

Name: DOEEN LYON

Submission:

All the key points in the 10 point list are relevant to a cultural policy, however may I may a special mention of all the thousands of volunteers who keep their cultures alive in small and regional museums around Australia. Without their dedication to the care, conservation, research and commitment much of Australia's culture would have been lost long ago. I have been involved in this field since 1979 and have actively advocated for this important sector with the aim of promoting the grass roots of local cultures. Local Museums have the potential to act as a mirror to their communities, enagaging in dialogue with people and recording their stories. This encourages research and curiosity about past actions and practices in such fields as social policy, migration, women's issues, religion,economics agriculture. In our rush to promote, brand, advertise and exploit our communties we should perhaps reflect on how they came to be what they are and to look for what has made that com munity unique. Exciting partnerships can be forged between museums, artists, film makers and performers and I would request any new cultural policy to actively encourage such partnerships, while realising that most small museums do not have the capacity to employ full time staff to push forward their ambitions.

A dynamic local museum can be a vital factor in local cultural tourism, in education in schools, as a resource for festivals and creative partnerships in addition to its core business of preserving records of local material culture and mounting exhibitions. I would like to see a specific department within government concerned with Museums, history, heritage and the arts as a creative hub to facilitate exciting new initiatives in valuing our unique Australian-ness!

For an example of a project which my museum [Wollondilly heritage centre, The Oaks, NSW 2572] is trying to make with a digital film maker to include in an exhibition about child maigrants at Dr. Barnardos, Mowbray Park, Picton, please see attached script which will be overlaid over photos and archival footage to create a DVD of 10 digital stories, each no more than 3minutes long. We struggle to pay the film maker but persist because it is exciting, contemporary, necessary and innovative!

Nice images of the Australian wilderness in colour juxtaposed with re-enactments of black and white video.

## *Nobody's Child.*

Male VOICE: Welcome to sunny Australia, you Pommy Bastards! Picture of Boat/statue?/pic of John as kid or re-enactment.

John Bicknell: We were child migrants, we were nobody's children. It was 194?

At that time, to be a pommy bastard, was the lowest you could be. Birth certificates were stamped Bastard. It was an inescapable sentence, haunted you all your life.

Female Voice: "As my allowance has been stopped since January 14<sup>th</sup> I find it impossible to carry on any longer.

Some of us had no family or we were told we had none, we were told our families were killed in the war, for some of us it was true, for others it was not. Some of us were rejected by our mothers, we had been treated poorly, we were poor and always hungry... Some of us had been abused in homes in England, been scared and traumatised.

During the war, thousands of children were homeless, some, 4 or 5 years of age, roamed through the streets, fending for themselves.

Female Voice: I shall be very grateful if you will make arrangements to receive my three boys before April."

At age 63, the tears rolled from my eyes in torrents when I read my Barnardos records. Mother said we were going to play with lots of other boys our own age, we didn't know we'd never return home again.

MALE VOICE: "you step out of line and you'll get six of the best.

By the age of 7 my defense mechanisms had truly set in, I was never kissed or hugged... I had learnt not to cry at all, and no telling tales... I was thoroughly convinced that my face somehow told people that I was a bad person and I always felt as though I'd done something wrong... if I could just see what it was I could in some way, do something about it... I grabbed every chance to try and look in the mirror.

Female VOICE: All those Barnardos boys should have been put down at birth.

I had been given an IQ of 96, so I was told I was retarded in thought, dull and slow in most of my activities, this played on my mind and so I was determined to sit my leaving certificate, which I did, with only 10 other boys and I even became School Captain (even if the other Barnardos Boys threatened dire beatings if I wasn't elected) .

Birth Certificate/Image of him on bus?/Barnardos Records/ Any photos?

After a long search for my identity through lost papers and deleted information, I found out that as a child migrant I wasn't yet an Australian Citizen, still nobody's child, but that I had family, a lot of family back in England I had never met. On Australia Day, 2003 in the presence of at least half my long lost family I became an Australian citizen.

MALE VOICE: Welcome Australian Citizen. Number 01200500793. John Richard Bicknell... Australia's child.