

### ***Forcibly Removed***

Presented by: Mr Albert Holt, Adopted Elder of West Moreton Anglican College & member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Education Standing Committee

Sponsored by: Deacons Lawyers

*Throughout my life I encountered many challenges and, when I think back, what made me strong to deal with and overcome problems was my ancestral inheritance. How can I forget such a significant elder...who called out to me "Murringoo Holt" meaning Aboriginal admired. I often think of that double A rating raising my self-esteem and identity.*

*I use the word "luck" Luck is a word that impacts on our daily living. With good experiences, it makes us happy. But with bad experiences we are made saddened.*

Albert Holt, 2002

As I grew up I couldn't understand why there was two societies of living conditions, for instance, where Aboriginal people were forced to live. We had very substandard living conditions compared to the non-Indigenous people that lived three miles away. What significantly impacted on me was experiencing, with my greatly loved parents, brothers and sisters a different standard of living compared to non-Indigenous people.

For instance, we lived in standard dwelling places – a weatherboard home that had one bedroom, kitchen and eating place, a lounge room and metre veranda. The partitioned off bedroom had tongue and groove boards that were not clamped together. I can clearly remember the cold winter conditions. Paper was scarce so we'd go out into the bush and get leaves and branches to stuff into the cracks of the floorboards to try and stop the bitterly cold, howling, blustering winds making our sleepless nights a bit less miserable.

It is hard to comprehend the impact of seeing the glow of the electric street lights from the township of Murgon three miles away while we were living in a house with kerosene lamps for lighting.

A contradiction in terms was the Protection of Aborigines Act – the word "protection" gave hope and faith that this meant having a genuine interest in the betterment of our family. However, living in substandard conditions and under imposed conditions which restricted our basic freedom, it was difficult to see any benefits to anyone at all.

I used the writing of "Forcibly Removed" as an opportunity to share the impact of oppression, bigotry, loss of basic human rights and freedom. I share also the struggle to overcome these bad experiences not harbouring bitterness or hatred towards a group of people, who I believe were absolutely evil and committed evil things to fellow human beings. Being hyped up and being twisted with hate, I felt would not have worked in the better interest of my healthy attitude towards friends and people of good will and good faith.

I leave you with my parting thoughts. As we walk together hand in hand, embracing walking down the pathways of progress towards reconciliation, may there always be a chapter of one man's story that brings you Luck, Learning, Understanding comes Knowledge.