



The Path of Pain – *a journey of resilience, healing and reconciliation in bringing to light the real story of Bernier and Dorre Island's History*

Kathleen Musulin, Jade Pervan, Deb Wilkes



Department of Planning,
Lands and Heritage
Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

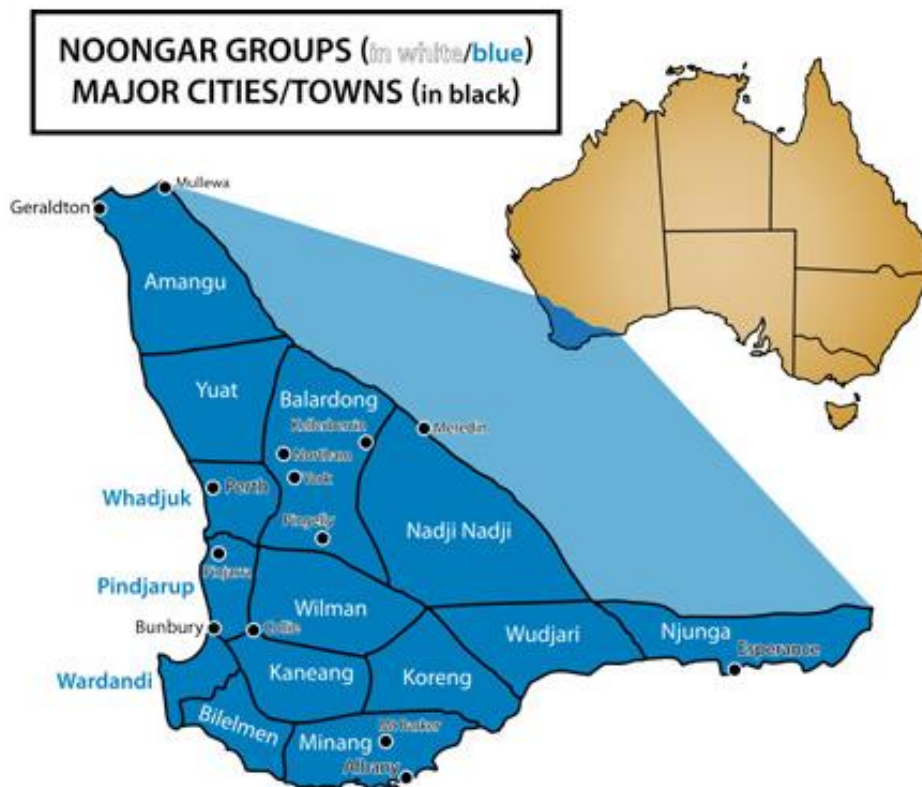


WARNING

This presentation may cause stress to some viewers.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences are also advised that this presentation contains images of people who have passed away.

Acknowledgement

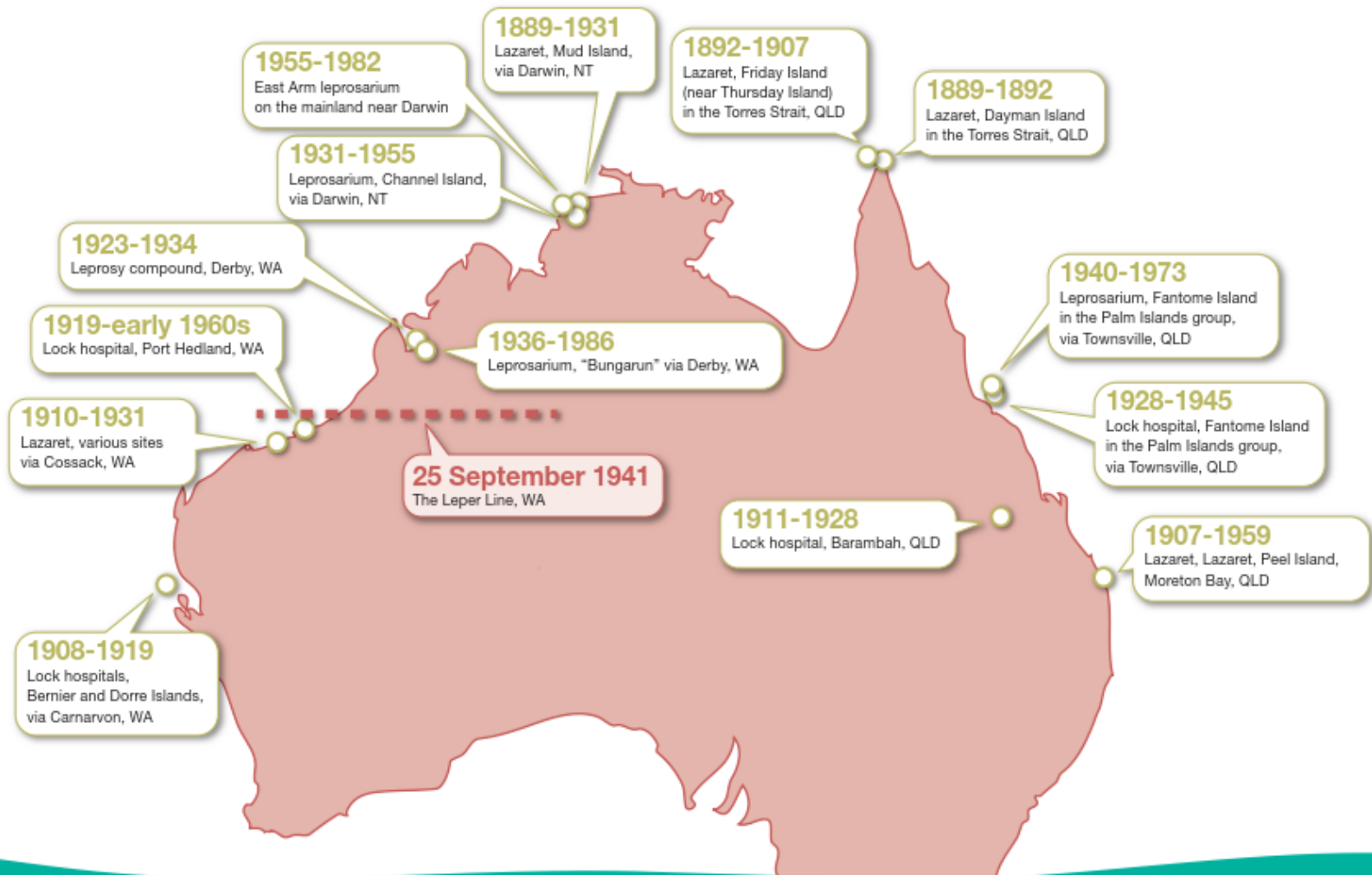


KAYA

*Ngala kaaditj Wadjuk
Noongar moort keyen
kaadak nidja boodja*

We acknowledge the Wadjuk Noongar people of the lands on which we are here today, and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

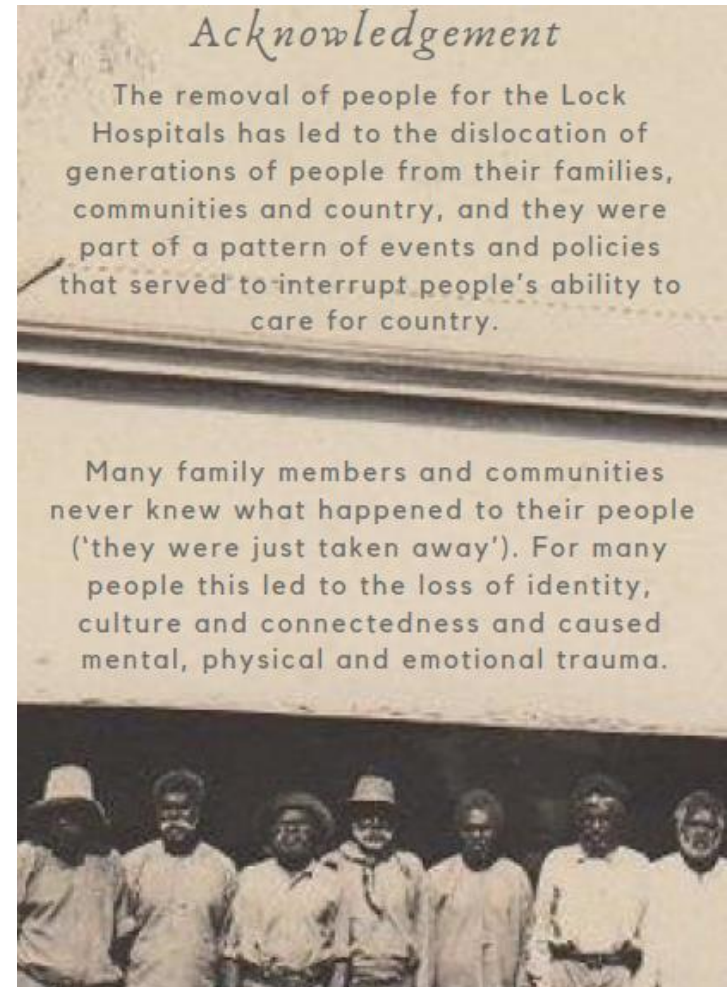
Medical incarcerations



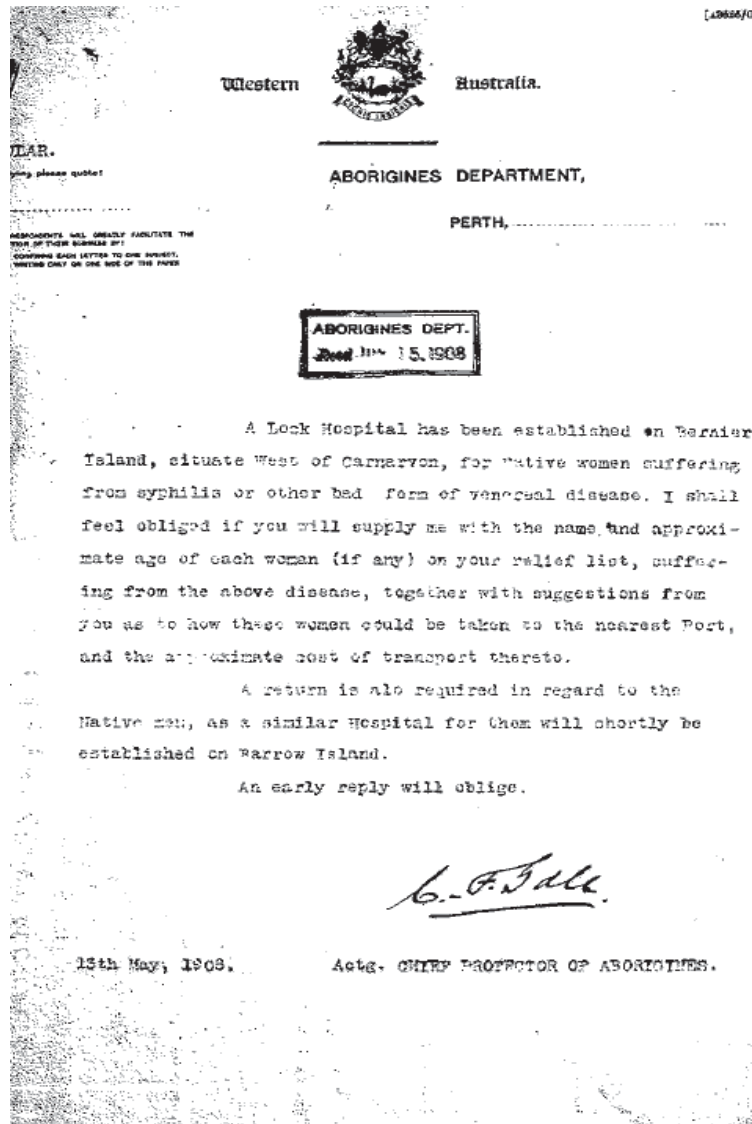
Family fragmentation and dislocation- Loss of identity, culture and connectedness.

Health - Mental, Physical , Emotional

Social Indicators - poverty, education, housing, employment, incarceration and mortality rates



1905 Act – Prisoner Patients



The collection methods were neither humane nor scientific. A man, unqualified except by ruthless and daring and helped by one or two kindred spirits, toured the countryside, raided native camps and by brute force “examined” the natives....the diseased were seized upon....chained by the neck.... marched through the bush in search of further syphilitics (Watson 1946:112).



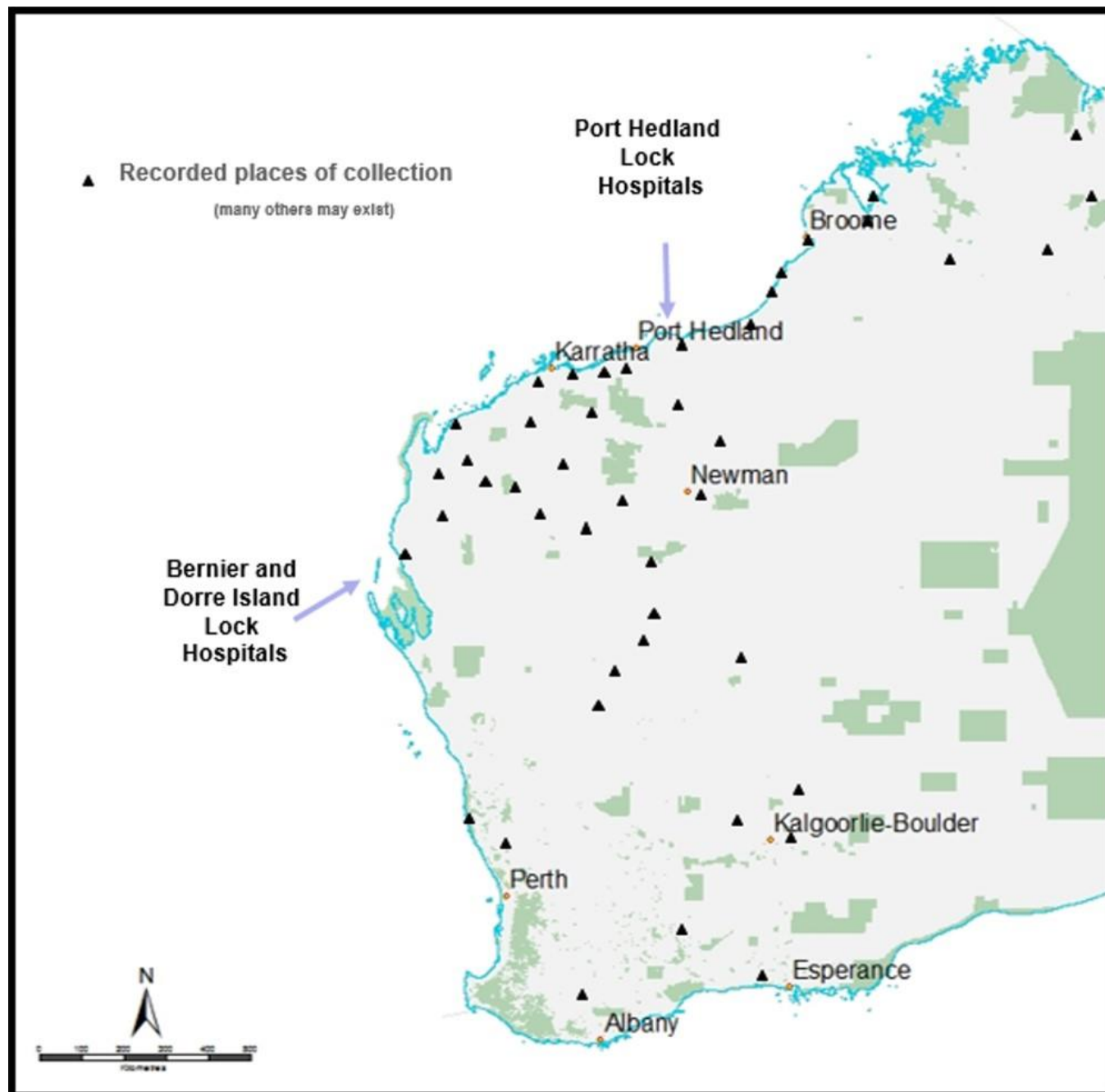
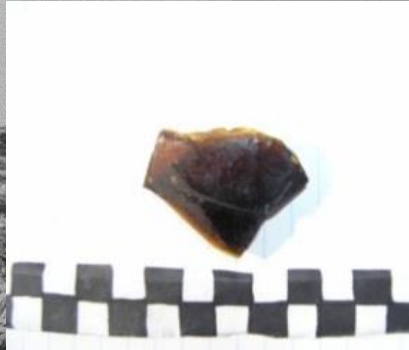


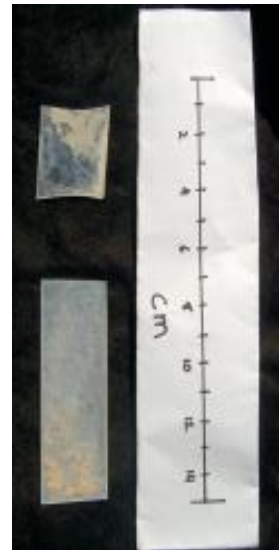
Image courtesy Roger Gregory

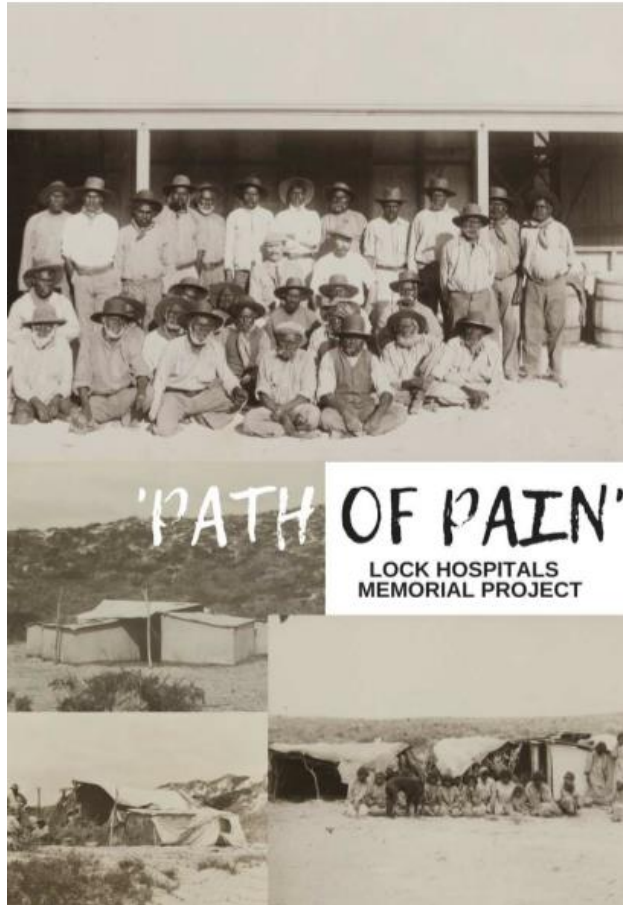






MEDICAL TREATMENT '606'





MISSION STATEMENT

To develop, construct and install a culturally appropriate memorial and healing place in Carnarvon, that recognises and acknowledges the neglected history of the Aboriginal men and women who were part of the Lock Hospitals Project between 1908 and 1918/9 on Bernie and Dorre Islands.



Many ideas and comments were put forward by the group. One comment summed up what a memorial should be, it *"needs to be an experience"* and *"Needs to be a whole lot of things"*. A reminder comment felt that it *"Need to tell the story/remember the people that lived this story"*.

There was general agreement that should be more than one memorial and that there should also be a walk trail with acknowledgement along the way. *"One thing alone cannot tell the whole story"*.

How Local Government Can Support Historical Truth Telling

- Whose story is it?
- Elected Member support can provide credibility for the project – take regular updates to Council or have an Elected Member attend meetings
- Provide administrative support
- Auspice and/or apply for grants
- Provide display in the Library/Town Amenities
- Assist with promotion of events, stories or activities through already established channels (Webpage, social media)





Acknowledgment and Truth



Jade Pervan (nee stingem... · 23/7/18 ✓
Visiting the ancestors on [#Bernier](#) and [#Dorre](#) Islands. [#lockhospitals](#). Tragic history but beautiful memorial sign.



Acknowledgement, memorialisation and commemoration has a real role to play in the essential healing process and reparation. The Carnarvon and Bernier and Dorre Islands memorials aim to acknowledge this story, provide a platform for truth telling of past acts, promote and protect the heritage places through cultural heritage tourism while providing healing for the communities affected.

Jade Pervan (nee stingem... · 8/1/19 ✓

The memorial signs of the story of the Lock Hospitals are now up. Follow the Carnarvon town jetty across Whitlock and Babbage Islands to One Mile Jetty to see them all. Thanks to Bianca McNeir for her artwork and Jessica Stingemore and Coresigns for the signs. [#LockHospitals2019](#)



The WA Government and the Shire of Carnarvon have acknowledged the history, with the Government in the process of building a permanent memorial statue on the cliffs looking out to the islands.
"We accept that this was a really horrific piece of Western Australian history," Regional Development Minister Alannah MacTiernan said.

"There's justice in just the truth being brought out and being acknowledged."



Artists Concept Statement.
 This memorial sculpture is the result of an intense interactive process between the Aboriginal Community of Carnarvon, and ourselves, the purpose of which is to inform contemporary Australians of what took place here, not so long ago, thereby launching a healing process into the ongoing tide of history, slowly rippling toward a better future. The sculpture is sited at this location, the terminations of the "Path of Pain" and the departure point for hundreds of Indigenous Australians, in chains, from the mainland to their forced medical incarceration on the Doro and Borella Islands of Shark Bay, between the years 1906 to 1919.

The pain of their journey is symbolised by a chain motif, a series of linked way-stations, marking at intervals the route they traversed to this place of their evacuations. While signifying the agony of their forced march, it also embodies the metaphor which these links symbolise, connecting the present in the past and the bonds of friendship and healing which this memorial seeks to engender.

The Indigenous people consigned in this process were forcibly removed from their traditional Country all over the State of W.A. This dislocation had profound effects. The anguished displacement of families and tribal dismemberment has left scars which run down to us from this dark past and therefore this memorialisation has a powerful role to play in the essential healing process that is critical in our fragmented world of today. Effects of this outrage completely ignored such as: people as the terror that inland people felt when confronted with the sea; the wild ocean waves of Shark Bay scolding many to their deaths, but also the horror and shock they suffered from being plunged into this alien environment, stretching for over 36 Kilometers from One Mile Jetty to the Islands.

The sculpture embodies the core element of this tragedy of inhuman separation expressed through the eyes of the children, whose parents, family and larger tribe, were physically torn apart in this terrible history. This is embodied in the tale that have come down to us, of how the children, most of whom were left behind, reached to the horror of being separated from their parents. The abandoned children presently this other devastation and act as a 'mute point' in the telling of this story, forever marking and memorialising this place.

The young girl, totally forlorn, can only point in the direction of these 'Islands of Tears' - the place of her parents' internment, her other hand covering her eyes, lest the vision on the horizon would be imprinted upon her retina, confirming the horrendous reality of separation (which she cannot bear to believe is true). Her pointing finger captures the huge depth and intensity of her loneliness with this one simple gesture the little leather, clinging in terror to the only 'mother' figure he now has, expresses the premature realisation that this young girl faces as his future name, while she herself, too young to be cut adrift from her tribal family, faces a harsh and desolate future.

Without bitterness, we must ensure that these heartrending stories are told; that the tragedy of the Lock Hospital is acknowledged and that the victims of this appalling injustice are remembered, so that the like of this can never happen again.

www.lockhospitaltrust.com.au
 Photo: Michael Smith and Charles Smith, by request 2010





In memory of more than 700 Aboriginal people forcibly removed from their traditional lands for the Lock Hospital experiments

Many died under deplorable conditions and are buried here.

.... From the descendents of those who passed through these hospitals between 1908 and 1919, and the local Aboriginal people.

"Healing does start with truth-telling,"