

RESETTLEMENT | Wiradjuri Gawaymbanha-gu Mamalanha

Transcript: Episode 2 | Not a Hard Life

Aunty Lottie Bamblett: No my mum used to say, leave the past with the past. She would not talk about it because it hurt her too much. Where she lived a life I think of running from welfare. No matter where they went, welfare was on their back. My mum was tormented all her life until dad died and she moved from Brungle area.

LUKE VO: Hi. I'm Luke Wighton, a Wiradjuri man originally from Condobolin now living in Wagga Wagga. I'm the host of this podcast series RESETTLEMENT - Wiradjuri Gawaymbanha-gu Mamalanha, which means Wiradjuri Welcome to Visitors. It's all about Wagga Wagga's First Nations community.

Before white settlement, we'd been living peacefully and sustainably in this beautiful part of Country on the Marrambidya Bila - or Murrumbidgee River - for tens of thousands of years.

From the 1830's, colonisation of the Wagga Wagga area began, destroying our Mob through land theft, disease, murder and oppression. Our language and culture were denied, even made illegal. Our children were stolen from their families to be trained as slaves for the colonisers. We were banished to the fringes of society.

But in the early 1970's that changed. The children's homes were closed, the missions were shut down and the size of our population in Wagga Wagga began to grow again - under what was known as the Aboriginal Family Resettlement Scheme.

The federal government scheme ran from 1974 until 1986. The aim was to move our mob from the missions and fringes of smaller remote towns to larger regional areas like Wagga Wagga, with the promise of better services and more opportunities.

This podcast series was a goal of the Wagga Wagga City Council's Reconciliation Action Plan. It has been developed by the Museum of the Riverina in collaboration with our First Nations community.

So, let's get to know some of our proud First Nations mob from Wagga Wagga.

For a long time, many First Nations people tried to hide their Aboriginality because of racism and Government oppression. The Bamblett family didn't do this.

Aunty Lottie Bamblett had confidence in her Aboriginality ... thanks to her mum Kathleen Little, who would often remind her 'You're no better than anyone else - but no one else is any better than you'.

Aunty Lottie, who's almost 80 years old, is from Wiradjuri mob.

She is one of those who arrived in the sixties, before the resettlement scheme began.

She grew up in a tin hut beside the canal at Griffith and had - in her words - a wonderful childhood.

Aunty Lottie originally comes from Brungle – a village between Tumut and Gundagai on the western edge of the Snowy Mountains.

It was known as Brungle Mission Station - but it was never a mission. It was established in 1888 by the Aborigines Protection Board.

Aunty Lottie's family was dirt poor and her parents worked very hard to find work and look after their nine children.

And to add to that, they were always trying to escape from the Welfare and to avoid their children being stolen.

Aunt has seen the records of how her family were treated back then.

[00:04:13] Lottie: My mum, in Brungle, she was put out to service. And my aunty was put in Cootamundra Girls Home. Two of them. And my brothers were, my uncles were put in Sydney Boys Homes. And that's why she could not stand Pommies. Sorry for the - but she couldn't stand Pommies - because of what they did to her.

[00:04:37] Lottie: And they were always... I got some things from my niece. She got me a lot. And I could read back about how they used to, mum and dad, used to travel a lot around Brungle and Tumut and Adjungbilly and, and all the welfare people would write letters in to - oh people, the police and the schools would write letters into them saying, oh the Little's are very, you know, their kids are very cheeky.

[00:05:13] Lottie: And, uh, some of the teachers'd write, yeah, that the children are at school and they were very clean and. Because my eldest brother couldn't read or write, see. And, um, yeah, so what I read wasn't very good. The two brothers, and the other two sisters were too old for them to do anything with them.

[00:05:37] Lottie: That's why Dad and Mum moved a lot, because the welfare was on their backs all the time. Well he worked at, um, at the plains in Tumut, cutting millet, and they'd follow the work wherever they could. Yeah, my mum worked hard all her life. But yeah, mum, what I read in those papers, my mum was tormented all her life until dad died and she moved from Brungle area. Yeah, so that was, that was sad.

When her father died, her mother Kathleen Little moved west out of the mountains, to the flat plains of Darlington Point on the Murrumbidgee River or known as the Murrumbidgee River.

There, the family lived in a shack.

[00:06:44] Lottie: The only thing I remember at Darlington Point is that there was a sawmill next to us and, uh, yeah, we, and, and we lived on the riverbank. That's all I remember there. I was only two when dad died. She was at Darlington Point, but she moved from, uh, Tumut Plains from Brungle to Tumut Plains and when my dad died, she just moved to, she moved around a lot. Yes. And then she ended up in Darlington Point and from Darlington Point to the Threeway.

The Three Way Aboriginal Reserve was on the fringes of Griffith in the western Riverina.

[00:07:31] Lottie: My mum was the first one on the Three Way. They took an old red hut from Darlington Point. And that's where Mum moved from Darlington Point into that house. And then they pulled another one in there. That was Auntie Mary and Uncle Jack, they moved in there. And then families just sort of kept coming. And then my brothers and sisters moved there for a while.

Altogether, Auntie Lottie had eight siblings.

[00:08:02] Lottie: There's three of us left. And one, my oldest brother Alexander, he moved there. Arthur, my other brother. And Stella, my sister. And Jessie, my other sister. And Katie, she was only still young, and Patrick and me, and Norman. Nearly all mum's family came there when she moved there. My eldest brother, he sort of took over the father role with me, and my other brother took over the father role with my brother Pat.

[00:08:35] Lottie: And when we moved to the Three Way, that's when the fun started with - when everyone started coming. And we used to play rounders and we had to walk from the Three Way bridge right up to the school. There was no buses. We done that till the time I left high school.

Auntie Lottie remembers being chased by the welfare when she was at school in Griffith.

[00:09:05] Lottie: I must have been stubborn or cheeky to my mum. And the welfare came down and said to me, if you don't get to school tomorrow you'll be in Cootamundra Girls Home. And I soon polished my shoes and did my uniform.

[00:09:21] Lottie: I remember my friend Beverly. She's passed away now. Yeah mum used to sing out to her, it was so funny. She said, you'll be washing nappies soon. And there was no boys involved at all. And we used to play rounders, you know, and the boys used to sting us with the ball, I tell you. They didn't hold back on us. And we used to have singalongs at night. You know, my sister-in-law then, she used to get the guitar and we'd sing and yeah, we just, it was a really good place to be, until later on when alcohol started taking over the people.

[00:10:10] Lottie: I thank God that my mum never drank. I worked hard too, when we moved to Griffith, when I grew up, out in the orchards. Because you couldn't get a

job in the shops. You were black. Yeah. And, um. We all worked in picking grapes and oranges and tomatoes and everything. Melons. And my brother used to say to Mum, 'Mum, make Lottie get over here and do some work'. He reckons I'd be sitting there eating the fruit. But I did my share, no matter what he said.

[00:10:53] Lottie: I'll tell you a funny story about my brother. My eldest brother that reared me up. See, my mum used to buy that Fairy margarine. That's what we used to use, but he used the butter, of course. Because he was a rabbit, see. He used to go out rabbiting in them days. And I went over and asked for a bit of, uh, a bit of butter, because I couldn't stand the Fairy margarine. And he said, 'no, you go and buy it'. And I said, 'well, you can keep it', and walked out the door. And he ran after me with it, 'here you are, here you are'. And I said, 'no, keep it', see, that's me. And I could hear him saying to his wife, Etty, 'I don't know how she's going to get on when she marries Carl'.

Carl is the man Aunty Lottie fell in love with.

[00:11:43] Lottie: Carl Bamblett. We got married I think, oh I don't know, about '62. Not on the Three Way but they used to call it Frogs Hollow before you crossed the bridge to the Three Way bridge. They used to live there, him and his parents and his sisters and brothers. There was a few families over there. And I remember the Condo family used to live on the other side of the bridge down in the little corner. They were the Condo mob.

Though education became a passion of Aunty Lottie's - as a teenager she was constantly trying to avoid it.

[00:12:18] Lottie: When I was on the Three Way and I was in high school, I put me me age up and I left school a year earlier. And my friends they'd get out their windows and they'd curse. I couldn't. I'd be waving at my window. Oh, bless them, they're all passed away now. But it was, you know, we had such a good .. But they were shocking girls. At school, if anyone called them in high school, anyone called them names, they'd wait at the gate for the ones that would catch the bus. I was a little dainty one, I never did it, but I'd be the one singing out 'here they come'. Oh, you're making, you're bringing back a lot of memories.

Another story she recalls from living at Three Ways was learning how to swim.

Little Lottie and her family weren't allowed to use the public baths... so they had to do it the hard way.

And while she laughs about it now, it was a dangerous place for you to take your first dip.

[00:13:36] Lottie: My mum taught me to swim in the channel in Griffith. They threw me in and I had to swim or go under. And I learnt to swim like that. No pool for us, it was the channel. And they were swift, too. Dive off the Three Way bridge. I've got a

photo taken with my cousin sitting on the Three Way bridge. That's how they learnt. We used to put our step sister out on a rope. She couldn't swim in one channel, and that's how she, in the summertime, that's how she swam. We didn't, I didn't worry about fish. I don't think me and my girlfriends worried about.. Just worried about showing our figure off I guess.

Aunty Lottie's mum tried to teach her kids a little Wiradjuri language, but it was limited.

They had to be careful because the government had banned the use of First Nations languages.

[00:14:36] Lottie: Only what my mum taught me, so no one would know what we were talking about, I mean, the white people. We had our own little language she taught us and, um. That.. My grandfather wouldn't teach them too much. He just taught them the basics so they'd know if, if the welfare was coming or, or the police, I guess. I don't know.

[00:15:01] Lottie: But she taught us little bits of language to keep us safe. One, that has to deal with kids, if they seen anyone coming, she'd sing out, 'All you goodas go. All you goodas go'. And they knew, that's kids. Yeah, move. And they, that's what she taught us, different words, but...

Aunty Lottie's limited language differs from the Wiradjuri Dictionary developed by Dr John Eliot Rudder and Uncle Stan Grant senior and his brother Pastor Cecil Grant.

[00:15:46] Lottie: I've got their, um, songs. And I know that Stan and the words that they've... But see, they come from Condobolin mob. We come from Brungle. And it's... Sometimes the words are different. So some words I didn't understand what they were talking about.

[00:16:08] The Waajin. You know what that is? White woman. In Condobolin there was a lot of old people that taught people. Because my eldest brother was born in Condobolin. And, uh, yeah. But my mum only taught us. Their dad only taught them certain words because they'd be in trouble if they taught them the lingo. So they only taught them what they really needed to know.

Aunty Lottie says her mum never spoke about the colonisers efforts to erase our language and culture.

[00:16:44] Lottie: No, my mum used to say, leave the past with the past. She would not talk about it because it hurt her too much. Well she lived a life, I think, of running from welfare. What I've read in that book, papers that I've got, no matter where they went, welfare was on their back.

[00:17:05] Yeah, we weren't allowed to. Well ...we, just amongst our family. And I taught my kids. I don't know if they taught their kids, but I taught my kids what I

knew. And, uh, it's funny, uh, the lingo that, it's not of theirs, but it is of theirs, but it's uh, I'll say a couple of words and you tell me if you know what I'm saying. (speaks in language) That's how we learnt. That's how mum, mum learnt us. And that's my, my youngest grandson. He lives in Sydney and he - I didn't think he knew it - but he started talking in it to me on the phone. Like yeah.

[00:17:56] You wanna know what I said? Put that mic away from me.

[00:18:05] I didn't have a, I didn't have a hard life. I never had a hard life. We had our ups and downs, the same as any family. But my mum wouldn't let us talk about the past. Would not. She'd say, leave the past with the past. When we'd, we'd hear things and we'd want her to answer them, but she would not. Yeah, we're sad about it, too. We're sad that she wouldn't tell us what we wanted to know, but she just hated the Pommies that much.

In 1967 Auntie Lottie arrived in Wagga Wagga with her husband Carl Bamblett and together they set up their new home in Beltana Avenue, Mount Austin.

[00:18:46] Lottie: Well, to get off the Three Way. I tried to make it better for my children. But later on I think I regretted it. We had a good family.

Aunt says she never felt excluded in Wagga Wagga – though she missed the mob she'd grown up with. And for her, being Aboriginal wasn't an issue.

[00:19:07] Lottie: Well, you want me to be honest? I didn't care. My mum told me they were no better than me and I was no better than them. And we were brought up with that. I was lonely for my own and that's why I think my, we used to go over to my mum's at Harden- Murrumburrah.

[00:19:31] But I did miss the Three Way. I missed the connection and the community. But as I said, we thought it would benefit our kids. In one way it did, and another way it didn't, because my kids, my eldest daughter, I had seven years, six years between the two lots, and my youngest daughter, if they tormented her brother, she'd floor them. She kept, oh, you know, she, she looked after her brother - in Mount Austin School this was. Oh, she was, she was a little toughie. But she's passed away now, my baby. And, but she stuck up for her brother, where her brother should have been sticking up for her.

[00:20:21] It was a bit sad, but I thought, you know, if it's going to benefit our children to get to the proper school and how far they had to walk and that was, they all went to Mount Austin and, uh, if it was to benefit them. Catherine worked in the, I don't know if you remember Jewel's Supermarket, she got cashier out of the year with a big teddy bear. And the other one worked in a nursery and yeah. So it benefited them in a way, but I think I isolated them, Carl and I, from their people. Until they started moving here.

[00:21:59] Because they didn't know much about them - unless we took them over to Mum at Harden. They'd seen their cousins and that for it. But anyone else, other Aboriginal families, they didn't for a long time.

[00:21:13] We were here for a long time before we knew of any other Aboriginal family here. Because then my brother moved over here from Harden-Murrumburrah and the Honeysetts. And then we met Dot and Hewitt. He was in the army. He lived behind... in Ashmont and then they just sort of all started to come.

[00:21:37] But the one thing I did not know, I only read it lately, it was all through the welfare that put us in Beltana. My husband done all that without letting me know. And I read the letter and Mr. Sullivan his name was, and he said, 'I choose this family because she's one of the two that are very clean and light coloured skin and she'll meet it, 'She'll mix in with the neighbours'.

[00:22:08] My neighbours were beautiful, lovely people. Um, my kids, I'll tell you a funny thing, they went to school and I worked with this lady. And my daughter, the darkest one, mind you, said to this lady, 'go on you black bitch'. And she told me at work. I was so embarrassed. And she was dark, Kayleen was dark. Catherine was the third one and she wouldn't say anything like that. But I think they were just picking their flowers or something, I don't know. I know they got chased home from Froggy once, picking the flowers on the corner of Beltana.

Aunt speaks fondly of her beloved Carl and his generosity.

[00:22:59] Lottie: We had a good marriage. We married, we just finished 20 years of marriage and he passed away. He was only 43. Blood clot on the brain. Here in Wagga. That's when we moved here. And he worked on the Department of Main Roads and I worked in the Calvary Hospital - in the laundry and then in maternity for seven years. And then I remember ringing up Carl, 'you have to bring my shoes down, I'm in my slippers here at work'. I forgot to change my shoes. And he had to bring them down. And I met a lot of nice friends. Because there was no, no Aboriginals here then to ... My niece came over. She started working at the.. She lived with us and started working at Wagga Hospital in the laundry.

[00:23:52] And then my nephew came over with, he used to live with mum in Harden there. And he stayed with us. It was all my people mainly that, it was all my people, not mainly. He just came, they all came and lived with us 'cause Carl had a heart of gold. I can remember the time when this fellow was drunk and he, he asked me for two, two dollars. And I said, 'listen here mate, if I can work, you can work'. And my husband said, when he got drunk, 'you're nothing but a little pig.'. 'Could have left the little out', I said.

Once the Aboriginal Family Resettlement Scheme began in 1974, Aunty Lottie says it was time to start having fun again with the mob.

[00:24:42] Lottie: The Honeysetts and I used to go, Aunty Violet, the mum of them, we used to go dancing and it was good. And I'd make the boys dance, because my

husband wouldn't dance. It was really good to meet up with other Aboriginals. I didn't know them, but you get to know your own. Me and the Honeysetts used to, not only me, but Violet and all of us used to go out on a special night and we'd go bowls.

[00:25:12] My nephew was.. My husband's nephew was out at Kapooka. He'd come in, we'd walk downtown, ten pin bowling and yeah. And the Honeysetts was probably and the Smiths were the ones that we sort of mixed together and went out to the, the club. It was all us Kooris that mixed together when they came here.

Aunt says Carl was very popular in the community, not just because of his sporting or coaching ability. He cared about the young people – no matter what colour their skin was.

[00:25:48] Lottie: He was well liked here and with all the boys, he, you know, he, he was just, he had that, I don't know, something about him that I didn't have, you know. Yeah, they all looked up to him. And he even had me out there playing touch footy. And the girls played, his daughters played hockey and softball and touch footy and he had all these young boys, mainly the Honeysetts, he had them and Norman and just, he was so good to them.

[00:26:24] I played touch footy. I was made to. He had us running around that oval from Beltana up there where they play hockey and that now. He'd make us run, the family and the girls and him. He worked for the Department of Main Roads for as long as he, well until he passed away. But he was working with the youth, the boys and the men.

[00:26:51] He'd get them, and the girls, to go and play sports and to sort of lift them up. He did, he was one of those people. He was very well liked you know, and they.. He was very.. 'Cause the young people, I'll tell you, the young people, even white kids, when they got into trouble with the police, they wouldn't call their parents. They'd call Carl.

[00:27:16] And he'd go... He had to drive to Tumbarumba a couple of times. Well, it wasn't nothing to him. And he'd kick 'em up the bottom as they were walking out of the police station too, you know, for making him do that, but he did it. All the time, they'd call on Carl. He was a good person to black and white. It didn't matter to him.

Aunt says the Bamblett name is well known - because of Carl's grandfather... they're part of a big mob.

[00:27:52] Lottie: Because of grandfather, he had about three wives. They - all the Bamblett's are related. You go anywhere and there's a Bamblett there. Okay. From Cowra down to Shepparton to Melbourne and everywhere. I think we were the only Bamblett's in Wagga then, but I don't know about now.

The Bamblett's never asked for help in Wagga Wagga – even if they'd known it was possible.

Instead, Aunty Lottie would go to visit her mum in Harden to seek guidance.

[00:28:26] Lottie: There was no services. There was none. If you wanted anything, you had to pay for it. You couldn't go and ask. Well, I didn't know. I was too used to being on the Three Way. And I didn't know you could go to like the church or the Vinnies or that. I didn't know anything. I wasn't told about it.

[00:28:47] So what my husband earned and I earned, we lived on it. We were, I wouldn't say independent, because I didn't know nothing about it. And we weren't told anything, that you can get help, you know, at such and such. And I didn't know anything about them. It's only since I've got on with the age that I do now look for help from Vinnies or Salvos and they're very good. They're very good, to me anyway.

[00:29:16] I just did what I had to do and I'd ask my mum because you couldn't ring up then. We'd go over and I'd ask her what to do and she'd just advise me to do the best I can. And if people don't want to talk to me, or my, then my, just ignore it because there's nothing I can do about it. If people want to be ignorant, that's their choice. But I don't have to be.

Auntie Lottie attended a Baptist Church until the Aboriginal Church opened in the 1980's with Pastor Ivan Williams.

[00:29:56] Lottie: That was good, they were lovely. Mrs. Young. Yeah. She'd pick us up. We ended up buying her old car off her. Yeah. That was the first car we had here. It was an old blue Ford. Pastor Ivan, he was learning the guitar and he come in the church one day with the guitar and I started laughing at him. He wouldn't do it again! I used to, I had a sick sense of humour. But they, yeah, we went there until everything, when Carl passed away, because he was a good friend of Ivan's. He'd help him in the church.

When Carl died in 1987, Auntie Lottie left Wagga Wagga and didn't return until 2020.

[00:30:45] Lottie: When he passed away, I sort of finished my childcare diploma. I was two years into it and then I sold out and moved. Because I couldn't stand Wagga at that time. Too painful. Because he was gone and, yeah. So me and my children and their children, we just packed up and went. My nephew took me up to his place in Pearce in Canberra, in the ACT.

[00:31:15] And then there was a job advertised in Queanbeyan Women's Refuge. And I applied for it and I got it. Women escaping domestic violence and children. And I was there for 17 years. I was the one with the children because I had the diploma. Like I had a childcare certificate. You had to go on call and they, you had to have your phone on because there was no mobiles and that then. And, uh, you'd get woken up by the police at three or four o'clock, so you'd have to go to the refuge. Or

you'd have to go with another one to that person's place and pick them up that were escaping domestic violence. It was hard, but it was good.

She says the terrible domestic violence we hear so much about today has always been around – it was just more hidden.

[00:32:13] Lottie: It wasn't as open then when I worked with it. It was there and it wasn't just the middle class ones neither. It was, it was just Iraqi and everything. It was no middle class going to a refuge. I can tell you that. Everyone, it was everyone. No matter where they come from.

Aunty's early childhood training at TAFE all came about thanks to a push from a very powerful Elder - the late Aunty Val Weldon - who was determined to see the growing First Nations mob in Wagga Wagga achieve their best.

[00:32:56] Lottie: I went when Aunty Val opened the school down here. She was the one that pushed us. That was Hewitt and Dot's mum. But the kids at that TAFE were very, mainly the boys used to call us coons and we'd just ignore them. Because it, I always said it comes from the parents for the kids. They learn from their parents to hate. But I've got a lot of good white friends and children.

[00:33:31] The ones that I taught in the refuge, looked after, they still remember me. And I got one little, one boy - he's married now and no one can say nothing about me. Even his parents and his mother, and his gran.

[00:33:46] She employed us, Aunty Val, and that's when she was the one that made us go and get our diploma. She said 'Youse are going to be educated and get paid properly'. So we did. Carol and I, Carol Morgan. And a few used to come from different towns, Aboriginal girls, the Koori girls and we all did our diploma. There was about seven or eight of us.

[00:34:15] I can't remember their names now, but Aunty, Aunty, um, Val, there was all Aboriginals. We all worked. I've got a photo of them in, at the kids in the school, my grandkids. Yeah, we worked all together. And Carol Morgan and a lot of us. I worked in mainly all three or four um, preschools around here - Koala was the main one where I finished up.

She is forever grateful to Aunty Val.

[00:34:46] Lottie: She didn't pull any punches. She'd let you have them, straight in. She'd tell you straight where you were going wrong and she'd praise you when you were doing good. Oh, she was strict, don't worry. We didn't get away with nothing just because it was our mob. She made us do our work. I probably wouldn't have had my childcare diploma. Probably wouldn't have worked in the refuge for 17 years if she wouldn't have pushed me to go for it.

Sadly not all of Aunt Lottie's children have outlived her – only highlighting the awful gap in life expectancy of our mob.

[00:35:24] Lottie: I've lost two daughters. One, uh, Kayleen, that was the second eldest. She died at 43. 'Cause she had a kidney problem. And in the finish she had a stroke. She was in a wheelchair and she couldn't talk or.. So, about 14 years ago now, 13, 14.

[00:35:45] And Stella, my baby - she died about, by the time I came back to Wagga, she was gone about 5 years ago. She had diabetes 1 and no one knew. No one knew. That's what's in the death certificate.

[00:36:05] Anyway, my other girl, She's um, the eldest one's in Newcastle. She's... She's had a bad trot with her... She had cancer and they didn't get it all. She was under chemo for two years and then she had a blood clot in her foot and it travelled up to her heart. When she lifted her arm up, it travelled into her arm. Yeah, she can't come back to Wagga because that's the reason I come home. Because of her. She couldn't cope with losing her sisters. I'm sorry.

[00:36:54] So, and my son, he just got out of the hospital from nine days. He's in Condobolin. He was in Orange Hospital. He had a slight heart attack. The salt, his salt was down and.. Oh, poor old Simon. That was the shock of his life, being in, that's the first time he's been in hospital and nine days. And they kept saying, you can go home, and then they'd take the blood test, the salt'd be down. They thought he had diabetes, but he hasn't. But he's so grateful to be home now. Yeah. They're doing okay. He's doing okay. But he wants me to go down, spend a couple of days with him.

Aunty says she will visit Condobolin, but it's really sad to see her old home town of Condobolin shrink and lose services and facilities.

[00:37:52] Lottie: I was there for 15 years, and the pastor of the church says, 'You've got to get back home here'. I said, 'No way'. They're closing everything down there. Everything. When I first moved there they had Target, they had jewellers, they had shoe places. Got nothing now, only the IGA and, yeah. Only things that are standing are the pubs of course.

These days in Wagga Wagga, Aunt Lottie continues to be involved with preschoolers.

She says unlike other Elders, she's not into weaving or art.

[00:38:38] Lottie: They do, but I don't. I reckon I'd done my work doing four years study and getting a diploma and they asked me to draw a picture - I couldn't even draw a stick figure. So all I'm good for is reading and talking. I just like being with the kids. I miss them. I've had all my own, but I just miss being with the kids. I go out

there to preschool once a fortnight with Meg and them from the hub out there, we go into the preschool.

[00:39:14] And one little girl attached herself to me and she doesn't like me going. She wouldn't, she doesn't, like she's like she's gonna cry. But I go to preschool, I just, as an Elder, that's one little girl, she, she really hooked herself onto my hand and wouldn't let it go. Bless her.

Aunt says in the fight for land rights, she wasn't an activist - but her husband was.

Now, aged 79, she has stronger views.

She says the NO result in the Voice referendum really hurt. Aunt is adamant that Aboriginal people should be consulted about the things that affect us.

[00:39:54] Lottie: I was disappointed. I was really disappointed that the people of Australia didn't sort of want to come together with the Aboriginals and sort of give them a bit of a go. Not for me, but for the younger ones coming up. I was disappointed. This is their land. I was disappointed.

[00:40:17] I thought more, not so much the ones that come from overseas and that, but the ones that were here all the time. They should have - I reckon they should have went with us. That's like all those ones that come from overseas with their new cars and oh well, I'm, you know, that's just, I've got it against that. They support them but they don't support the Koori people the way they should. All Aboriginals. We're only Kooris in New South Wales.

[00:40:48] They just don't want to learn, or those that learn voted for us. Those that understood. But the ones that didn't want to, thinking that we're taking all their money and the government's giving us all that money - that's a lot of wooley. Because we work hard for our money. We're like everyone else. The ones that are on the dole, there's white people on the dole too. I just turned it off at the end because there were so many...I just put it down they didn't want to know. It wasn't ignorant or anything. They just didn't want to know or learn anything about our culture.

Aunt says our mob fought from the beginning of colonisation to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

She says we are the traditional owners no matter what others believe.

She feels that acknowledging the ongoing strength of First Nations culture and the facts of the dark history of colonisation must be taught to young and old.

[00:41:50] Lottie: I'd like to know why that welfare was brought in to our people and, and lifting the kids from their, you know, from their parents, just because they were there. I just couldn't, I can't understand it. That's why mum wouldn't talk about it, because it hurt too much.

[00:42:07] I think they've got to push ahead to get the younger ones that are growing up now, coming up, to know the truth. To know the truth about where we come from and what happened and, you know, with our parents and with their parents and... And the younger ones have got to know. There's a lot that know, that have learnt. But there's a lot that don't want to know. You know, we never had it handed to us like, no way did they hand us, what we got the dole the same as everyone else. My husband was on the dole one week.

[00:42:47] I remember going to the Aboriginal do last year - dinner. And my name was on a leaf. And this young, this man sitting next to me said, 'Do you know a Carl Bamblett'? I said, 'I'm his wife'. And he worked at the Department of Main Roads with him. And he said, um, 'He was a good man. Good man.' You know, I didn't expect that. Anyone sitting beside me, but there, you know, there's people that know, and, and people who, uh, white people I'm talking about, that mix with Aboriginals, they know the truth.

[00:43:33] But the ones that don't want nothing to do with us, they're the ones that are ignorant, and arrogant, and don't want to know. They just think we're in there for getting all this money off the government. I wish it was true.

While Aunt Lottie tries to remain optimistic, she has deep concerns for our mob and for the future for her grandchildren, great children and even her first great, great grandchild.

She is very close to her large mob and is trying to nurture them, but she wants them to be respectful and take responsibility, like she had to.

[00:44:25] Lottie: It all depends what crowd they get in with. And as I said, it's up to them. The choice is theirs. We can't tell them because they always say 'I know Nan. I know Nan'. They know nothing. I said, 'I'm 70 something and youse are trying to tell me what to do'. I don't know. Anyway, yes. They gotta learn same as everyone else how to cope with life. What's right and what's wrong. And there's so much, um, there's so much out there, so much evil out there, isn't there? All the drugs are, I've never seen so many drugs. And all the dealers, I think, they can go anywhere and get it. It's shocking.

[00:45:23] Talking about my mum, I miss her. I miss my husband. I kept saying 'why did you go and leave me with all these problems of these kids'?

[00:45:37] Yeah. No, I've got a really good family to be honest. I've got a couple of radical bad habit ones, but the rest are... I've got 20 grandkids, about 16 great grandkids and one great great grand.. She came down and seen me about 10 months ago. I've got a photo of me and her. But that's how I've... That's the ones. And the mums used to get a bit jealous because they'd come to Nan. And talk to Nan about their problems. Especially the eldest one.

[00:46:18] Well, I'm the top - leader of the band now like my mum was. I'm the top one in my family now. Because the father's gone. Their grandfather's gone. So,

yeah, sometimes I get a bit sad about it, that they haven't got a man, but they'll have to do with me.

Aunt Lottie still goes back to the Three Ways at Griffith every now and then.

There's now a park where she used to live.

[00:46:49] Lottie: It's all developed now, I can still remember where we all lived. I was down there not long ago. That's where my other daughter used to live. My grandson lives there now. Yeah, on the Three Way, yeah.

[00:47:04] I haven't had many, um, sad times, but I've, only when I lost my friends, you know, my good friends that we used to talk and joke around.

[00:47:15] I'll tell you, this is the last joke I'm going to tell you. We lived in Griffith on the Three Way. I'd just got married and um, her name was Isabel. She was slipping around with my cousin. And I was laying down in bed one night and all the girls were going past on the road and I could hear her saying, 'I'll have two tops. Two tops of the wine.

[00:47:46] And I tormented her all the years till she passed away. Oh Two Tops. Oh, I miss her so much 'cause we were so close. You know, I'll have two tops. And she never, never lived it down with me. I just... She'd tell me a few where to go too when I tormented her. Yeah, I'm happy with that. I told you all my jokes.