

Frank Gare, Western Australia's last Commissioner of Native Welfare. In it the letter it said, 'Records for the period 1940 to 1951 state that no reference to the birth of Sydney Jackson can be found.'



If anyone does not understand the impact of the removal of Indigenous children from their families resulting from the Stolen Generations they should take notice of Jackson's life. Taken away by a formal arrest warrant when he was three, he was separated from his family for twenty years and would meet his parents only twice before they died.⁶² He was one of the lucky ones.

Jackson has absolutely no doubt that his mother, Jinna, and his father, Scottie, loved him, shown by his mother deliberately evading the police and the departmental gaze in their concerted attempts to track and capture 'half-caste' children like Jackson and his sisters. As both of his sisters had been removed and detained at the Moore River Native Settlement (made famous in the *Rabbit-Proof Fence* film), Jinna did everything in her power to ensure that Syd did not end up there, or in any other state-run institution. But the arm of the Native Affairs Department was long and powerful and eventually Jackson and Jinna were tracked down at Tarmoola station just near Leonora. Initially Syd was to be transferred 'under escort' to Sister Kate's but he ended up at Moore River Native Settlement with his sisters. After a short time, he was removed from his siblings and taken to Carrolup Native Boys School near Katanning, and then finally to Roelands Native Mission situated just between Collie and Bunbury in the southwest of Western Australia.⁶³

It would be years later that the pieces to the puzzle could start to be put into place, as Jackson explains:

For a long time I thought I was a Noongar because as a kid I was brought up in the southwest in a place called the Roelands Native Mission. Years later when I caught up with my sisters and other members of the family I learnt that I was born in Leonora which I learnt that I was part of the Wongi people out of Leonora and Kalgoorlie. My actual clan group is the Wongi people. I had very mixed feelings about that because you know you're living in Noongar country and you're bought up as a Noongar, then being told that you're from that area (the goldfields) it took some time to sink in over the years and to accept the fact that I'm from up there.⁶⁴