

GRANDMOTHERS AGAINST REMOVALS NSW



GMAR NSW, in partnership with NSW Greens MP David Shoebridge, welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Federal Senate inquiry into the out of home care system.

The numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being forcibly removed from their families by child protection agencies nation-wide is at an unprecedented high.

NSW has the worst rate of removals in Australia. On 2 October 2014, the Senate of the Federal Parliament of Australia noted on the national record that: *"a) New South Wales children from Aboriginal communities are being removed from their families at an unprecedented rate with more than 6,000 Aboriginal children, representing about one in 10 Aboriginal children, in out-of-home care in New South Wales and 2. [The Senate] recognises that we all must do all in our power to stop the development of a new Stolen Generation"*.

The crisis of the ongoing Stolen Generations in Aboriginal communities is beyond acute and demands urgent action.

This submission seeks to contextualize the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the out-of-home care system within the broader crisis of the ongoing Stolen Generations. GMAR NSW believe this necessitates an interrogation of the historic and contemporary dynamics between Aboriginal communities and child protection agencies and police.

GMAR NSW, in partnership with NSW Greens MP David Shoebridge, have hosted a series of community consultation sessions in regional NSW, namely Gunnedah, Moree and Dubbo. The stories shared within these consultation sessions were formed into reports and are annexed here as:

1. *'Aboriginal Child Removal in Gunnedah'*, (February, 2014)
2. *'Guwaabal Nigiyani Guwaalaylanha | Sharing Our Stories; Our struggle against ongoing Stolen Generations | A Report Summary'*, (October, 2014).

These stories are from affected Aboriginal families at the grass-roots level and offer expert community insights into the nature of this unacceptable crisis as well as direction about how it may be addressed from the bottom up.

Please note that throughout this submission, the acronym DOCS is used throughout the report, as opposed to FACS, given it is the spoken preference amongst grass-roots communities in NSW.