

My early memories are happy ones, I remember the warm smile of my mum as she waited for me to get off the school bus with a tin cup of succulent giant mulberries, and she made me feel loved. I lived with my family in a Sydney Williams hut at Winnellie Camp Darwin. Originally the residence housed the military but from the late 1930's they became homes for aboriginal people.

My parents grew vegetables and fruit trees, with chickens and ducks providing eggs and a goat giving us plenty of milk. I still remember having freshly made milk ice blocks from one of the neighbours on a hot day as they were cool and refreshing.

When the NT Government decided to close down the camps, our family moved to the suburb of Milner. We missed the strong connection between families that we had at Winnellie where everyone knew everyone and looked out for each other.

My mum's early years were hard as she was one of the 'Stolen Generation' taken from my Nana and her country Daly River. She was transported to Darwin by Police boat and put in "Kahlin Compound" a home for Halfe Caste children only to return to her country later in life when she was with Dad. Mum's three older children were also put into care. They were sent to the now infamous Retta Dixon home- an Institution for Aboriginal children. My older sister started the Stolen Generation in the Territory and wrote a book called "Take this child from Kahlin to Retta Dixon". I am also happy in the memory that my two brothers were buried back on country.

My dad, Mick O'Brien was born in Yarloop WA which was a timber town in the mid-1900s. Dad left home when he was 18 and disengaged from his family, he headed to the Northern Territory where he met my mother in Darwin during the war. A mother of three she had found a man who became her lifetime partner. Her roles were varied: mother, domestic at Government house, hospital worker and home maker.

When I was small dad used to take us to the mission at Daly River to see my nana who lived and worked on a peanut farm this was a great adventure for me and exciting to see everyone, later nana would come to our home in Milner.

At 14 I was sent to a boarding home for Aboriginal Children in Adelaide to attend school – history being repeated.

I left school and moved to Alice Springs in April 1974 it happened quickly and without much time to prepare. It was a life changing event, rather like Cyclone Tracy that was to happen in December that same year.

I have always thought of myself as a 'battler'. Six children and a desire to create a safe environment for them initiated my move from an abusive relationship. I studied, worked hard and am now a proud homeowner and grandmother of eleven. 2017 clocks up 24 years in the education field working with young adolescents.

Life has its ups and downs, I am proud of what I have achieved so far. I have a wonderful family, I have overcome cancer I love my job and the home I have created in Alice Springs. The journey and adventures continue and there is still much to do I have grown to love the country I now call home. Its colours, scenery, and nature I love it all. There is nothing quite like the peace and quiet you find here and I love going bush to enjoy the serenity