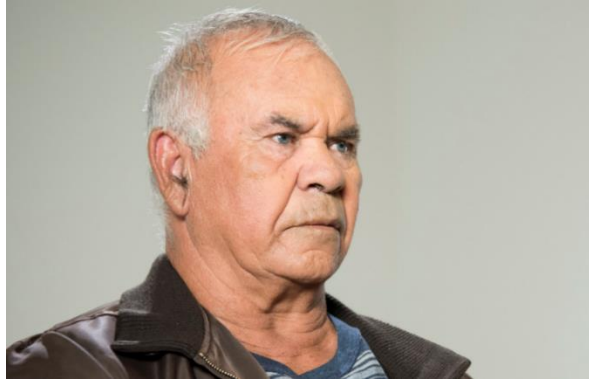


MICHAEL WELSH



Michael Welsh is a Wailwan man from Coonamble in New South Wales. He was eight when he and his brother Barry were forcibly removed from his mother and five of his siblings.

Michael was told that his other brothers and sisters would follow on the next train. He knew it was a lie.

He was taken to the notorious Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Training Home. An institution near Kempsey on NSW's mid north coast, Kinchela was renowned for its physical, sexual, psychological and cultural abuse of aboriginal children. The children weren't allowed to use names. Instead they were given numbers. Michael was number 36.

Michael said the aim of Kinchela "was to degrade us and set us up for reprogramming our brains."

For decades afterwards, Michael struggled with the trauma he experienced at Kinchela.

He finally reached a stage where he "couldn't hold the pain back any longer". He made contact with the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC), an organisation established by Kinchela survivors to support them and their descendants.

"When we get together as a group of brothers who've gone through that place, it feels good. The fear that was there is not there anymore," Michael says.

He's now Treasurer of KBHAC and on the Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Committee.

On the 20th anniversary of the Bringing Them Home report, Michael is passionate about ending the cycle of intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"I'm not the only one who feels this pain, I've got eight children and they all feel the same," he said. "We do not want this hate to go to our children or to our grandchildren and great grandchildren."

"Our children need to be connected to this healing process too. Our journey's almost over, our children's journeys are only just beginning."



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