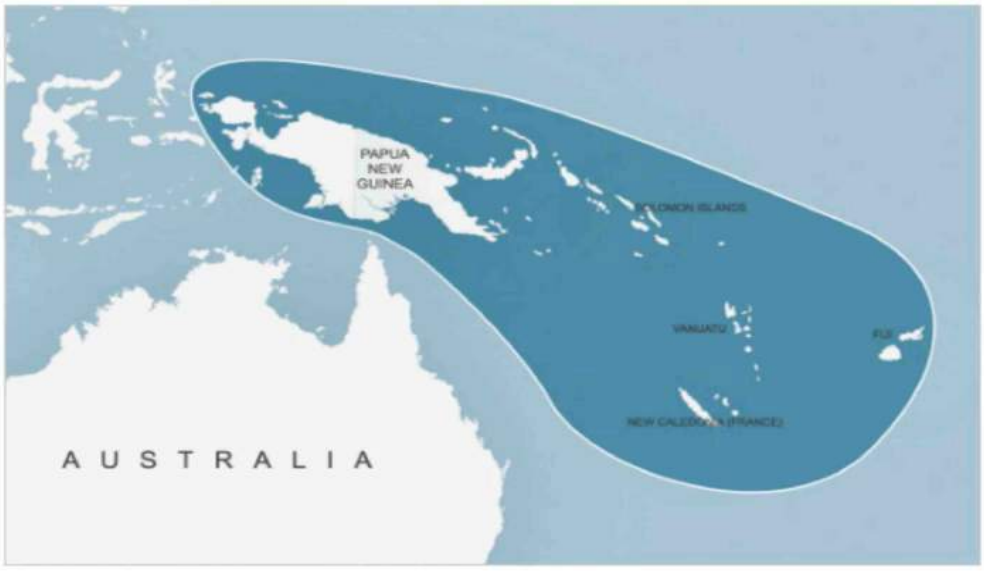
Emelda Davis DNA ancestry

Appendix 1
Children of the Sugar Slaves – Black and Resilient, 2020
(Waskam) Emelda Davis – DNA (2pages)

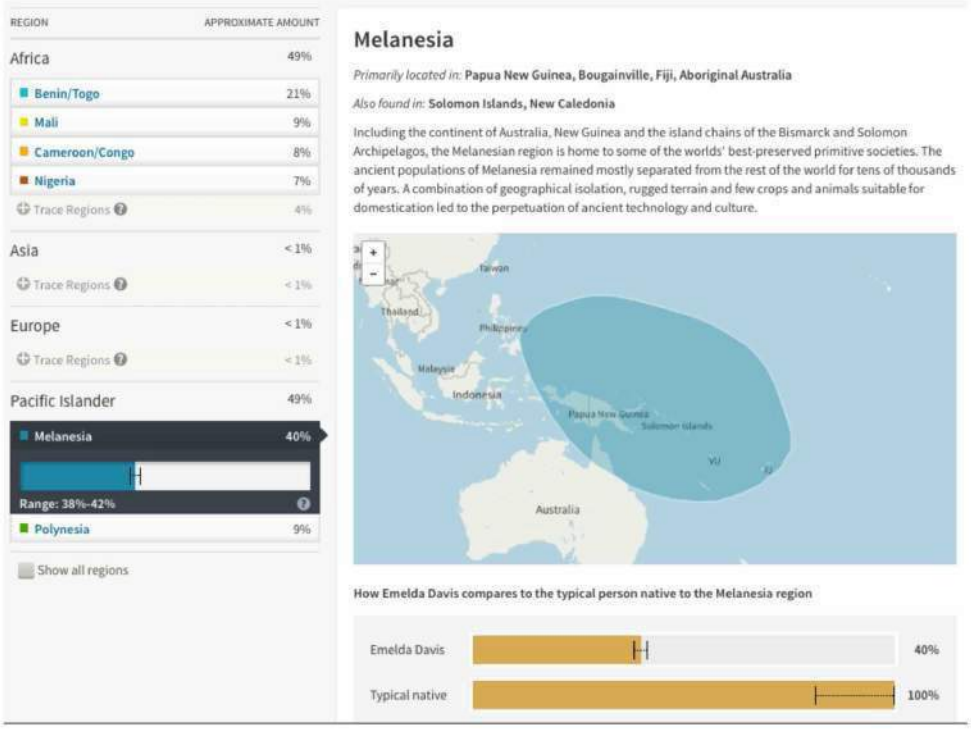
Population History

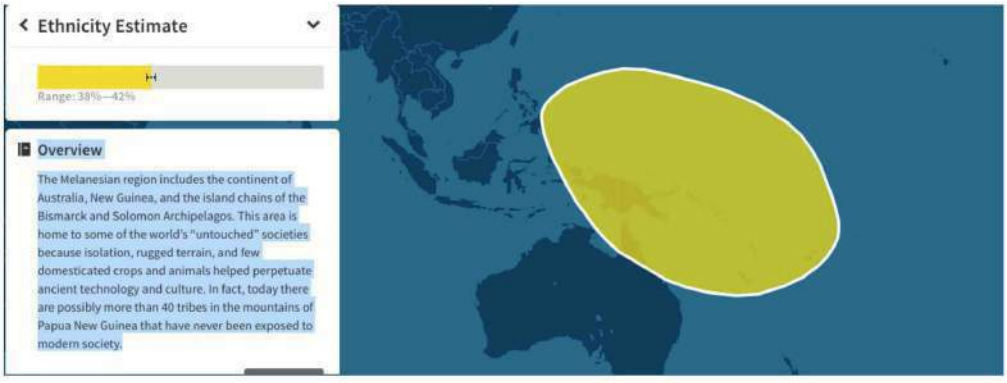
The first settlers

The Melanesia region includes Papua New Guinea, Australia and the island chains to the east including Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji. The word "Melanesian" is more of a geographical name than a description of an ethnic group, so its meaning in this context is somewhat vague. But, in general, the indigenous population of the region can be broken down into pre-Austronesian (including Papuans and Aboriginal Australians) and Austronesian.



The Melanesia region

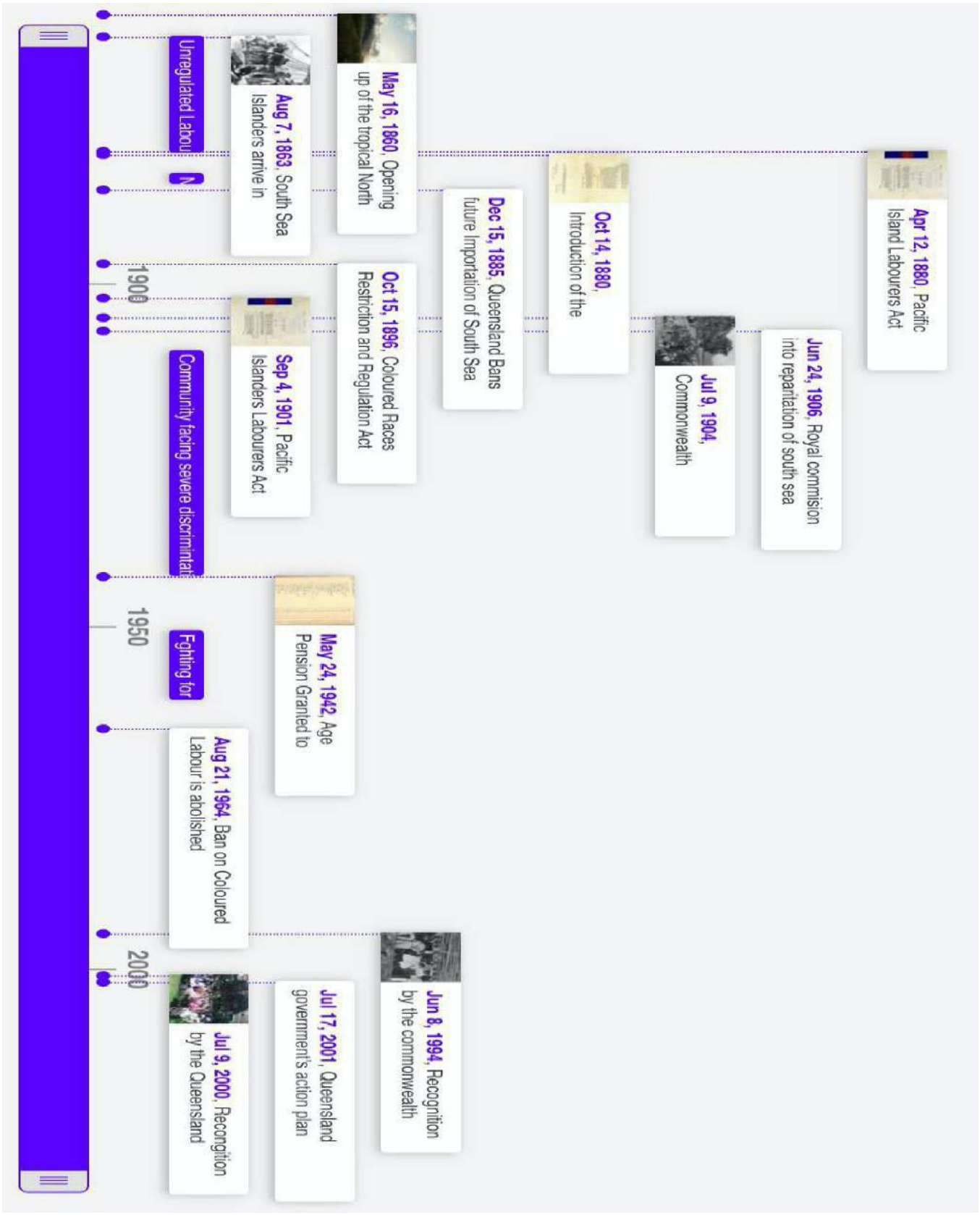

REGION
APPROXIMATE AMOUNT
Africa 49%
Benin/Togo 21%
Mali 9%
Cameroon/Congo 8%
Nigeria 7%
Trace Regions 4%
Asia <1%
Trace Regions <1%
Europe <1%
Trace Regions <1%
Pacific Islander 49%
Melanesia 40%
Range: 38%-42%
Polynesia 9%
Show all regions
Melanesia
Primarily located in: Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, Fiji, Aboriginal Australia
Also found in: Solomon Islands, New Caledonia
Including the continent of Australia, New Guinea and the island chains of the Bismarck and Solomon Archipelagos, the Melanesian region is home to some of the worlds' best-preserved primitive societies. The ancient populations of Melanesia remained mostly separated from the rest of the world for tens of thousands of years. A combination of geographical isolation, rugged terrain and few crops and animals suitable for domestication led to the perpetuation of ancient technology and culture.
Taiwan
Thailand
Philippines
Malaysia
Indonesia
Papua New Guinea
Solomon Islands
Australia
How Emelda Davis compares to the typical person native to the Melanesia region
Emelda Davis 40%
Typical native 100%


Ethnicity Estimate
Range: 38%—42%
Overview
The Melanesian region includes the continent of Australia, New Guinea, and the island chains of the Bismarck and Solomon Archipelagos. This area is home to some of the world's "untouched" societies because isolation, rugged terrain, and few domesticated crops and animals helped perpetuate ancient technology and culture. In fact, today there are possibly more than 40 tribes in the mountains of Papua New Guinea that have never been exposed to modern society.

APPENDIX 3

History timeline of South Sea Islanders Australia

https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/history-of-south-sea-islanders-in-australia



Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Chronology 1-19

AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

1790s

- Once New South Wales was established, so too was a food trade in salted pork to Tahiti. Pacific or South Sea Islanders began to arrive in Australia, to Sydney and Hobart, as boats' crews.

1788-1820s

- The Pacific frontier was the most important economic element of British colonialism in Australia.

1847

- First 122 indentured ASSI from the Loyalty Islands (now included in New Caledonia) and New Hebrides (Vanuatu) brought to Eden in NSW by entrepreneur Bob Boyd. The whole venture was a disaster.

1840s-1850s

- Some SSI made their way to Sydney as boats' crews. There were a few working on the docks in Sydney.

1860

- The first Pacific Islanders are brought to work in the bêche-de-mer industry at Lizard Island in North Queensland.

1863

- The first 67 South Sea Islanders arrived in Brisbane to work on Robert Towns' cotton plantation, Townsvale, on the Logan River. There were the first of 62,000 contracted labourers brought in a variety of circumstances from kidnapping to voluntary enlistment to work in the Queensland pastoral, maritime and sugar industries, 1863-1904. Quite large numbers came more than once and the overall number of individuals is thought to have been around 50,000. Ninety-five per cent were males aged in their teens to mid-thirties.

1863-1870

- All ASSI labourers to Queensland were from the Loyalty Islands (now part of New Caledonia) and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu).

1868

- The *Polynesian Labourers Act* was passed by Queensland Parliament to regulate the labour trade.

1869

- The Queensland Government created a Select Committee on the operation of the *Polynesian Labourers Act*.

1871

- London Missionary Society missionaries arrived in Torres Strait.

- The first Solomon Islanders entered the Queensland labour trade.

1872

- The Torres Strait Islands were annexed to Queensland (with a further extension in 1879).
- Britain passed the *Pacific Islander Protection Act* as an attempt to govern the labour trade to Queensland and Fiji.

1875

- Britain annexed Fiji.
- Britain passed an amendment to the *Pacific Islander Protection Act* as a further attempt to govern the labour trade to Queensland and Fiji. This enabled the establishment of the Western Pacific High Commission.

1880

- The Queensland Government passed the *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act*, the first major legislative revision since 1868.

1882

- The Anglican Selwyn Mission was begun by Mary Robinson at Mackay.

1882-1884

- Queensland labour recruiting was extended into the archipelagoes east of New Guinea.

1883

- Queensland attempted to annex South-east New Guinea.

1884

- Britain annexed South-east New Guinea as a Protectorate.
- The Queensland Government passed an amendment to the 1880 Act to limit the employment of ASSI to tropical agriculture but created an exemption category known as Ticket Holders who had arrived before September 1879 and were exempt from all further special legislation. There were 835 in 1884, 716 in 1892, 704 in 1901 and 691 in 1906.

1884–1885

- The Queensland Government established a Royal Commission into Recruitment of Labour in New Guinea and Adjacent Islands.

1885

- Queensland ceased labour recruiting in the archipelagoes east of New Guinea and henceforth recruited only from islands now included in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.
- Queensland signaled the end of the labour trade by 1890.
- Queensland introduced an amendment to the 1880 Act to begin the Pacific Islanders' Fund, partly to distribute the wages of deceased ASSI.

1886

- The Queensland Kanaka Mission was begun in Bundaberg by the Young family (more informally the mission began in 1882).

1888

- Britain and France established a joint naval administration in the New Hebrides.

1892

- Queensland Premier Griffith announced the extension of the labour trade "for a definite but limited period of, say ten years".

1893

- Britain annexed the British Solomon Islands Protectorate; further expanded in 1899.

1901

- There were 9,327 ASSI in Australia, spread from Torres Strait to the Tweed District in Northern NSW. The new Commonwealth Government of Australia legislated for a 'White Australia Policy', including the Pacific Islanders Act which ordered the deportation of all ASSI.
- The Pacific Islanders' Association was formed in Mackay to argue against deportation and to achieve better conditions for ASSI.

1903

- Between 1903 and 1906 eight petitions were presented to the Queensland and Commonwealth governments on behalf of ASSI due to be deported. In March, two hundred ASSI from Rockhampton petitioned the Governor of Queensland.
- In September, 3,000 ASSI signed a petition to King Edward VII.
- The Commonwealth Government introduced the *Sugar Bounty Act* to

subsidise sugar produced only with white labour.

1905

- The Governor of Fiji agreed to take Queensland Islander deportees.
- Prime Minister Watson visited Rockhampton and received a petition.

1906

- A Queensland Royal Commission into the Sugar Industry recommended certain categories of ASSI be allowed to remain in Australia.
- The Pacific Islanders' Association was revived and wrote to Winston Churchill, Secretary of State. 200 Islanders attended a meeting to plan tactics at the Royal Commission.
- In September H.D. Tonga and J. Bomassy went to Melbourne to meet Prime Minister Deakin.
- In October 1906 the *Pacific Islanders Act* was amended.
- The QKM, Anglican and Presbyterian Missions to ASSI were closed. The QKM moved to the Solomon Islands and became the South Sea Evangelical Mission (later Church).

1907

- 427 ASSI left to work in Fiji. Along with the existing labour recruits there they form the base of the present-day Solomoni community.

1907-1908

- Except for the exempted categories, all remaining ASSI were deported. Around

2,000 remained and form the nucleus of the present-day ASSI community.

1908

- Britain and France established the New Hebrides Condominium. The Pacific Islanders Branch of the Queensland Immigration Department was closed.
- Amongst the ASSSI who remained, there were 150 farmers in the Mackay district. The trend had been since the late 19th century to lease small plots of land on steep hill sides, shunned by Europeans, to the Islanders for cane growing.

1913

- Queensland's *Sugar Cultivation Act* required non-Europeans to apply for certificates of exemption in order to be employed in any capacity in sugar growing. They were forced to take a reading and writing test with 50 words in any language as directed by the Inspector before they were allowed to grow or cultivate sugar cane in Queensland.

1919-1921

- Queensland's Arbitration Court ruled that no 'coloured' labour could be employed on cane farms, except where the farm was owned by a countryman, and in 1921 the Court granted preference in employment to members of the Australian Workers Union (AWU). The effect of the 1900s-1910s occupational restrictions was to relegate ASSI, notably the original immigrant generation, to the more menial, poorly paid and itinerant farm work.

1920s

- Banks refused to lend money to ASSI, leaving them increasingly insecure given increasing mechanisation in the sugar industry.
- In the 1920s and 1930s most of the ASSI followed prominent Islanders into the Assemblies of God and Seventh-day Adventist Churches. In Rockhampton several families remained Anglican.

1930s

- By the late 1930s only a handful of Islander farms remained.
- Elderly ASSI were paid an 'Indigence Allowance' in the 1930s, that was converted to an Old Age Pension in 1942 once the restriction on non-Europeans receiving the pension was removed.

1940s-1950s

After the war, occupational restrictions were lifted however the increasing mechanisation of the harvesting process in the sugar industry meant that jobs as cane-cutters and field labourers disappeared. ASSI men were forced to find work labouring or blue collar work, often less well paid, in the sugar mills, on the railways, or in the new coal towns in central Queensland. In the non-sugar areas, they engaged in cash-crop farming, in tropical fruit production (such as banana growing in northern NSW), or in seasonal employment in the meatworks in Rockhampton, Mackay and Bowen.

1960

- University of Queensland history postgraduate student Peter Tan interviewed 19 ASSI, including some of

the original immigrant generation. He did not complete his research or publish his findings.

1963

- Alex Daniel Solomon, from Guadalcanal Island, died at Mackay in 1963, the second last of the original immigrants there.

1964

- Ohnonee (Thomas Robbins) died at Mackay, the last of the original immigrant generation in that district.
- Linguist Tom Dutton recorded interviews with Peter Santo and Tom Lammon, two of the last survivors of the original immigrant generation in North Queensland. These interviews were published in 1980. Tom Lammon died on 11 August 1965 and Peter Santo died on 27 March 1966, said to have been 105 years old.

1965

- The Queensland Government removed legislative restrictions imposed on non-Europeans, principally through the *Aliens Act* of 1965, which repealed legislation such as the *Sugar Cultivation Act* of 1913.

1967

- Peter Corris, then a PhD student at the Australian National University, interviewed descendants of ASSI in Solomon Islands, Fiji and Australia. None of his interviews have survived.
- George Dan (also known as George Melekula) died in Cairns, thought to have been the last of the original

immigrant generation. (The death may have occurred early in 1968.)

1972

- The Australian South Sea Islanders United Council was established by Robert and Phyllis Corowa. By 1974 there were branches in several areas of NSW and Queensland.

1973-1981

- Between 1973 and 1981 Clive Moore and Patricia Mercer, PhD students at James Cook University and the Australian National University, recorded more than 100 tapes with ASSI.

1975

- Papua New Guinea becomes an independent nation.
- The first national ASSIUC conference was held in Mackay in May. Delegates attended from Ayr, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville, Gladstone, Nambour, Bowen, Tweed Heads, Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra.
- Prompted by an ASSIUC delegation, in August 1975 the Commonwealth Government established an Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) to investigate ASSI claims of disadvantage.

1976

- The Queensland Government under Premier Bjelke-Petersen appointed Noel Fatnownaas Special Commissioner for Pacific Islanders and recognised ASSI as a "distinct ethnic group". Noel Fatnowna held this position until 1984 when the

Commission replaced by an Aboriginal Coordinating Council, the functions of which excluded ASSI.

1977

- Faith Bandler published *Wacvie*.
- The Interdepartmental Committee Report was published in July 1977. It concluded that "Their socioeconomic status and conditions have generally been below those of the white community thus giving the group the appearance of being a deprived coloured community." Thirty-seven per cent of those surveyed lived below the poverty line (as defined by the Federal Commission of Inquiry into Poverty). The comparative figure for the total Australian community was 12.5 per cent.

1978

- Solomon Islands became an independent nation.

1979

- The *Forgotten People*, three hours of ABC Radio programs of interviews with ASSI, produced by Matthew Peacock, were put to air, and published as a book, *The Forgotten People: A History of the Australian South Sea Island Community*, edited by Clive Moore, in 1979.

1970s

- By the late 1970s ASSIUC ceased as a political force, beset by internal rivalries and splits, although in name ASSIUC continued to operate until the 1990s.

1980

- Vanuatu becomes an independent nation.
- Faith Bandler and Len Fox published *Marani in Australia*.

1984

- Faith Bandler published *Welou: My Brother*.

1988

- The Queensland Government gave ASSI full access to the programs of the Department of Community Services, which primarily catered for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.
- Thomas Lowah published *Ebed Mer (My Life)*.

1989

- Noel Fatnowna published *Fragments of a Lost Heritage*.
- Faith Bandler published *Turning the Tide: A Personal History of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders*.

1991

- Evatt Foundation released a report on ASSI.

1992

- The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission published *The Call for Recognition* on ASSI.
- Mabel Edmund published *No Regrets*.

1994

- The Commonwealth Government recognised ASSI as a disadvantaged ethnic group.

1995

- ASSI historical exhibition toured in Australia and the Pacific.
- NSW Premier Bob Carr sent a memorandum to his departments asking that they support inclusion of ASSI as a special needs group.

1996

- Nasuven Enares began the ASSI Secretariat, located initially in Sydney.
- Jacqui Wright and Francis Wimbis published *The Secret: A Story of Slavery in Australia.*
- Mabel Edmund published *Hello, Johnny!*
- *Australian South Sea Islanders – Storian blong olgeta we oli bin go katem sugarken long Ostrelia*, by the Australian National Maritme Museum.

1997

- Clive Moore, Max Quanchi and Sharon Bennett published two books of curriculum materials in collaboration with the ASSI community: *Australian South Sea Islanders: A Curriculum Resource for Primary Schools*, and *Australian South Sea Islanders: A Curriculum Resource for Secondary Schools*, Brisbane: Australian Agency for International Development, in association with the Department of Education, Queensland, 1997.

2000

- The Queensland Government recognised ASSI as a disadvantaged ethnic community.
- Cristine Andrew and Penny Cook edited, *Fields of Sorrow: An Oral History of Descendants of the South Sea Islanders (Kanakas).*

2001

- *Refined White* – Centenary of Federation Project
  A touring exhibition and secondary school resource which examines the struggle that governments and the sugar industry had in meeting the demands of the White Australia policy and its social impact on Australia's the South Sea Islander people. The project celebrated the culture and contribution of the Australian South Sea Islander people. Australian Sugar Industry Museum, This exhibition toured 12 national, state and regional venues in ACT, Queensland and NSW, 2001–2004

2002

- "*Across the Coral Sea: Loyalty Islanders in Queensland*" exhibition.
- A photographic exhibition based on historical images from the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland which portray the way in which South Sea Islanders arrived, lived and worked in Queensland in the nineteenth century.
- Marilyn Lake published *Faith: Faith Bandler, Gently Activist.*
- Terese Fatnowna published *Faith of Our Fathers: A journey of Three Fatnownas, 1866-1999.*

- *"My Island Homes"*, Exhibition, Floating Lands Festival 2011 Butter Factory Arts Centre, Cooroy, Sunshine Coast Regional Council
- Collin Terare and Brisbane community hosted an ASSI / ni Vanuatu delegate forum at Bald Hills Queensland which initiated the call for the establishment of a national voice.

2011

2012

- Cedric Andrew Andrew, born at Sandy Creek outside of Mackay in 1911, died on 16 October 2012. He was then the oldest ASSI in Australia. In 1931 he married Marva Rutha Malasum with whom he had seven children. His grandparents, Charles Querro and Lucy Zimmie were kidnapped from Ambae (Oba) Island in Vanuatu.
- The Wantok 2012 conference held in Bundaberg. ASSI (Port Jackson) Branch elected as the National Interim Committee main coordinators Emelda Davis and Danny Togo.
- Sydney Lord Mayor, Clover Moore opened 2012—20 Years on since The Call for Recognition dinner for the ASSI.PJ.

2013

- The 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first ASSI in August 1863 was commemorated in various places in Queensland and New South Wales in various forms, from formal dinners to exhibitions and booklets.
- *Joskeleigh: Homeward bound*, Joskeleigh Museum
- Exhibitions as part of ASSI 150 SEQ Commemorative Program:

- *Echoes ASSI 150*, The Centre Beaudesert
  The Australian South Sea Islanders, State Library of Queensland
  Journeys to Sugaropolis, City of Gold Coast
  Two islands, one home, the story of belonging, Artspace Mackay
  Sugar, Queensland Art Gallery
  Journey blong yumi: Australian South Sea Islander 150, Logan Art Gallery

- Key Events as part of ASSI 150 SEQ Commemorative Program:

- *Weaving the Way*, Multicultural Art Centre
  Memories of a Forgotten People, Cultural Precinct, Brisbane
  This is Our Story, Commemorative Walk, Harvest Point Christian Outreach Centre, Beaudesert

- Publications as part of ASSI 150 SEQ Commemorative Program:

- *Journeys to Sugaropolis*, City of Gold Coast
  ASSI 150 SEQ Newsletters August 2012 – November 2013, ASSI 150 SEQ Committee
  ASSI 150 Website, ASSI 150 SEQ Committee http://www.assi150.com.au
  ASSI Blog, State Library Queensland http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/assi/

- A Commemoration Ceremony was held in Port Vila on 28th July in remembrance of the anniversary of the first ni-Vanuatu to go to NSW and Queensland, hosted by the Vanuatu Government. The PM called for an apology for descendants. Guest speakers Mrs Bonita Mabo, Emelda Davis and symposium participants Professor Clive Moore, Associate Professor Doug Hunt. Over 100 ASSI community delegates attended the ceremonies.

- The New South Wales Government recognised ASSI as a disadvantaged ethnic group. The motion was put by the Member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich. There were seven recommendations that saw bipartisan support.
- Sydney University partnered with the ASSI.PJ to deliver '*Sydney Ideas – Human Rights for a Forgotten People*' symposium in recognition of 150 years for ASSIs in Queensland.
- A digital media campaign focused on historical awareness of the atrocities faced by SSI/ASSI was produced by the ASSI.PJ in recognition of 150 years for Queensland.
- The Commonwealth approved significant funding under the 'Community Cohesion' grants initiative to capacity build in ASSI communities, to the value of $50,000.
- In November the Wantok 2013 conference was held at the Queensland State Library in Brisbane 1-3 November. The result was nomination of a national representative secretariat and board.
- Wantok Tweed Heads was held between 7-8 December in support of a national voice, supported by 200 community members.

2014

- Wantok Mackay QLD was held between 28-31 March and saw the election of a national governance working group to develop a national constitution.
- May 15th National Solomon Islands Museum 'Blackbirding' exhibition as a part of the International Museums day saw ASSI delegates participate, on invitation from the Solomon Islands

Government, as a part of the opening ceremony speeches and in the day 2 symposium accompanied by Professor Clive Moore, Clacy Fatnowna, Emelda Davis and Marcia Eves.

- Raechel Ivey (née Togo) was the first Australian South Sea Islander to obtain dual citizenship with Vanuatu, September under a new provision of the Vanuatu Constitution.
- Wantok NSW capacity building funded under the Community Relations Commission assisting Pacific Island and broader community understanding of a shared history.
- September 1st saw a Federal Parliament motion of regret and a call for inclusion of ASSI in census, education, training and health programs as well as diabetes research
- Emelda Davis president of ASSI.PJ of the NSW Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) (ASSI.PJ) was invited deliver a paper on ASSI History and the Melanesian perspective on indentured labour at the Port Louis, Mauritius international conference "Towards the establishment of the Indentured Labour Route" in acknowledgement of the 180th Anniversary of the first arrival of Indianindentured labour at Aapravasi Ghat on 2nd November 180 years ago. Her presentation received a standing ovation.
- MUA VOYAGE arrival ceremony saw ASSI.PJ Emelda Davis Mau committee member and Shireen Malamoo present to over 1,000 people at the Maritime Museum Sydney docks where Pacific Leaders sailed into Sydney Harbour bringing a message of people, oceans and climate change on the opening day of the IUCN World Parks Congress 2014

- Christensen Fund supported Capacity-Building Workshop held in Honiara, Solomon Islands National Museum between 28 November to 1 December titled Findem Baek Famili

2015

- Wantok NSW Lismore from 19th to 22nd January in collaboration with Shelly Nagas and ASSI.PJ an historical 4 day capacity building workshop hosted at the Historical Museum.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Interviews by (Waskam) Emelda Davis (held in Australian South Sea Islander Port Jackson collection)

1. Corowa, Lorraine Chinderah Northern NSW, 2017.
2. Edwards, Delma. (nee Long) Tweed Heads, Northern New South Wales. 2017,
3. George, Lydia. Canberra ACT, February 10,2020. Phone interview transcribed
4. Haines, Peniana. 2017 Sydney NSW, 2017.
5. Johnson, Gordon . Lismore Northern NSW, 2017.
6. Jascek, Lola (nee Noter) Lismore Northern NSW, 2017.
7. Malamoo, Shireen. Redfern NSW, 2017.
8. Mooney, Graham 21 June 2017 Tranby College Sydney (now deceased)
9. Pearson, Angus and Jennifer, Tweed Heads 2017
10. Skinner, Dianna, on Tweed Australian South Sea Islander cruise Sydney December 9, 2017
11. Toar, Wilma, on TASSIA Cruise Sydney, December 9, 2017
12. Togo, Geoffrey, Chinderah, Northern NSW 2017
13. Togo, George. 2017, Chinderah Northern NSW, 2017.
14. Togo, Harold. 2017, Chinderah Northern NSW, 2017.

Other interviews

1. Diop, Shola. 2020, interviewed by ETM Perspectives ANMM,
2. Slockee, Isobel 1987 interview by Inge Rieby for the NSW Bicentennial Council available at NLA online and State Library of NSW (MLM 5163/Box 12 Item 168)
3. 'GLADYS' 1987 interview by Inge Rieby for the NSW Bicentennial Council State Library of NSW (MLM 5163/Box 12 Item 169)
4. 29 taped life history interviews of Faith Bandler by Carolyn Craig, 1997, now accessible online at State Library NSW in Amplify.gov.au system

2. PERSONAL SOURCES

Davis, Emelda – family archive (including material from Australian South Sea Islander United Council ASSIUC which was passed on) including two interviews commissioned by AUSAID by with Les Togo in 1995 and Phyllis Corowa in 1997 for Secondary School Resource material. Interviewers unknown.

3. SECONDARY SOURCES

Andrew, Cristine, and Penny Cook, eds. (2000) Fields of Sorrow: Oral History of the Mackay South Sea Islanders (Kanakas) and their Descendants. Mackay: Australian South Sea Islanders United Council

Arajuo, Ana Lucia (2012) The Politics of Memory. Making slavery Visible in the Public Space. New York: Routledge

Arnold de Simine, Silke and Joanne Leal (eds) (2018) Picturing the family. Media, Narrative, Memory. London: Bloomsbury

Arnott, Georgina (2020) 'Links in the Chain: Legacies of British slavery in *Australia Australian Book Review*, August; 423 / www.australianbookreview.com.au/ abr-online/current-issue

Ashton Paul & Paula Hamilton (2010*) History at the Crossroads. Australians and the past.* Sydney: Halstead Press

Attwood, Bain (2005) 'Unsettling pasts: reconciliation and history in settler Australia', *Postcolonial Studies*, 8:3, 243-259

Attwood, Bain (2011) Aboriginal history, minority histories and historical wounds: the postcolonial condition, historical knowledge and the public lifeof history in Australia, *Postcolonial Studies,* 14:2, 171-186

Australian Human Rights Commission (2003) Australian South Sea Islanders: A century of race discrimination under Australian law https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/australian-south-sea-islanders-century-race- discrimination

Bandler, Faith (1977) *Wacvie*. Australia: Rigby, 1977. Print.

Bandler, Faith (1984) *Welou, My Brother*. Australia: Wild and Woolley Pty Limited and Aboriginal Artists Agency Limited, 1984

Bandler, Faith, and Len Fox, eds. (1983) *The Time was Ripe: A History of the Aboriginal*-Australian *Fellowship*. Chippendale: Alternative Publishing Cooperative

Banivanua-Mar, Tracey (2005) 'Consolidating Violence and Colonial Rule:

Discipline and Protection in Colonial Queensland', *Postcolonial Studies*, 8: 3, 303- 313

Banivanua-Mar, Tracey (2007) *Violence and colonial dialogue: the Australian-Pacific indentured labour trade.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press

Banivanua Mar, Tracey (2012) "The Contours of Agency: Women's Work, Race and Queensland's Indentured Labour Trade," in Carol Williams, ed*. Indigenous Women and Work: From Labour to Activism*. Chicago: University of Illinois.

Banivanua-Mar, Tracey 2016 *Decolonisation and the Pacific: Indigenous Globalisation and the Ends of Empire*. Melbourne: Cambridge UniversityPress.

Butler, Judith (2006) *Precarious Life: the powers of Mourning and Violence*. England: Verso.

Carlson, Elizabeth (2017) 'Anticolonial methodologies and practice forsettler colonial studies' *Settler* Colonial *Studies*, 7:4, 496-517

Conor, Liz & Lydon, Jane (2011) 'Doubletake: reappraising the colonialarchive' *Journal of Australian Studies*, 35: 2 137-43

Cheer, Joseph, and Keir Reeves. (2013) "Roots of Tourism: 'Blackbirding' and the South Sea Islander Diaspora." *Tourism Analysis* 18: 245-57.

Chilisa, Bagele (2012) *Indigenous research Methodologies*. LA, California: Sage publishers

Cook, K. & Goodall, Heather (2013) *Making Change Happen: Black and White Activists Talk to Kevin Cook about Aboriginal, Union and Liberation Politics*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

Corris, Peter (1973) *Passage, Port and Plantation: A History of Solomon Islands Labour Migration, 1870–1914* Carlton: Melbourne University Press

Cvetkovich, Ann (2003) *An Archive of feelings. Trauma, Sexuality and lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham, USA: Duke University Press.

Dalsgaard, Steffen (2015) 'The ethnographic use of Facebook in Everyday life' *Anthropological forum* 26: 1 96-114

Davias Carine (2016) 'Interconnected Spaces in the Life Narratives of Australian South Sea islanders' *Commonwealth Essays and Studies,* Paris 38: 2 Spring 63-71

Davias, Carine (2013) 'Cultural Heritage and Identity in the Literature of Australian South Sea Islanders and Other Media'. *etropic* 12: 1 33-41

Drozdzewski Danielle and Carolyn Birdsall, (eds) (2019) *Doing Memory Research: New methods and Approaches* Palgrave Macmillan 2019

Davies, Lucy (2019) 'A Regulated Labour Trade across the Torres Strait: Papuan and New Guinea domestic workers in Australia, 1901-1950' in Vitoria Stead and Jon Altman (eds) *Labour Lines and Colonial Power*, Canberra: ANU press, 75-101.

Dick, Thomas (2015) 'Decolonising labour markets: the Australian South Sea Island Diaspora and the role of Cultural expression in Connecting Communities' Chapter 5 in N. Szablewska & S. D Bachmann (eds) *Current Issues in Transitional Justice.* Springer Series in Transitional Jusice 4, Switzerland: Springer International

Dortins, Emma (2018) *The Lives of Stories. Three Aboriginal-Settler friendships.* Canberra: ANU Press

Doyle, Justin, Grahame Fatnowna, and Teleai Ketchell. (2000) *Three Among Many: A collection of life stories from Mackay's Aboriginal, Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander elders*. Mackay, Qld.: Info Pub.

Edmund, Mabel. (1992) *No Regrets*. Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1992.

Fatnowna, Noel, and Roger E. Keesing, eds (1989) *Fragments of a Lost Heritage.* Australia: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1989.

Fallon Kathleen Mary (2015) 'The Australian South Sea Islanders Towards a Postcolonial Australia? Chapter 8 in Kate Darian-Smith & Penelope Edmonds (eds) *Conciliation on Colonial frontiers. Conflict Commemoration and Performance in Australia and the Pacific Rim* Routledge London, 132- 149

Fischer, Nina (2015*) Memory Work: the second generation*. London: Palgrave

Gibson, Ross (2002) Seven Versions of an Australian Badland, St Lucia UQ press,

Gistitin, Carol (1993) 'Kanaka Women Servants' *Oral History Association of Australia journal*, No 15, pp22-28

Gistitin, Carol (1995) Quite a Colony – South Sea Islanders in central Queensland, 1867-1993 Rockhampton: AEBIS Publishing:

Giuliani, Gaia (2011) 'Throwaway Labour: 'Blackbirding' and a White Australia' *The Journal of the European Association of Studies on Australia*, 2:2 ISSN 2013-6897

Gluck Carol (2007) 'Operations of memory: "Comfort Women" and the world' in Sheila Miyoshi Jager & Rana Mitter (eds) *Ruptured Histories. War, Memory and the Post-Cold War in Asia* Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,

Gutman, Yifat (2017) *Memory Activism: reimagining the Past for the future in Israel-Palestine.* USA: Vanderbuilt University Press

Hamilton, Paula & Shopes, Linda (eds) (2008) *Oral History and Public Memories*, Philadelphia Temple University Press.

Hamilton, Paula (2011) 'Material memories and the Australian memorial imagination' *Melbourne Historical Journal,* 30th Anniversary Issue on memory and Commemoration, ,39.

Hamilton, Paula (2018) 'Speak, Memory! Issues in Oral and Public history' in Paul Ashton & Alex Trepaznik (eds) *What is Public History Globally? The Past in the Present*, Bloomsbury UK,

Haskins, V & Lowrie, C eds. (2015) *Colonization and Domestic Service. Historical and contemporary perspectives,* Taylor & Francis/Routledge NY and Oxford

Hayes, Lincoln (2002) 'The Tangible Link: Historical Archeology and the cultural heritage of the Australian South Sea Islanders' *Australasian Historical Archeology*, 20 , 77-82

Hayes, Lincoln. (2002) *On Plantation Creek: a Community History of the Australian South Sea Islanders in the Burdekin Shire*. Ayr: Burdekin Shire Council, 2002

Indelicato, Maria Elena. (2020)'Beyond Whiteness: violence and belonging in the borderlands of North Queensland' *Postcolonial Studies* 23. 1 pp99-115

Itong, Johnny (1995) *Memories of 80 years of work on the Tweed*, Coolangatta: no publisher

Keightley Emily and Michael Pickering (2013) *Research Methods for Memory Studies*. Scotland: Edinburgh University Press

Lake, Marilyn (2002) Faith Bandler, Gentle Activist Sydney: Allan & Unwin

Lindner, Ulrike & Dorte Lerp (eds) (2018) New perspectives on the History of Gender and Empire. Comparative and Global Approaches. London: Bloomsbury Academic

Lydon Jane (2010) 'Return: The Photographic Archive and Technologies of Indigenous Memory', *Photographies*, 3:2, 173-187,

Martin, K. & Mirraboopa, B.(2003) 'Ways of knowing, being and doing: A theoretical framework and methods for indigenous and indigenist re-search', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 76, pp. 203-14.

Maynard, J. (2007), *Fight for liberty and freedom: the origins of Australian Aboriginal activism*, Aboriginal Studies Press.

Mercer, P.M. & Moore, C. (1978) 'Australia's Pacific Islanders 1906–1977', *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 90-101.

Mitchell, Julie Kaye (2019) 'The Secret Life of memorials: Through thememory Lens of the Australian South Sea islanders' (doctorate from Macquarie University, Sydney) Archeopress digital repository https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvndv78p.6

Moore, Clive (1992)'Revising the Revisionists: The Historiography of Immigrant Melanesians in Australia', *Pacific Studies*, 15:2, 61-86

Moore, Clive(2014) 'Empires of the Coral Sea.' in Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie (eds.) *The Routledge History of Western Empires.* Routledge: New York, 151-164

Moore, Clive (2015) 'Australian South Sea Islanders' Narratives of Belonging." In *Narrative Practices and Identity Constructions in the Pacific Islands,* edited by Faranza Gounder, 153-74. John Benjamins Publishing Co: Amsterdam: Studies in Narrative series

Moore, Clive, (2015) “The Pacific Islanders’ Fund and the Misappropriation of the Wages of Deceased Pacific Islanders by the Queensland Government”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 61, 1, 1-19.

Moreton-Robinson, A. (2013) 'Towards an Australian Indigenous women's standpoint theory: A methodological tool', *Australian Feminist Studies,* 28: 78, 331-47.

Munro Doug, (1993)’ The Pacific Islands labour trade: Approaches methodologies, debates,.’ *slavery and Abolition*, 14:2, 87-108

Munro, Doug (1995) “The Labour Trade in Melanesians to Queensland: an historiographic essay.*” Journal of Social History*, 28 3: 609–27. An expanded version published as ‘The Historiography of the Queensland Labour Trade’, in Tom Brass and Marcel van der Linden (eds), *Free and Unfree Labour: the debate continues* Peter Lang AG: Bern, 479–97.

Munro, Doug, (1994) “Labour Trade Studies: What and Where?”, in Alaima Talu and Max Quanchi (eds), *Messy Entanglements: The Papers of the 10th Pacific History Association Conference* Tarawa, Kiribati, Brisbane: Pacific History Association, 1994, pp. 131-39;

Munro, Doug (1995) “Revisionism and Its Enemies: Debating theQueensland Labour Trade*”, Journal of Pacific History*, 30:2, 240-249.

Munro, Doug. (1995) 'The Labour Trade in Melanesians to Queensland: An Historiographic Essay'*, Journal of Social History,* vol. 28 no. 3 1995, pp. 609-627

Munro, Doug. (1998) "White Australia Defied: Pacific Islander Settlement in North Queensland." *Journal of Social History*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1998, p. 931-950

Nakata, Martin (2007) *Discipling the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines.* Aboriginal Studies Press: Canberra

Piccini, Jon (2016) Transnational Protest. Australia and the 1960s. Palgrave Studies in the History of Social movements. London: Palgrave Prince, Peter Herman (2016) “Australia's South Sea Islanders: Still Paying for the Law's Failure.” AUSPUBLAW: Australian Public Law blog: https://auspublaw.org/2016/10/still-paying-for-the-laws-failure/

Quanchi, Max (1998) ‘Australian South Sea Islanders; a call for recognition’ *Journal of the Pacific Society*, No 80-81 (Vol 21, No 3-4) pp 3-19

Rae, David (2019) *The Concise Guide to Tweed History.* The Tweed Coast and Hinterland Tweed Heads. published by David Rae: Printed by Summitpress

Raines, Kevin (2013) ‘Journeys to Sugaropolis’. State Library of Queensland Exhibition. August-October 2013. Exhibition Booklet *Journeys to Sugaropolis, City of Gold Coast Region Surfers paradise*. Available at http://heritage.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/uploads/Sugaropolis/SouthSea_Booklet.pdf

Ricoeur, Paul (1981) *Hermeneutics in the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and interpretation*. England: Cambridge university press

Ruth, Norma & Romm, Aileen (2017) 'Researching Indigenous ways of Knowing-and-being: RevitalizingRelational Quality of Living' in Ngulube, Patrick (ed) *Handbook of Research on Theoretical Perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Developing Countries,* IGI Global: South Africa

Saunders (1979) Troublesome servants', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 14:3, 168-183

Saunders, K (1980) "Melanesian Women in Queensland: 1863-1907. Some methodological problems involving the relationship between Racism and Sexism' *Pacific studies*, Vol iv No 1, pp26-44

Saunders, K (1982) *Workers in Bondage: The origins and bases of unfree labour in Queensland 1824-1916*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press.

Saunders, K (1984) "The Workers' Paradox: Indentured labour in the Queensland sugar industry to 1920." In *Indentured Labour in the British Empire, 1834-1920,* edited by Kay Saunders, 213-59. London: Croom Helm

Simon, Roger (2012) "Remembering together: Social media and the formation of the historical present." *Heritage and social media: Understanding heritage in a participatory culture* 89-106.

Smith, Zadie, (2000) *White Teeth*, London: Penguin

Stoler, Anne Laura and Frederick Cooper (1997) 'Between metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda' in idem (eds) *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* Berkeley: California Press,1-56

Summerfield, Penny (2016) 'Oral History as an Autobiographical Process' *Miranda*, 12. 2016 (open access journal) pp 1-13 https://journals.openedition.org/miranda/

Vivian, Bradford (2017*) Commonplace Witnessing: Rhetorical Invention, Historical Remembrance, and Public Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press

Wustenberg, Jenny (2019) 'Locating Transnational *memory' International Journal of Politics, Culture & Society*, Vol 32. Pp371-382

UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

Calnitsky, Naomi A 'Gender difference in the South pacific Labour Trade 1847-1911. Conference presentation, n.d. available at https://www.academia.edu/36071826/Gender_Difference_in_the_South_Pacific_Labour_Trade_1847-1911

Foley, Gary 2001 'Black Power in Redfern 1968-72 Hons thesis University of Sydney available at http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/essays/pdf_essays/black%20power%20in%20redfern%201968.pdf

Fallon, Kathleen Mary. 2016 'Hidden in Plain Sight: Negotiating Postcolonial Public Remembrance: The Australian South Sea Islanders

and Their Strategies of Cultural and Political Survival since 1980' Phd thesis , University of South Australia,

Knaap, A.D. & David, L.N.d.P. 2015, 'slavery under the British Flag: Representations of the Pacific Labour Trade in the Anti-slavery Reporter, 1867–1901,' Submission to University of Sydney, 2015,6, Sydney University Library website, URL http://hdl.handle.net/2123/14006

Mercer, Patricia Mary, 1981 'The Survival of a Pacific islander Population in North Queensland, 1900-1940' Phd, Australian national University

Mitchell, Julie Kaye 2019 'The Secret Life of memorials: through the memory Lens of the Australian South Sea islanders' (doctorate from Macquarie University, Sydney) Archeopress digital repository https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvndv78p.6

Moore, Clive 2013 "The Visual Heritage of Australian South Sea Islanders." Selected Lectures on Queensland History from the Lectures in Queensland History Series. Townsville: Townsville City Council.

https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/5372/Final-version-of-TSTPublication-Lectures-in-Queensland-History.pdf

Moore, Clive 2015, Australian South Sea Islander Historical Chronology 1790-2015 of political achievements, Australian South Sea Islander Political Achievements, Wordpress, Sydney, 2019

Prince, Peter Herman. 2015 "Aliens in Their Own Land: 'Alien' and the Rule of Law in Colonial and Post-Federation Australia." PhD thesis, Faculty of Law, Australian National University. Report, Australian South Sea Islanders in the Tweed Valley Coraki, NSW. Mitchell, Elayne, Christine Salisbury, Phyllis Corowa, Bronwyn Mitchell and Wendy Foley. (1998) Australian South Sea Islanders in the Tweed Valley. Lismore: Northern Rivers Institute for Health Research.

Smallwood, G. 2011 'Human rights and first Australians' well-being' PhD, James Cook University

Stoetzel, Felicity 2014 "Melanesian workers: maintaining and creating identity within the labour trade and the effects of the sugar plantation missionaries in Queensland' unpublished paper.

OTHER MEDIA

Enares, N. Arthur William Toar and Nanna Enares interview, DVD, National Film Sound Archive, Australia, Tweed Heads, Northern Rivers, NSW 1975

Mabo, Dr Bonita Ernestine (1943-2018), Memorial, web, viewed 2019, 8th February 2019.

Jackson, A.S.S.I.-P. 2016, White Australia has a 'Blackbirding' History 2016 commemoration map, 2016 marks 169 years since South Sea Islanders were bought to NSW, ASSIPJ, Pyrmont, Sydney NSW2016, <http://www.assipj.com.au/southsea/wp-content/uploads/ASSIPJ-map.pdf>.

Wantok Inaugural Australian South Sea Islanders National Conference Social Justice, 3:16 'Kanaka born' edn, Youtube, 2012, 27 August.

West Melanesia (c) 2004 Pacific islanders of the Sahulplat (Flobamora,Timor, Maluku, Papua and Australia) mainly belong to the Melanesian nations in the Pacific of the negroid (black) race. The Asian people of the Sundaplat (Sumatera, Java, Kalimantan, Malaysia and Singapura) mainly belong to the Malayan nations in Asia of the Mongoloid (yellow) race., 2018, <http://www.westmelanesia.com/>

South Sea Islanders Cutting Cane. This clip filmed in 1899 is one of the few pieces of footage of Melanesian labourers cutting cane in Queensland. The clip is held by National Film and Sound Archives. This footage was taken by the official photographer of the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Frederick Charles Wills, and his assistant Henry William Mobsby. The department commissioned them to capture scenes of Queensland agricultural life using a static Lumière Cinematographe https://aso.gov.au/titles/historical/ssisland-cutting-cane/clip1/ [the first moving pictures of ASSI.]

Pastures of the Blue Crane. 6 x 30 minute episode. Producer: Brett Porter. This series was based on a children's novel by Hesba Brinsmead (1965). The series was filmed around Tweed Heads, New South Wales

Also see the quest for re-release:https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-28/pastures-of-the-blue-crane-revived-for-fans/10419244

The Islanders. Australian Broadcasting Commission Television ("Peach's Australia") 1975. The Forgotten People: A history of the Australian South Sea Island community. ABC Broadband radio series first broadcast 10-12 January 1978, researched and presented by by Matt Peacock. [This was published in 1979, edited by Clive Moore.]Return to Vanuatu. SBS Television ("Dateline"), September. 1993

Faith Bandler. SBS Television ("Australian Biographies"). Transcript available online 1994.

Sugar Slaves: History of Australia's Slave Trade. Sydney: Film Australia. Director and Co-Producer Trevor Graham; Producer Penny Robbins; Writer Jean-Jacques Portail. UQ Library HD4875.A84 S84, 1995. https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=I4_zbkffAY4

Blackbird: An emotional film tells the untold history of Australia's sugar slaves. A film by Australian Solomon Islander Amie Batalibasi. It was shot at Mackay in 2015 and first screened on NITV 13 October 2017. https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2017/10/12/blackbird-emotional-film-tells-untold-history-australias-sugar-slaves

Australia's Hidden History of slavery: The government divides to conquer. Sydney Democracy Network. http://sydneydemocracynetwork.org/tag/australian-south-sea-islanders/.[Blog site.] 2017

Plantation Voices: Contemporary Conversations with Australian South Sea Islanders. Running between 16 February and 8 September the Queensland State

Library mounted a multi-media exhibition of Australian South Sea Islanders using its own resources, plus those of the Queensland Museum, the Queensland State Archives, and the Australian National Archives, 2019.