

**Legal and Constitutional References (Senate) Committee:
Inquiry into Indigenous Workers Whose Paid Labour Was
Controlled by Government (Stolen Wages)**

Submission by Thurlius Saunders,
Kuranda Qld

With regard to Indigenous workers whose paid labour was controlled by government: talking about missing unpaid and underpaid wages, savings and other benefits (stolen wages) held by governments:

a) Many of the old people, my parents, aunties, families from the missions, all had wages and savings controlled by the government.

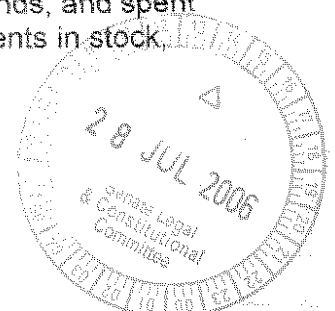
There are many stories from my mother and father, and all the old people, about physical and sexual abuse and mistreatment at work... shaved heads and put in the sun, young girls hung up in bags on a line in the sun, being locked up in small places, and having wages withheld. So many stories of abuse, so many.

If someone reported any form of abuse they were punished themselves.

b) Wages were always held from people and they were just given a very small amount as pocket money. They didn't see their wages.

The money they got was through the Director of Native Affairs in Brisbane, the 'Protector of Aborigines', and through the main office at the missions through the police from the Director of Native Affairs. They were sometimes given receipts. When they went to collect their money from the police station, the police would tell them how much money they could have, not their own full entitled payment. The police would make the decision how much the person should have. The people were treated like they were asking for something that was not rightfully theirs, and treated with disrespect, when they were just wanting what was due to them. The money was not looked after properly. People do not know what happened to their money, it wasn't there when they went to the office for the money that had been held from them. It went to the commonwealth not to the people who worked for the money. There was fraud on savings accounts and misappropriation of funds, and a large volume of undetected fraud which has been admitted to by the department. There are many 'lost' files. My father and many people always had money taken out of their wages.

c) The Aboriginal Welfare Fund was not set up as a trust fund in the usual sense, and there were no restrictions on governments in relation to the way they used the fund moneys, or to the mixing of funds, or on the purchasing or disposing of assets. It seems it was set up and used how people wanted without any regulation that the money be made available to the wage earners. Aboriginal wages were stolen and used as government funds. The money was used for government funding for aboriginal welfare, funding reserves, and subsidising losses from trading activities, trading activities on missions, Queensland Aboriginal Creations, and significant amounts were retained by treasury for general purposes, mixed with other department funds, and spent on other projects, 'loans' to authorities eg., Hospitals, investments in stock,



cash advances etc. They did not make sure the money was looked after properly, responsibly, or in the best interests of the Aboriginal wage earners, and in many cases, at all.

d) Maternity allowances, child endowment and pensions seem to have been paid into the department for the 'care of' Aboriginal children in institutions and dormitories, not to the parents, and given to the proper recipient according to the wishes of the person in control of the money, or not.

None of the old people, or my parents or family members have spoken about workers compensation or inheritances, so it seems these were not issues that were discussed with the Aboriginal workers.

e) Many records have been 'lost', there has been much secrecy, exploitation, denial and social injustice over many decades and different governments. No government has taken the issue on in an honest and total way, with the aim of bringing justice and compensation for past wrongs which have detrimentally affected the traditional owners of this country in so many ways.

f) Our family has travelled to Brisbane and spent many hours, days and weeks in the archives searching for information about our family members. It is a lot of work going through the paperwork and would be impossible for people with literacy problems. Going to the archives is straightforward with identification, but the searching is very time consuming and difficult. There are many records to search through. These records should be kept and collated and put onto computer data base by a neutral group so that they are safe, more accessible, easier to reference and research, and available for all who wish to see them.

g) So far the Consultancy Bureau has just highlighted the difficulties involved in researching the wages, savings, entitlements and fund moneys when so many records are missing. The government says it will make every effort to provide available information, but at this point all the work needs to be done by the individual/s searching for information. An independent body needs to be completely funded by government as a truth and reconciliation commitment, to take on the task of gathering all available information and setting up a system of repayment of all moneys with appropriate interest over these years, and to pay compensation to the people who suffered physically and financially under protection laws, inter-generationally and to this day, as these affects have been passed through each generation to the present eg. If someone had been paid properly, they would have felt respected, and might have been able to buy a property they would have been able to pass on to their families etc.

h) One example of responsible government handling of a similar situation with the Inuit people of Canada, is that the people now have a percentage of the GDP, self-governance, recognition and respect as traditional owners, and the opportunity of true sustainability and self-reliance and working out past and current issues in the way they need to themselves. Our country would do well to emulate or even better that situation for the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

i) We definitely need a national forum as soon as possible to talk about how the money was controlled and the accumulated affects of that to this day. Records need to be set straight and the truth needs to be written in to the history books about these, and all Aboriginal issues, so that this country can finally look at itself in truth, and move forward in an honest spirit of respect and co-operation.

J. Saunders
26.7.06.

STATEMENT FROM THURLUS SAUNDERS (NEE WALKER)
RE: STOLEN WAGES FROM PARENTS,
GRACE WALKER (NEE SANDYCAPE, ANDERSON, ROY)
AND (HERBERT) BERTIE WALKER.

(SEE ATTACHED CLAIMANT INFORMATION SHEET AND COPIED RECORDS)

My mother, Grace Walker, shared many stories about her life with me, many times, and I remember what she told me about the mission, and her working life and the many difficulties she experienced from an early age, being separated from her family, and sent out to work while she was still a child. My mother was sent out to work from the Woorabinda Settlement at the age of nine (9) years. Being a big-built girl, she looked much older than her years. She was sent out from the dormitory at nine years old to work as a baby sitter. After that, she was sent to work at Hornet Bank Station, working for Bob Scott and his wife, where she worked as a housemaid and cook. She also told me how she would cook for 33 shearers at the age of 14. Mum always spoke well of this family. She was sent to Brisbane to work for the McFarlane family as a domestic, and also for the Sparkes family (Jandowae), and then to Cherbourg, where she worked as a help in the hospital while she was carrying her first child. Mother was married at the age of 25 to Bertie Walker at Woorabinda Settlement.

My father, (Herbert) Bertie Walker went and worked on a station as a teenager, his boss's name was Mr Glasson. I know father always talked of droving cattle from Quamby down over the border into N.S.W. He worked with Mr. Glasson until his boss died. The last time he saw his boss was while taking cattle from Quamby. I know he worked there before he was 18 years old because mum and dad wanted to marry then, but they were not permitted by the superintendent, and told they were too young. They were allowed to marry many years later when dad was 30 years old, they had to wait until then. Dad was also a blacktracker in Rockhampton. After getting married he worked in Woorabinda mission as a policeman, a butcher, and a stockman. He left Woorabinda in 1944 and worked at Fairy-mead Plantation at Avondale. There was money deducted out of his pay as always when you were under the Act. My father worked two jobs that got him long service before he died.

After mother and father were married in 1935, they both went to the office in Woorabinda to collect the money that was kept from their wages, and to their great disappointment, were told there was nothing. My mother never drank or smoked. For all the years mum worked she was told she had nothing, but she knew different, the money should have been there for them. Mum spoke of Superintendent Blair and Superintendent Naggs over that time.

I remember going in to the office with mother when I was small and the people asking for their own money were being treated very badly. They made people look small when they were just asking for the money that was due to them.

My mother had to endure many things no person should have to live through, being taken from her mother and forced in to the dormitory, and punished for trying to see her mother or family. She and other children were forced to wear uncomfortable hessian bags for clothing for punishment, and she was given pants without the button sewn on as a uniform. She was made to look after the younger children in the dormitory and given responsibilities a child should not be asked to do. She was once accused of taking another child's bible text, although she had already learnt her own, they didn't believe her and she was punished by being put in to the morgue, locked in that horrible and frightening place, alone. Another time she had her hair cut off and was made to sit out in the sun in Woorabinda, where it gets very hot, this also happened to other children. Another punishment was to put a child's head in the pee bucket that was in the corner of the dormitory, that the younger children often defecated in. When my mother and father were getting married, my mother had ordered some material to make her wedding dress. The other people told her it was held in the Superintendent's office for weeks after it arrived, and it was only given to her the day before her wedding. This didn't stop my mother, though, and she stayed up all night and finished her dress to wear to her wedding that day. She always said that all of these things that have happened to Aboriginal people have to come out and be heard by everyone.

My mother and father were both hard working and very honourable and respected people. They both had so many stories of cruelty and disrespect, to themselves and other Aboriginal people, by the system they grew and worked under. They have had to endure all these things in their lives, and then be refused the payments they were due from the honest work they did over so many years. All of this has impacted on their lives, their family, and their communities. I wonder how the people investigating in the Senate enquiry would feel if it had happened to their own parents and families.

J. Saunders

THURLUS SAUNDERS

CLAIMANT INFORMATION SHEET

Claimant	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	School	Where	Dormitory	Time Period
THURLUS SAUNDERS	20.7.41	WOORABINDA	AVONDALE	QLD		
Claimant's Address	ST, KURANDA QLD					
Claim on Behalf of	FATHER - HERBERT (BERTIE) WALKER					
Claimant's Parents - Mother	GRACE HARRIET WALKER (NEE SANDY CAPE, ANDERSON, ROY). (BILCHULLA)					
Father	BERTIE WALKER (GUNGARIE)					
Relocated From	MARANCA, FORESTVALE STATION NEAR MITCHELL TO WOORABINDA					
Relocation Reason	REMOVAL OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS FROM COUNTRY TO MISSION.					
Employed Where	Employer	Years	Referred (sent) by	Wages	Time Period	
WARKON STATION ROMA DISTRICT	GLASSON	WORKED AS A YOUNG LAD UNTIL HIS BOSS DIED 1922 - 1926	CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES	UNKNOWN		
TAROOM	STOCKMAN/DRIVER	1922 - 1926	CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES	"	4 YEARS	
ROCKHAMPTON	BLACKTRACKER, POLICE	1933 - 1934	CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES	"	1 YEAR	
WOORABINDA	BLACKTRACKER, POLICE	1929 - 1933	CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES	"	4 YEARS	
WOORABINDA	BUTCHER & STOREMAN FOR MISSION	1935 - 1936	CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES	"	1 YEAR	
WOORABINDA	RINGBARKER	1938 - 1942	CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES	"	4 YEARS	
AVONDALE	MR. SUTTON CANE CUTTING	1943 - 1947	CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES	"	3 YEARS	

J.B. The Director may, at any time, revoke any exemption and thereupon the provisions of this Act shall apply to such aborigine as if no exemption had ever been granted.

"The ABORIGINALS PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION ACT OF 1939"
(Regulation 4)

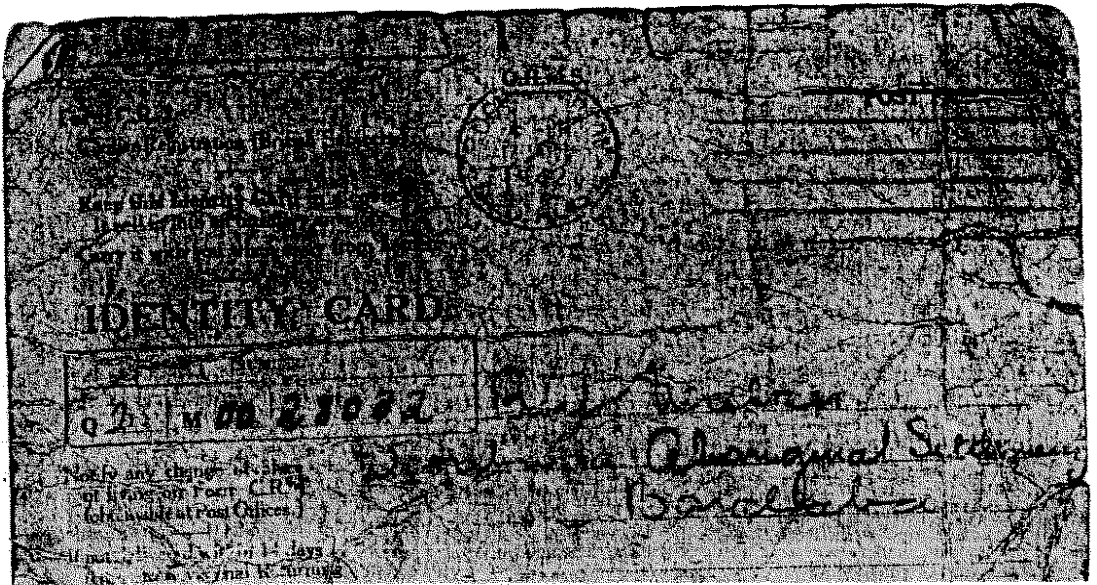
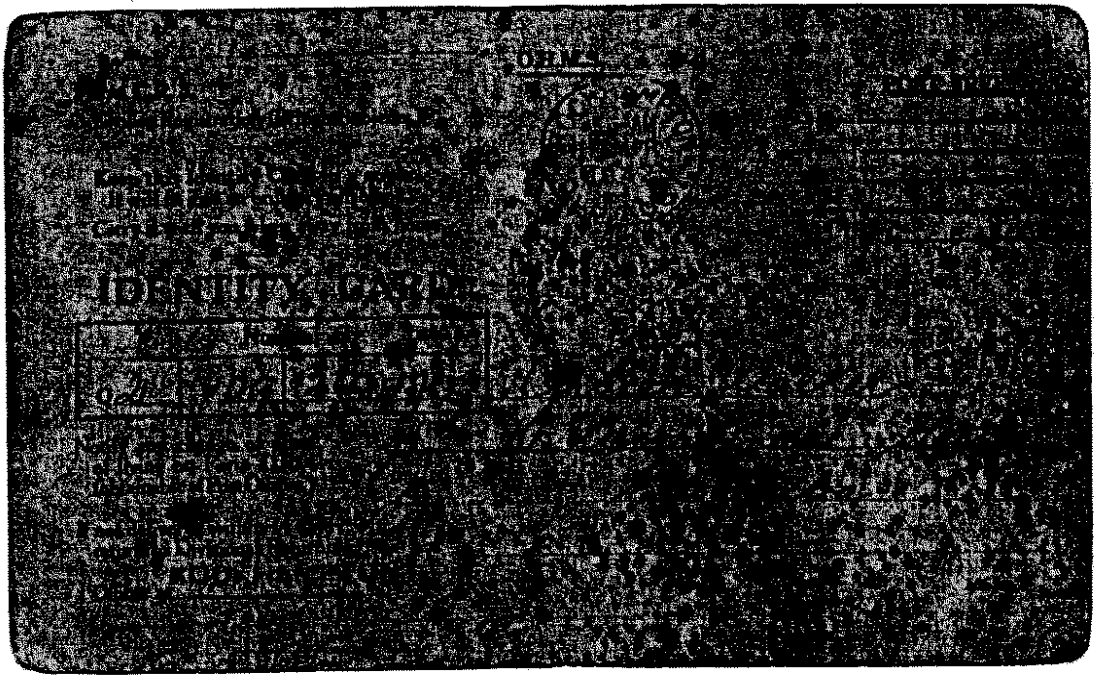
CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION 79/44

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT BERTIE WALKER of AVONDALE
is hereby exempt from the Provisions of "The Aborigines Preservation and Protection Act of 1939", and the Regulations thereunder, subject to the conditions specified hereunder :-

(Date) 5th September, 1944.

W. Davis
Acting Director of Native Affairs

The condition of the granting of this Certificate of Exemption is that such Certificate of Exemption shall, upon revocation, be delivered up to the Director.



PERSON TO WHOM THIS CARD IS ISSUED

The Identity Card must be signed by you on receipt, in the presence of a witness, and carried with you at all times. You may lose it under national emergency conditions for important purposes. You must not allow it to be stolen or permit it to pass into the hands of any unauthorized person. If nevertheless the card is stolen or definitely lost you must immediately report the facts to the Divisional Returning Officer by whom it was issued. Thereafter make a separate note now of the address of that officer (see left hand corner of other side) and of the Identity Number shown on this card so that if the card is lost you will be able to quote that number.

If you Change your Place of Living (or if you temporarily) you must, after making the change with change on Form C.R. 3, obtainable at a Post Office.

You must carry this Identity Card with you whenever away from your home. The Card must be shown at any time on demand, to any person authorized by law to see it.

Witness Signature: R. [illegible]
 Address of Witness: [illegible]

Signature of Holder: [illegible]
 Holder's business address (at date of signing card): [illegible]

FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES, IF REQUIRED

Ration book for [illegible]
Ration book issued for 3 children
Mrs. [illegible]

Serial No. 112306
 District No. [illegible]
 C.R. No. 10271
 Date of Issue [illegible]
 R/S/P 1051

PERSON TO WHOM THIS CARD IS ISSUED

The Identity Card must be signed by you on receipt, in the presence of a witness, and carried with you at all times. You may lose it under national emergency conditions for important purposes. You must not allow it to be stolen or permit it to pass into the hands of any unauthorized person. If nevertheless the card is stolen or definitely lost you must immediately report the facts to the Divisional Returning Officer by whom it was issued. Thereafter make a separate note now of the address of that officer (see left hand corner of other side) and of the Identity Number shown on this card so that if the card is lost you will be able to quote that number.

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Witness Signature: R. [illegible]
 Address of Witness: [illegible]

Signature of Holder: [illegible]
 Holder's business address (at date of signing card): [illegible]

FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES, IF REQUIRED

Abinda Albertina Sentimental

A
 B
 C

30 AUG 1944

8 B/184



All communications should be addressed to the SUPERINTENDENT.

Woorabinda

Aboriginal Settlement

Baralaba

26-8-44 194

The Director of Native Affairs
Brisbane

Memorandum

In reference to your Memo 8 B/184

8 H/29

I beg to advise as hereunder

Bertie Walker. This man is a light half-caste & at one time he practically managed a property named "Warkon" for a man named _____ in the Roma District. The man has his wife & children with him at "Avondale" where he is Cane Cutting & is to receive constant employment with _____

I cannot follow that a man who wants exemption if he is compelled to live on a Settlement with his relatives that he is debarred. He wants to get away from the Settlement & ~~Native~~ associates & that goes for his wife. His children are practically white & his wife is an Octoroon

He is also employed by Sutton ^{at Avondale} but until they can get a suitable place to live in he has left his wife here. He is a light half-caste & a man who has never been known to drink or buy drink for others. Both he & Walker have a fine record at employment & in here

Walker was with us at Taroom & _____ has been here since his mother died in Baralaba about 9 years ago

Walker's brother is exempt & I understand joined the A.I.E & mother _____ is exempt as well as her brother _____ who (though not supplied with a certificate) has been handling his own affairs for the last 3 years since his wife died. His wife was a daughter of _____ who is exempt

I strongly recommend that both the above receive exemption. The children especially of the Walkers are almost white

Grace Walker aged 35
Desmond son born 29-1-34
Nerida daughter born 26-10-38
Thurlis Do Do 20-7-41

Superintendent

Reviewed
8 H/29
3/11/44
Copy for file
Copy taken 30/8/44 gm

22 JAN 1945

Avendale Bundaberg. 8 B/172

Away

Bertie Walker,

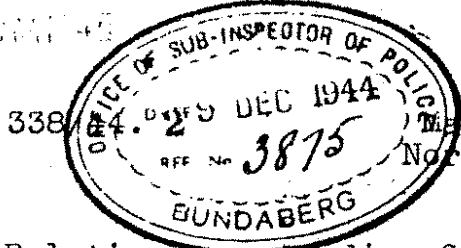
Received from the Superintendent Woorabinda Settlement Baralaba, Exemption Certificate No. 79/44, covering my exemption for an indefinite period.

WOORABINDA SETTLEMENT

18 JAN 1945

Signature. *Bert Walker*

Witness *J. Sutton*
2 - 1 - 45



80/114

338 Maryborough District,
North Bundaberg Station,
December 28th. 1944.

Relative to handing Cheque for £8-2-5d to Grace Walker,
of Avondale. Vide attached B'berg Ref. 3875.

Sir,

I have to report having on this date handed
Cheque for £8-2-5d. to Grace Walker of Avondale, and
obtained her signature on attached Receipt No. A75663
in my presence.

G. Mc Grath
Constable 3104.

Sub Inspector of Police,
Bundaberg.

Director of Native Affairs,
BRISBANE.
Forwarded for your information.

[Handwritten signature]

Protector of Aborigines,
BUNDABERG.
29/12/44.

miss me ready 17/1/45
12/1/45 *20/1/45* *etc.* *the next presumption*
no typos to write of
not read.
Receipt received
18/1/45 *28*

SCHEDULE D.

28 VICTORIÆ No. 15.

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

This form must be transmitted by the Minister who celebrates the Marriage to the District Registrar within one month after the celebration of such Marriage. Penalty for omission to transmit Certificate, a Fine not exceeding Fifty Pounds.

* Insert Minister's or Registrar's Christian Name and Surname at full length.

I, James Ray Norman being Archdeacon of Rockhampton

Insert Designation.

† Church or address of place where Celebrated.

do hereby certify that I have this day at St. Columba's Church Merrolunda duly celebrated Marriage between

BRIDEGROOM

Insert Bridegroom's Name (in full) Bertie Walker
,, Rank or Occupation Stockman
,, Residence (in full) Merrolunda Aboriginal Settlement (Place)
,, Condition (Bachelor, Widower, Divorced) Bachelor
,, Age (Last Birthday) 29 (Years) Date and Year of Birth 17th August 1905
,, Birthplace (Town or Place) Maranoa (County or Shire) (Country) Q
,, Father's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Randy Walker
,, Father's Rank or Profession Stockman
,, Mother's Name (Christian Name) Sophie (Maiden Surname)

AND

BRIDE

Insert Bride's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Grace Anderson
,, Rank or Occupation Domestic
,, Residence (in full) Merrolunda (Place)
,, Condition (Spinster, Widow, Divorced) Spinster
,, Age (Last Birthday) 25 (Years) Date and Year of Birth 29 November 1909
,, Birthplace (Town or Place) Maranoa (County or Shire) (Country) Q
,, Father's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Jack Anderson
,, Father's Rank or Profession Stockman
,, Mother's Name (Christian Name) Mabel (Maiden Surname) King

WITNESSES TO MARRIAGE

(Witnesses' names in full) — before § Lorna Mitchell and Harold Tison

after declaration duly made as by law required (see back of this form).

DATED this sixteenth day of February 1935

James Norman { Signature of Minister or Registrar.

Usual Signatures of Parties to the Marriage.

Bertie Walker
Grace Anderson

Usual Signatures of Witnesses.

Lorna Mitchell
Harold Tison

Declaration before Surrogate, District Registrar, or Minister.

I, Berta Walker of Woorabinda

being duly sworn, do on my oath declare*

that I believe there is no impediment or lawful objection by reason of any kindred relationship or alliance, or any former marriage, or the want of consent of Parents or Guardians, or any other lawful cause, to my being married to Grace Anderson

daughter of the late Jack Anderson of Jarrabul

SIGNATURE OF MAN Berta Walker

And I, the said Grace Anderson of Woorabinda do on my oath declare

that I believe there is no impediment or lawful objection, by any such reason or lawful cause as aforesaid, to my being married to the said Berta Walker

SIGNATURE OF WOMAN Grace Anderson

DECLARED and sworn (or and affirmed) by the parties named this sixteen

day of February 1935, before me—

Signature and Designation { James Norman
Anderson of Rockhampton

*If conscientiously objecting to take an oath, and after making a declaration provided for by the 17th Section of "The Oaths Act," 31 Vic. No. 12, strike out the words "being duly sworn, do on my oath declare," and insert the words "do solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm."

ENDORSEMENT OF CONSENT.

BRIDEGROOM.	BRIDE.
The consent of.....	The consent of.....
and.....	and.....
was given to the marriage of.....	was given to the marriage of.....
with.....	with.....
the said.....	the said.....
being under the age of twenty-one years.	being under the age of twenty-one years.
..... Minister or Registrar. Minister or Registrar.