

**STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
J. D. SOMERVILLE ORAL HISTORY
COLLECTION**

OH 482/7

Full transcript of an interview with

JOSIE AGIUS & VINCE COPLEY

on 26 March 2000

by Sue Anderson

for the

NGADJURI ORAL HISTORIES PROJECT

Recording available on CD

Access for research: Unrestricted

Right to photocopy: Copies may be made for research and study

Right to quote or publish: Publication only with written permission from the
State Library

NOTES TO THE TRANSCRIPT

This transcript was donated to the State Library. It was not created by the J.D. Somerville Oral History Collection and does not necessarily conform to the Somerville Collection's policies for transcription.

Readers of this oral history transcript should bear in mind that it is a record of the spoken word and reflects the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The State Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the interview, nor for the views expressed therein. As with any historical source, these are for the reader to judge.

This transcript had not been proofread prior to donation to the State Library and has not yet been proofread since. Researchers are cautioned not to accept the spelling of proper names and unusual words and can expect to find typographical errors as well.

**JOSIE AGIUS AND VINCE COPLEY TALKING TO SUE ANDERSON,
SALISBURY NORTH, 26.03.2000**

[Present: Fred Warrior]

SA: OK, perhaps if we start with you Josie just saying your full name and your date of birth and where you were born.

JA: My name is Josie Agius. I was born in Wallaroo on April 2nd, '34. I was a Warrior before I was married.

Right, and what about you Vince?

VC: My name's Vince Copley. I was born on the 24th of the 12th, '36 at Wallaroo, and I was a Warrior before I was a Copley.

JA: You're still a Warrior.

VC: Still a Warrior.

How long were you there, you know, after you were born, tell me a bit about your life after that.

JA: In Wallaroo?

Yeah.

We lived there and we had two sisters and also a brother. The oldest was Winnie and then there was Colin and Maureen. We lived in Wallaroo till I was about five, because I remember starting school there, but also our Father died when I was about three or four years old, so Vince and I never really knew our Father. And so we lived there until I started school at Wallaroo and I think things might have got a bit hard for Mum-----

Who was your Mum, by the way?

My Mum was – our Mum was – Katie Edwards and she married Fred Warrior. And I remember Mum donkeying me from Wallaroo to Kadina – she used to go and do housework there and she used to leave me in the playgrounds, then she'd come back and pick me up when she'd finished. Then our older sister Winnie looked after us. So then, I think when I was about seven, or eight, we went home to Point Pearce and Mum left us with our Grandparents, Pappa and Grandma. And then she took Winnie into town and she found work in Adelaide. And so we were over on Point Pearce with our Grandparents for about four years, five years I think.

And who are your Grandparents?

Joe and May Edwards. Stayed there with them. And Winnie looked after us – elder sister – or helped to look after us. And we went to school, ended up going to school there and Mum would send home money and clothes and that to Pappa and Grandma for us. School – and then I think when I was about ten or eleven, we came back into Adelaide. Mum got a house there at Mile end on Henley Beach Road and came back into Adelaide to live. All except Winnie came back into Adelaide. We all went to Thebarton School for a while.

What did Winnie do?

Vince fainted one day at the schoolyard, so we had to----- [laughs] Fell flat on his face.

VC: Lost a lot of my teeth.

JA: Most of his teeth. But I didn't know about this till lunchtime, because I was looking for him; I couldn't find him, and they come up and told some of the kids, come up and told me that he fainted and that, took him home and that. So we stayed at Thebarton for, till I was in about Year 5, 6. Then Mum got married again; she married a white man, Allan Copley. And we all then moved up to Leigh Creek, because Allan was working in the Water Works – the MWS – so we ended up going up to Leigh Creek and going to school there, eh?

VC: Mm.

JA: For about two years?

VC: Yeah.

JA: But in the school at Leigh Creek when we first went there, there was only about 12 kids there at that time, children, so we had to go back to a school – Copley School – and then when we said our names was Copley – because then they couldn't understand how we was Copleys you see, so we had to explain to everybody how we were Copleys and how it was connected and that. We ended up with some good people there that we still have contact – not have contact – but we connect sometimes with people that we meet. Anyway we ended up then going up to Alice Springs to live. So we ended up leaving school there at 14. I had two jobs before I left school – I worked in a café and also going round and washing those big medicine jars. So I had to stand on this big box, because I couldn't reach the sink, with this big white apron on. So I had those two jobs and then Saturday mornings, I'd go and do some housework for this lady – do ironing and all that for her. And we lived down at the Gap, just as you come through there – have you been to Alice Springs?

Yeah.

Well as you come through the Gap then, on your right-hand side there was what they called the 'Half-Caste Cottages', so we lived there. We were there for about six years, eh?

VC: It was longer than that.

JA: But you weren't there for all that. Yeah, but you weren't there for that long.

VC: No.

Why weren't you there Vince?

Because I came down to the Boys' Home here, St. Francis House.

Why was that?

It was a Home mainly for Northern Territory kids and this Church of England priest, Father Smith, had organised with the mothers to bring these kids down and get them educated and put them through their training system or whatever, and I went into Alice Springs and I just made friends when they came up for Christmas. They used to come up every, you'd go up there every Christmas time. So I said to Mum I wouldn't mind going back, so I sort of broke the rule I suppose as the first South Australian kid in the Home. My cousin came later and spent a year there, but I spent eight years in the Home going through primary school and into secondary school and then starting an apprenticeship.

And which Home was it, sorry?

St. Francis House.

JA: Down at Semaphore.

VC: And so once that sort of happened and you had to get out, it made things very difficult. Kids didn't – well Mum had passed away and Josie was down at Port Macdonnell.

JA: No I wasn't, I was working in Adelaide when you was at St. Francis House, because I was working at the Franklin Hotel.

VC: Yeah, when I finished, wasn't it, when I moved?

JA: Moved when I got married.

VC: And Winnie, my other sister, was at Pine Point over on Yorke Peninsula. So there wasn't else to do, but I bummed around Port Adelaide for six months, picking up a bit of day work and stuff like that, and then went with my other two cousins up to the Riverland to do a bit of fruit picking, which was the worst job I ever had. [Josie laughs] And we come out of that and went over to my sister at Pine Point for a while. For six months or something I stopped there and played a bit of footie, then teamed up with my cousin again; we ended up in Broken Hill. Then from Broken Hill I went to Melbourne. So just moved around for a while.

Moved around, mm.

Had two years in Melbourne trying to play footie and came home then, back to Yorke Peninsula, went back to Pinie with my sister – that's my crutch I suppose at that time – and she looked after me, and then I got work on the farms there locally and played football with the local team and I eventually stayed there. I stayed there; I ended up staying there about 11 years, got married.

JA: Married the farmer's daughter [laughs].

VC: the farm, but never mind. And then at that particular time Aboriginal Affairs was not well known. I think they had about two organisations in Adelaide at that time, 1970. One was run by my Auntie and one was run by one of the boys from the Home. So they decided to set up this particular office to try and get a community centre in Adelaide, where Aboriginal people would have a focal point to go to get assistance and all those sorts of things, because they were coming and trying to get some help So we eventually got that and set it up and we set up Legal Rights, set up the Housing Unit and set up the, part of the ASG. So all these organisations that are up and running now, they stem from that particular office, which very few people know about. They know a little bit about the history, but not all of it.

Then I went to Canberra for eight years and lived over there and worked. Then I had a heart attack and then I came back and I've been here ever since.

And that was when your interest in Aboriginal heritage began, was it, or have you always had that interest?

No, I think our interest in Aboriginal heritage started at Leigh Creek. There was two or three people from Nepabunna working in Leigh Creek at the coalfields and they used to come out home and when we used to go up to; we went out to Nepabunna a couple of times and they were going to; oh I don't know, because like seeing people living in different environments in different ways; still living in humpies. I met an old lady, I always remember an old lady – she was 104 then, when we went – and she was still kicking around. She remembered when the telegraph went through.

Wow.

So she had all those memories and recollections and that probably was my first instance into – apart from of course being Point Pearce where all our old relations were – but having seen people living like that. They said it was good though. Still got those connections from the Jacksons and the Coulthards that were around at that particular

time. I still know who they are and But yeah, in the '70s I think; no, it was in Melbourne when I was playing footie and I was living with Sir Doug Nicholls at the time and Victoria had one Aboriginal organisation called the Aboriginal Advancement League and Doug was the head of that at that time.

That's right.

And he took me round the place, down to Port and up to Shepparton and down to, and he used to just talk on the weekends. And we had the old picture theatres – I don't know whether you remember the old picture theatres? – he used to fill them to the rafters and he was a real good talker. I think that's the first time I was aware of organised Aboriginal affairs. And then I came back to live in Adelaide and they set up the Aboriginal Cultural Institute – not to get confused with Tandanya – but that was the one that the Aboriginal Progress Association was in charge of, run by John Moriarty. And the other one was the Aboriginal Women's Council, which was run by our Aunty Gladys Elphick. So they were the only two organisations I'm aware of that were set up solely to find a building that we could buy as a focal point.

JA: They used to have meetings at the Aboriginal Progress Association and that was when Charlie [Fred Warrior??] and Winnie and them were all involved, wasn't it?

VC: Yeah, they met down at our sister's, Winnie's, down at Taperoo. Malcolm Cooper was there.

JA: And Don Dunstan was going into parliament and he used to come down and meet with all of us, from Port Adelaide and around that area, and you know, what he said, Malcolm Cooper and them, and we had people staying with us that was involved because they always thought that Winnie and Aunty Mary was with the communist group, but they weren't, and we used to go there every Easter time, eh?, to the FCAATSI meetings. We used to have FCAATSI meetings. I forget what that stands for, Federal-----

VC: Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

JA: We used to have that every year, so different people used to go, so went a couple of times with Winnie over there, and that was really interesting and I think that was when Charlie and Maureen and them was just starting to get into politics, isn't it? Well they were in but-----

VC: Well, they were both university students.

JA: University students, yeah. Because being in Adelaide, Aunty Mary Williams and Winnie was the two main ones that was into the politics and everything. Didn't interest me; still doesn't interest me really. Yeah, so we were the helpers; we were the blind workers under the front people, because they could talk, you know. But then that was really interesting at that time I think, to know what was happening, in Port Adelaide especially. Yeah, so I think things sort of fell away a little bit when we lost Winnie and Aunty Mary couldn't manage on her own – although she was pretty well then and she often had a kindergarten running for Aboriginal children out in that area, so that was good. It's still going today. I think there's a lot of people involved in it. But it's a good place to be down there now I think, because there's a lot of things happening, especially for the Aboriginal people.

We missed a bit out from you; you mentioned earlier that you were working in Adelaide-----

Oh well, when we lost Mum, we were over at Pine Point living. We'd just; one night we'd taken Winnie – eldest one – into the, was going to take her to the hospital. We took Mum into Wallaroo that night, because she wasn't very well – she was haemorrhaging, so my step-father and I, we went to, we had to take her to Wallaroo. So when we got back from Wallaroo we was just settling down and Winnie was expecting David at that time, another younger brother, so we had to take Winnie, we was going to take her to Wallaroo, but we only got as far as Maitland, so we had to go to the Maitland

Hospital, but at that time Maitland Hospital wouldn't let any Aboriginal people in to have their babies. They only had two government beds as far as I can remember what was told, and they just wouldn't let her in. But my stepfather went and had a go at them, so that's where David ended up being born, in Maitland, see, at that time the only Aboriginal kid. So all the other women that went from Point Pearce to have babies, they had to go to Wallaroo. And there was quite a few that was born in the carts or the cars – you know, had babies on the way up there.

Yeah.

So anyway, when I left Pinie – I was working on a farm there for a little while – and then I came into Adelaide and I got a job at Methodist Ladies' College, which is now Peasley (?) College. So I worked there and I got a live-in job there. I was there for about two years I think, working there as Waitress. And then I got married then and went down to live down the southeast, at Mount Gambier. So I ended up having my two children, two boys, down at Mount Gambier, and we lived down at Port McDonnell for another six years. Then we came up here-----

Who did you marry?

Freddie Agius. And he lived in brought up in the city. So although his mother was, my mother-in-law was a funny lady [laughs]. She was good-hearted and everything, but because everybody knew her, but she was a very frightened lady in lots of ways. I mean, like if you went out of the house, she'd bolt all the doors and all the windows in case somebody was going to come. She was more frightened of the black people than she was of the white people in lots of ways, but she was good-hearted and we got on pretty well after a while I think. You know, like mothers for their sons and fathers for their daughters. Anyway I didn't have any children for about two years and she was frightened that I wasn't going to have any I think.

We ended up coming back to Adelaide to live then and we lived around with different relations and that, which was a bit hard at first. When you've got children it's hard living with other people. So anyway, we ended up getting a house at Taperoo and my daughter was born; I had her after four years; there was Freddie and Raymond and then Kate was born about four years after Raymond, when I got back to Adelaide. So now I've been out at Taperoo for the last 38 years.

And for me, I worked in, first Aboriginal Health Unit, that my brother got for me when he was working in the Centre. So he wanted to know if I wanted a job for a little while, and I was there for seven years. And that was good, because then I had to drive a car. I could get a licence. I'd been driving around Taperoo for about five or six years with no licence. So I had to get a licence so I can drive the car. I had to go from Taperoo right up to Norwood and get a car and come back to Port Adelaide, because that was my area for Aboriginal people. And that was interesting because you got to know a lot of people. Not only young mob, but there was a lot of people coming in from the Reserves then, from the Missions into Adelaide to live. So that was good for me to know, and I still know a lot of them today, which is good.

So when I left the Aboriginal Health and I had time off there and I lost my husband at that time. And then I had two grandchildren, so then I thought well I hate sitting home, so I got a job with the school. And that was just around the corner – the Taperoo Primary School. So I was there for another seven years and that helped because now all those children are grown up and they've got children. So it makes you feel old. But now I'm – after that so I thought I'll have another rest. So I had another rest for what, about two months I think, then I got into schools, doing schools, working as a cultural person, like teaching language, because I was working with Rob Amery in the language and that. The Kurna language was just starting to come out then. So I got to know that and also a little bit of Narrunga language that we had; I was teaching a little bit of that in the schools and cultural stuff to the kids and telling them stories. More about your life story and what you went through, like with the Assimilation Act and if you was to talk to any other white person, you know how the police used to come and take you away and all that. And

some of the kids they just didn't know that these things happened. And if you went into a shop you were the last one to get served and all this sort of thing. And some of the kids they just listened and they just couldn't believe that these things had happened. And I think it was like, some of it was a little bit of ignorance because of their parents, you know, probably had told them other things about Aboriginal people. So you'd try and sit down and explain the good things about yourself and about other Aboriginal people.

And that was good for me because I got to know all the kids. Most of the kids now you see them – black and white in Port Adelaide – they still call me Aunty, which is good for me I think. And you know them, and they come up and they show you their babies and that. And you think, oh couldn't you do something else [than have babies young] [laughs], but as I said, I've been down in that area for a lot of years. I am now working – I went to college for three years, Taoundi College; that's the Aboriginal college – I did Tourism and Language there for about a year, two years I did that course, and then I went, the last course I did last year was, I went back and did reading and writing and arithmetic I suppose, maths, whatever. But that was a good course. Lots of things in that taught you; some things I already knew anyway, so it was just sort of making your mind work again and keeping it alive.

Now I've left that, so I've been working in a place at the Port, Youth Theatre. And I work with children there. I've been there for four years helping the kids. We've got two dance groups; we've got another little group that does circus. So that's been good for us and we've got other Aboriginal people involved in it, especially the young ones. So we are now trying to be just the Indigenous part of it, so hopefully that's going to come through for us. So we're working on that pretty hard at this stage. But it's good being down there with the kids, because it gives them other choices I suppose, that these good things can happen for them.

Oh that's great, yeah.

Plus we're still connected with a lot of people even though we haven't been to Alice Springs. You meet a lot of people from up there and you could connect with the different ones from those areas. Plus we've been involved with a lot of sport, all of us, and we're still involved with it, because you've got your nieces and nephews and your grandchildren playing and that keeps us going sometimes. And keeps us out of pocket [laughs]. But you enjoy it, because it's been a part of our life for a long time, just being involved in sports. Like when he [Vince] was playing, I used to go and watch him play.

And you're both now involved in administration?

We're involved in administration. Still with the netball and football you get involved in and things, otherwise it gets nasty [points at Fred Warrior]. You know what he's like?

Oh Fred, yeah [laughter].

But on the whole, it's a pretty good life I suppose, because when you leave school and all you're trained for is housework and you don't know what other things you can get into and what's going to be happening with your life-----

Well it sounds like you've had a very interesting one.

It's been interesting in the last couple of weeks I've been involved in, now I've done a lot of Kaurna welcomings to different organisations and groups and that. In the Fringe – I've done quite a few since the Fringe has been on and I've had a lot of people from different, you know, all over the world. And that's what I like, meeting people. I like to travel. You have to have money to travel, but it's hard. [laughs] But it's good and you're still involved with your families, so they keep you going.

And when did you first find out that you had Ngadjuri ancestry?

Well I've always, my Grandfather, because we've always known that he'd come from the north, but didn't actually know where. Because what I can remember of Grandfather Barney, he was always away from Point Pearce, and sometimes when he'd come home, we'd all use to go and he'd sit down and he'd tell us stories about different things. But being young I suppose, it sort of never sank in. And I used to look up at the stars and we'd sit sometimes and he'd talk about different things like that.

Can you remember what sort of things he talked about?

Oh, you know, he'd point out different things at night and that sometimes.

The stars?

Yeah, and talk about that. And I remember somebody saying to me that when our Father passed away – our Father used to be a runner and he died of a, he had a heart attack somewhere – and a bird had come and got talking to Grandfather Barney in the language and he was the first one to know about it, because I don't think Mum knew about it for a while there until they got news. But this was Grandfather Barney, I mean there must have been a language then. It's a pity that we didn't know the language. Like we said we grew up as Narrunga people, but always knew that there was another Grandfather, because with Pappa, Mum's dad, we'd always been close to them, but I think in our own way we was also close to Grandfather Barney when he was there, because we always used to look for him and he used to come home and that. So he must have moved around a bit and had a lot of knowledge. Because Professor Berndt said he was a very knowledgable person. So it would have been good for us younger ones to have known him, but I think that Irene [Agius] and probably my sister and that, they would have had a lot more to do with him. So it's a shame that we didn't have much more to do with him.

What about you, Vince? What do you remember of Grandfather Barney?

VC: Nothing very much. I think it was about 1968 I suppose when my sister mentioned my Father's side and from then on I twigged that I should find out a little bit more about where he came from, what he did etc., etc. But at that particular time, Aboriginal affairs was just starting to take off. The people that were involved at that time were very busy in terms of trying to set up the types of organisations that we wanted to set up to protect Aboriginal rights etc., etc. So it never gave me a great deal of time at that particular instance. So, yeah, I had very little to do with Grandfather Barney and like Jo said, my Father died when we were very young, so knew very little about that one.

So this is now a catch up period I suppose, in terms of trying to find out what's happening; trying to look at the country, see the sites etc., etc., and get myself, get my head around some of those sorts of things so that I can pick up the information, read reports and stuff like that on Ngadjuri group, boundaries etc., etc.; talking to other people outside of that area in terms of what their connection is with the land in terms of - now Native Title has come in people claiming Dreaming trails come from their country into our country and saying that they own it etc., etc. So there's a bit of a mix-up there and that needs to be straightened out.

So, apart from that, like Josie said, we thought we were Narrungas and that was the go. Even as late as the seventies, probably the two groups that you would have known would have been the Ngarrindjeris and the Narrungas. Nobody knew that they were Kurna. And so if you were looking at Port Pirie mob, nobody knew they were Nukunus and certainly nobody mentioned Ngadjuri groups. And so there was this part I suppose and it didn't really come until the '80s or halfway into the '90s where people were starting to say that's my land, that's where I come from, in terms of finding out exactly who they're, what their genealogy was; who they're related to; what part they came from etc., etc. So those sort of changes have just come about recently, so people are still trying to work out who they belong to.

Yep, and when Fred discovered that Barney was a Ngadjuri and that he therefore had Ngadjuri ancestry, I know that he was very excited about that and getting this

National Estate project together and so forth, did that renew your interest a bit in the Ngadjuri side of things?

To a certain extent, yeah. I really, I suppose again people said look you're tied up with Kudnarto right, so therefore you belong to the Kaurnas, right. And so you're getting one side telling you that and then you just have to do some research yourself I suppose before you make a decision on exactly what you want, but certainly, yeah, it still made me think a bit more about the Ngadjuri.

Can we just stop for a minute?

[END OF SIDE A]

SIDE B

JA: I think we lost a lot too because we didn't live on Point Pearce for that long. I mean, we said we moved and we lived at Leigh Creek and then we ended up in Alice Springs and I think in that time we did miss out. And specially with the two Grandparents, Grandfather Barney and Pappa.

And who's Pappa?

That was Mum's Dad, but his name was Joe Edwards.

That's right.

Because we had the two, we used to call him Pappa and then Grandfather Barney, so we knew who we was talking about I guess. And because we had to do with Pappa because Grandfather wasn't home all that much, we just sort of related to him. But there was this thing, because when we came into town to live, it was a bit of a shock for us to know that we were leaving the security I think of being home with no-one around us, none of our

relations and that. Because if you had nothing you went to your other aunties or to your relations and to know that you could sit there and have a feed with them, or you know, you had sharing. And then when we came into Adelaide it was really a shock for us to go to this white school and know you didn't know anything about the Aboriginal kids that was there. So, as I said, it was a shock.

And the trams in those days [laughs]. It was good because then you'd get on the trams and you'd hear the Greeks and Italians talking in their language and you used to think well that's good, but we only had our little bit of language that we knew, that we could talk to each other we didn't want anybody else to know about. And then people said that we should start sharing, but it took us a long time to say that we didn't want to share, we just wanted to keep things for ourselves. But now we do share a lot. But it's a pity that our Grandparents had their language taken away from them, because we would have had a lot more to share with each other then, especially us oldies to share with our grannies, our nieces and nephews and that that are coming up and like Fred's grannies that are coming up now, for him to share with them and Woody (??) [Vince] with his children and mine with my grannies. And it would be lovely to sit down and talk in language. Because you hear the little ones from up the Lands coming down and they're only this age and they're rattling off like one thing. You could just imagine Clifford doing that, eh?

VC: Mm.

JA: Rattling off. And I think we did miss out a lot, not being home all the time, but it's a feeling that when you do go home – even though you only go home sometimes now for funerals – to me anyway, I don't feel as if I've left the place in a sense, because everything's still the same. And the people over there are always the same to me, although some people say that when they go over there they don't like to stay too long; they like to get off because nobody's there and things aren't right. But I always feel as if I'm welcome there with the different people. Maybe because I have a agegroup and we've shared a lot of things together. And even Irene is older than us; she's still there,

she is the eldest of the Ngadjuri group now that we are, so it's fair I suppose that we ask her different things because she remembers a lot more than what we would. So I think that'd be a good thing for us now, for what happened today, for us to continue and to get to know a lot more about where we can go and say well this belongs to now, and we can have a say in that. [Interview is conducted following a visit to Riverton where Ngadjuri descendants met with Robert Hannaford who has offered space in Riverton for a Ngadjuri interpretive centre and with Sue Anderson, Fran Knight and Adele Pring, who are collaborating on a book entitled, 'Ngadjuri People of the Mid-North of South Australia: ngadlu walpa'].

How does that feel?

That feels very good. It would feel very good for all of us now to do that and to know that we can share and we can take other people there, like our own lot, and tell them about it, because we couldn't tell anybody else before because we didn't know much about it at all. It's only that I've got this [information on her Mother] and other things like with Adele helping and doing things about it, so I think it would be really good. I mean they have the stone or whatever's going to be there, I think it's going to be really special for us to have that happen. [Robert Hannaford has also been commissioned to produce a sculpture for Riverton of a Ngadjuri woman and child]. So yes, I'm glad that it's finally happening for us, and to share things, because we haven't been as a group before. We've always done things – found out that he [Fred] was doing things on his own and sometimes he'd come and tell us and sometimes he wouldn't and we've done things and maybe we should tell him and you'd get things all mixed up but now they're all together, we can keep that way and make it happen for us. And plus with Irene and Lainie and them all home there. To share it with the whole family.

So it feels like it's a bonding thing really?

I mean, we've always been close in our own way, but now this will be a lot better for us, to share all this now that it's happening and because of Grandfather.

And what about the grannies, how do you think it will help them?

Well then that'll be our next job – [to Vince] when you get your grannies [laughs]. It's up to us to make sure that they know that they've got not only us as Grannies, but they've got other Great-Grandparents that they should know about and to learn about.

And having the church at Riverton having some sort of display there and interpretive centre there, how do you think that will affect the-----

Well it'll be good, but you have to have it after football season so that everybody can come up; so that we can take the children with us and that they make it a special day.

VC: I think you've got to inform the wider community and that's one way of doing it. Not only us, but people that pass by, people that live in the area, to let them know that they weren't the first people living in that area - that the Ngadjuri people were. So whether you put one at Riverton, whether you put one at Burra and those sorts of things only tend to help people have an understanding. Once they understand, get an understanding, then people aren't so hard to talk about racism and things like that you know. I run cross-cultural awareness programs to a lot of people and 85% are wanting to know and they're on side. You get the other 15% who don't want to know, you wouldn't want to tell anyway. Overall I think that's the only way, not only for the Ngadjuri mob, but for the whole population of Aboriginal people, that the more understanding that the white people have of people's culture and then begin to share it with them, the better everything becomes.

You think it's a good step towards reconciliation?

Oh of course, yeah. And reconciliation's not new; reconciliation's been going on. I mean I married a white woman and our kids had to learn that very quickly, because they've got to be able to know about my side of the family; also about their Mother's side

of the family. She comes from Wales and all that sort of connection, so once they get an understanding, then they become better people. And I think that's what you want – you just need to have that in people's minds and then you'll find that Australia's a much better place to live in.

JA: Yeah, I think because we've been reconciling for ourselves since we've been alive I guess, when you live in different places and you mix with different people. I think you shouldn't have to be anybody but yourself. People should just like you for who you are and what you are and if you try to be something you're not, then I don't think you're happy. You're unhappy. So when you've worked in different places and with different, the other ethnic groups that you've mixed with all your life, you've been reconciling. So the reconciliation thing is, what he says, it's not going to be anything new. It might be new for some people, because they're working towards it and maybe they've even done that themselves, so maybe it's something that they have to learn, to do that themselves, from inside them, make it happen for them.

Having Ngadjuri cultural heritage, do you think that's a good, you know, is that something that your children and grandchildren can tap into and also be proud of perhaps? Do you think it's beneficial for them to know as much as possible about their Ngadjuri background?

VC: Oh sure, yeah. People, well our kids anyway, kids are more inquisitive now I think in terms of where they come from and 10 or 15 years ago people didn't want to know about it. They didn't want to talk the language. There's been a whole change about that now. In the last seven or eight years I suppose, kids are now wanting to become involved. Young kids don't care about what other people think about them if they get up and paint themselves and dance, whereas before if you were sitting in the schoolroom and something came up about the explorers running into the Natives or shooting them or something like that, you'd cringe and sink down in your seat. Kids aren't doing that any more. They're standing up and they're saying that's what I'm so and so and I'm proud of it and that's it. See that's the same with our kids. Our kids want

to know who their Grandparents are and where they came from and what's happening.
So that's really good.

OK, well is there anything else that you'd like to say?

I think we've just about covered it mostly.

JA: [To Fred] Is it all right? Did you approve of it. [laughter]

Oh well thank you very much, that's great.

[END OF TAPE]