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INTERVIEW

Reflections and Insights: The Gender, Violence and Protection Workshops and Forum

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This paper presents an edited transcript of the interview conducted by Goldie Osuri, co-convenor of the Gender, Violence and Protection workshops and forum, with the project Advisory Group, Sue Stanton, Shakira Hussein, Alia Imtoual and Nicole Watson, immediately following the final forum held at the University of Technology, Sydney. In this interview participants reflect on the project, on what was achieved and difficulties encountered along the way.

Initial Thoughts

Goldie Osuri: Thanks to all of you for participating in this interview. This is meant to be an opportunity for reflecting on the process of the project. Let's start with some initial thoughts about what you envisioned this project to be when we (Tanja Dreher and myself) contacted you to be part of an advisory group.

Sue Stanton: Well for me, I was motivated by the Intervention, but I've always felt that Aboriginal women haven't had a voice in the Australian environment at any level, even though we do have those identified leaders amongst us that apparently talk on behalf of everyone. I don't want people to get the wrong impression about that. I don't want people to think that I dismiss all that and think it's

unimportant or it's not appropriate. But I just think it puts us in danger, that homogenising thing that happens: That we all have the same aspirations; we all come from the same environments; we have the same political, social, whatever that keeps us going. So that's why I thought it would be exciting to be in a group that was going to allow me to learn and to talk about it.

Alia Imtoul: Well, I was a bit hesitant actually. I didn't know what was meant by an advisory panel, and I immediately jumped to the assumption that I was supposed to be some kind of expert and I was like: "wow, but I don't know what I could advise you on?" But then, Tanja and you spoke to me a bit more about your vision and what it was. And I realised I had something that I could contribute. I didn't have to be an expert, because I'm not an expert. I saw this as a space in which I could raise some of the issues relating to the communities that I have connections to, [issues] that I might not raise in other settings. I saw this as a safe space to raise some difficult issues, and I think I've been proved right in that assumption.

Nicole Watson: My first thought was that this was a great idea, over the last few years and particularly since the announcement of the Intervention, where there is a commonality, in a sense, of Muslim women and Aboriginal women both being painted as victims who need saving. So, I was aware that there hadn't been similar forums in the past, so I was quite excited, but I was also apprehensive. But, like you Alia I was concerned about what everyone would be like and I was concerned that I was expected to be some kind of expert on Indigenous issues, but I am really happy that I have been involved in the project.

Shakira Hussein: Well on a personal level, it was a really welcome chance to meet people outside the Muslim activist or Muslim community group. And it was good to come together with people without having to have that shared Muslim-ness which is starting to feel really constricting. So this was very welcome, never mind on the level of intellect, but also on the level of breathing space. So it was a really good break from that point of view. And, both Muslim and Indigenous issues at the moment are very subject to appropriation by people from outside, and also by a whole range of people from within and from outside those communities concerned. So to be able to lay cards on the table and discuss these issues without fear that it was going to get picked up and ran off with by somebody else was very important.

Reflections on the format of the workshops and the forum

Goldie Osuri: Thank you. That brings me to the second point that I wanted to raise. As you know, the original rationale for this project was looking at the points of connection between Indigenous and Muslim communities in terms of the hijacking of the language of self-determination. So perhaps, each of you could reflect back on the

workshops themselves and the forum today. Do you have any comments on each of the workshops or the forum today that you might want to raise, in terms of what was productive, what wasn't productive.

Sue Stanton: To have those discussions and learn new things, and also get that sense that you're not alone and that you're sharing some of this with other people. I just felt really safe that we could talk about whatever issue here, whereas in other forums I haven't felt that safety. I've been very wary of speaking out. But from the very onset, I think even before I went to the first forum, just in email correspondence with yourself and Tanja, I just felt good about it. I can't really put my finger on it or find the right words, but it just felt good and it was something I knew I wanted to do.

Alia Imtoul: To me this felt like a space that I hadn't experienced before. So even though the same things may have come up in other settings, I don't think I've experienced the kind of honesty in discussion that has happened in these workshops.

Sue Stanton: Yes.

Alia Imtoul: And so that was a really enjoyable thing to experience. But what I also really appreciated was the way that people from lots of different backgrounds came together, and I'm not talking about ethnic backgrounds, but from different life experiences: people who are working in academia, people who aren't, people who come from various community organisations. I've been to a few different forums that tried to bring together people in that way and it didn't happen. I don't know what you guys did differently but it worked. And I've been to a few forums where people from community organisations and people from academia but there was no common language. There seemed to be obstacles in people communicating even though people were on the same page politically and in terms of ideas or whatever. But, there was this inability to communicate. I didn't find that here and I really appreciated talking to people from various backgrounds, people who are working on these issues in lots of different ways. I thought that was a really positive aspect of the workshops.

There was this real feeling of respect. These are all intangible things that are hard to identify how or why they happen but there was this real feeling of respect and being open to hearing different points of view. And I mean, even the more tricky moments, like in a couple of the workshops there have been a few tricky moments that in other settings or contexts would have blown up and people would have felt alienated and attacked and there would have been this residual nasty feeling left behind. But that hasn't happened, like with those moments, those tricky moments. Well, this is my perspective of what has gone on. Those tricky moments became a way for really good discussion, and I think that comes back to this atmosphere of respect.

Shakira Hussein: I think that has something to do with pre-existing relationships to some extent. There was a cross-current of people who had met each other before and there was a certain level of trust that had built up. Also, there was a commitment to build ongoing relationships as well, so it wasn't just everyone walked in and at the end, everyone walked out.

Alia Imtoul: I think it was more about people came to these workshops with the commitment to open discussion with a spirit of goodwill.

Sue Stanton: Yes. I didn't know anybody, but I felt comfortable enough to email. I had a conversation with you in an email. And I think it was like what you [Alia] were saying, it's about respect and feeling safe about these women. These sound like a really good bunch of women that I can have a conversation with, so...

Alia Imtoul: Maybe because it was partly through invitation and word of mouth, that everyone invited someone whom they thought would be interested. So maybe it was that.

Shakira Hussein: That's in a way what I meant, that people were only there, that you knew because people were invited that you trusted that they were invited for a reason. I don't mean that everybody knew each other, just that you accepted that if someone was sitting around the table they had probably done something to earn it.

Significant Issues

Nicole Watson: I agree. There definitely was a spirit of goodwill and respect so I really enjoyed being a part of the workshops. The one that had the greatest impact for me was definitely the first one. We traveled over a range of topics that day and I think there were some that could have been potentially, well some sensitive issues. I remember at one stage where we were discussing forming relationships with men from our own communities and in a lot of Indigenous communities, a lot of our men, for whatever reasons, don't want to establish relationships with Indigenous women, and that was a potentially controversial subject. But I thought it was handled with a great degree of sensitivity and the fact that it was discussed in our very first meeting, I think spoke volumes about the goodwill and the respect that people had. I didn't know what to expect when I agreed to come on board, but it's been a real honour to be involved. I think that one of the things that made the first workshop so fantastic was that there were a number of Indigenous women there. I remember one of the workshops that I was the only Indigenous woman in the room, and I remember when Indigenous issues were raised I had a number of people looking at me and I felt like, I think people expected me to provide the essential Indigenous perspective that day. But it was a little difficult, but I am conscious of the fact that you and Tanja made a number of attempts to get more Indigenous women involved.

Shakira Hussein: I was very touched actually, because that first workshop was [held on] the week of the apology, and I was touched that Indigenous women, really quite frankly had other things on their mind that week, but still turned up. And there was huge amount of passion and what people needed to say on that particular day probably more than normal. So to be there and listen and to learn a lot fact-wise, but also to learn a lot about what kinds of conversations were possible was very important. So, I was very touched, firstly because people weren't talked-out, because I'm sure there was a lot of talking happening that week, but yet people needed to talk and still had things they needed to say and it got said that day. I guess the apology itself and the conversations that were happening that week because it was in the public eye so much and everybody sort-of had an opinion about it and to share it was something important. And, that it coincided with the earlier days of the Intervention as well and people had so much to say about that. The timing of it was really important, in the sense of what was happening. The outside world did come into these discussions a lot, especially what had been happening that particular week, and what was in the papers.

Nicole Watson: I think the apology was important for us on the day, but, we didn't even get confirmation that the apology would take place until rather late in the piece. There was no community consultation on the wording.

Sue Stanton: And now we recognise it for what it is.

Nicole Watson: And there were a number of people who were invited to Parliament on the day. And Rudd made it clear from the start that there would be no compensation. For me these workshops actually became important precisely because the apology seemed to become an alibi for doing the very thing Howard did to Muslim and Indigenous communities, Rudd continued this with the Intervention.

Shakira Hussein: Yeah, "dealt with, move on".

Goldie Osuri: Yes.

Sue Stanton: I like that term: "alibi". I think I'll use that (laughs).

Nicole Watson: I was there. I participated at the rally outside Parliament House the day before and there were some people from the NT and some of them assumed that the police that were overseeing the rally were actually there for them, and to me that spoke volumes.

Sue Stanton: Exactly. Nothing's changed.

Shakira Hussein: Yeah, but I was there the day before and the day of the apology and I had so many questions about it. And I was really

glad that I had this opportunity to thrash them out and to hear people's perspectives on it.

Sticky Moments

A question asking the interviewees to reflect on difficult or 'sticky' moments in the workshops prompted discussion of a tense moment in the public forum preceding the interview, in which a participant intervened to suggest, among other things, that the use of the term 'whiteness' was offensive.

Sue Stanton: It kinda threw me and my first reaction was to go down there and head-butt him and it's still my reaction. But I'm just really pleased with myself that I didn't react. I think if I had I would've spoiled this whole forum, but I was really cross. *Really* cross. But because the forum and the way it was going and how I felt about individuals here, it made me feel I didn't even have to respond to that. You know, that somebody, or that everybody else would deal with it and know that it was inappropriate and that it was some of the racist comment that he made.

Nicole Watson: It was very anti-academic!

Shakira Hussein: It was like wrapping it up in this type of code saying: "oh, you're all elitists, so you wouldn't understand us whites", coded *ordinary people*. Or that's what it sounded like to me, that there was this kind of Third-World bastion of the establishment that we were all representing, and that he was coming from the *real* world which was on the ground where whiteness shouldn't be a term of abuse and that he had absolutely never heard of it.

Nicole Watson: And just his sense of privilege too, that he basically felt *entitled* to insult all of us when he was a *guest*.

Sue Stanton: That's why I was proud that I didn't react to that insult, because I was really insulted. But I felt really good that I was surrounded by all these very strong people who I knew were on the same page as me and he was the odd ball there.

Alia Imtoul: He's probably not there to learn. He's there to teach. There was another workshop as well and for me I identified it as a sticky moment, but I don't know if everyone else did. But there was a woman there representing Muslim women's organisations and some of the things she was saying were getting my hackles up because again it was taking up this kind-of essentialised view of Muslim communities and...

Shakira Hussein: And essentialised view of Indigenous as well, I think.

Alia Imtoul: Yep, and she was kinda taking on this role as the authentic Muslim woman, spokesperson and assuming she would get

agreement from other women in the room who would identify as Muslim. But, actually I was really alienated by the things she was saying and I was finding that difficult to sit through because I was not having these kinds of political connection she was assuming that we were going to have on the basis that we shared religious identity and it just wasn't there. So, that was a tricky moment but it was a good thing as well because it kinda made it really clear that the alliance that we want to build or are able to build are not necessarily on the basis of those identity markers.

Sue Stanton: Exactly.

Alia Imtoul: Sometimes they are, but sometimes they're not. So, even though it was difficult for me to sit through, it was actually quite useful because it kinda concretised...

Sue Stanton: Well, it just reinforces for me what we're living, our reality living in Australia. The majority think like that guy (who thought whiteness was offensive).

Nicole Watson: That also highlights to me about the poverty of public debate.

All: Yes.

Nicole Watson: Yes, how simplistic. We can't criticise white privilege because it's implying that white people are evil.

Sue Stanton: Well, that's what I cop all the time as a historian.

Shakira Hussein: For a lot of the people sitting around the table: that's what we were here to criticise: whiteness, not being white.

Alia Imtoul: Yes, but I think he was taking up the view of white race traitors. Like he would've looked around the room and seen people he would have identified as "white people", whether or not he was in fact correct in those assumptions, he would've seen them as [race traitors] because they were utilizing these academic discourses and probably aligning themselves with ideas that he'd rejected. You know Frankenberg's idea of "race traitors".

Sue Stanton: But he'd also been thinking you were all "*Australians*", that's what he would've been sitting there thinking: "How dare you! So *unAustralian* to sit there and do this".

Nicole Watson: I'm actually glad that he was here, because his comments highlighted to me why certain people have been able to elevate themselves to the role of spokesperson because what they say is just so incredibly simplistic.

Sue Stanton: That's a good point Nicole.

Nicole Watson: And I have to say his name, at least once today.
Warren!

ALL: (laugh)

Sue Stanton: That's what drives the Intervention as well, that same simplistic rubbish.

Nicole Watson: But how do we get people to counter that?

Sue Stanton: I don't know. This is what I'm hoping to get direction from.

Alia Imtoul: I think it is to do with anti-intellectualism. I was talking to that young woman from the Netherlands and she was saying that one of the hardest things for her living in Australia is this lack of wanting to engage in "deep and meaningful" conversations about issues that affect us. She said that was something she was really struggling with, living here, because in *Europe* people do have those kinds of conversations.

Sue Stanton: They're *civilised* (laughs).

ALL: (laugh)

Nicole Watson: I was reading Fiona Allon's (2008) book, *Renovation Nation*. There's a certain resonance between her book and Hugh Mackay's (2007) book *Advance Australia Where* how it talks about that it's no coincidence that in this era of really poor public debate you have the rise of home renovation programs and the rise of the McMansion because people are retreating further into their homes and really disengaging from the outside world.

Future Possibilities

Goldie Osuri: In terms of the future of this forum. Where will you be taking the insights gained from this forum?

Sue Stanton: I just want to go back quickly a couple of questions ago, about why I first got involved in the group. I just had it answered for me, it was that lack of intellectual conversation. For me, the ongoing forums is a good idea and having met very interesting people that I can have intellectual discussions with but also at the same time, helping me come to terms with how I might best go about assisting my community. I know this sounds maternalistic and wanky but if I could share some language with them and maybe some kind of hope, especially for Aboriginal women in the NT. I really don't know. I'm really interested in Lina Kastoumis' work (with Urban Theatre

Projects, see <http://www.urbantheatre.com.au/>). She really made me think about how we can do a lot of stuff through theatre, because my cousin is involved with the Darwin community arts and she's an entertainer herself. She does a lot of singing and running around the countryside and she's actually a traditional Larrakia woman, traditional owners of Darwin. I know how frustrated she is because they get pushed out to the side too and she was saying: "we can do all these political things through plays and through song and that you don't have to worry about the ramifications, the legal ramifications". So that's what my cousin Ali was saying we should do, we should use that vehicle to get the message out. But I'm also linking this with our forum and saying that I've learnt that from here, that we can explore other avenues to do these things. But I really hope that we can get our own alliance going where we can all support each other in whatever issues that come up. We can be a strong alliance and say: "we want to support that section of our alliance" or "[support] that individual within our alliance".

Alia Imtoul: I like the idea of meeting again, because I felt really fed from these discussions and I think so much of what we do as academics is outcome driven. But with this, from the beginning, what we talked about is going into outcomes, but it wasn't outcome driven so we were more free about where the discussion was going to go. I wouldn't like not to never have this again and I don't know how feasible it would be meet regularly. Maybe even have something like Lina [Kastoumis] suggested, something creative, like a haiku day, or whatever that might be. Maybe connect with these ideas on a different level, as part of bringing these ideas, I don't even know what I'm saying. I know what I'm saying but I'm finding it hard to articulate. I think doing something a bit different to what we usually do in academia, because we've been able to build such good connections with people outside of academia throughout the course of these workshops, it would be good to continue that and to do something, not like something to tick a box for our universities, but also to do something because it's a good thing to do and it's fun and you get to engage with these ideas in a different way. You know, to share ideas about these things and get the ideas generated, rather than because we need to meet some institution's rule. I guess I really liked that idea of not just meeting together and revisiting those conversations, but doing something a bit creative.

Nicole Watson: I think it has been an incredible experience, and all the things you [Alia] were saying, I couldn't say it better myself. I particularly liked the sense of camaraderie that has been growing. This has been something that has been relatively brief, with very few resources but I think we've achieved a great deal and I hope that continues.

Shakira Hussein: I was getting ready for this workshop and I was excited because this was the culmination of everything we had been through before, but it didn't occur to me until I got here that it was the

last one scheduled and I felt this sense of loss. I would like it to keep going. I also think that most of the workshops were invitation only because, among other things, so that we can nurture them to be safe, and I would still want to continue them being safe and not having that atmosphere that you can just come barging in. We've had enough of people barging in and taking over and that's not what this is about. But, I think also that there were some things that were said within these workshops that I think could usefully be heard outside of them as well and I would like us to look for ways in which they could reach a wider audience and speak to people. And we've got resources, like you mentioned Lena, and this recording for *borderlands* and one or two other things. I want us to work on those and I want us to find ways to say what we've been saying in this workshop so that it can go beyond these four walls.

Goldie Osuri: Yeah, I'm excited about Paula Abood's blog, *Race and the City* (see Abood 2009 and <http://raceandthecity.com/>). I guess I just wanted to say that for Tanja and myself, at each step we were a bit anxious. We didn't know how it was going to go, it's exploratory. But I think this works with what you were saying Alia, that the exploratory-ness about it actually led to that creativity of it, I think, which we need to keep envisioning things differently.

Alia Imtoul: I feel that this was quite liberating for me to be part of this as just a conversation. I know the *Borderlands* opportunity came up as part of the process, but I didn't commit to this because we were going to write an article. I committed to this as a conversation, that was what excited me. I probably would have been quite resistant in getting involved in something that was just going to produce another paper. Even though of course, this is what I do, but it's more than that. I think it's the conversation that I felt needed to be had.

Reflections on building alliances

Shakira Hussein: One of the things that was really brought home by these workshops was that there really is a level of, and I understand it, why Muslims are so absorbed with Muslim issues on the one hand, but to hear people talk about the NT Intervention in particular and related issues did bring home to me that these questions are really about survival, about the food that people put on their tables, and their ability to get them. We're not facing anything on that scale and we shouldn't have to come to a workshop to find that out, but it really did bring it home to me the necessity of looking beyond your own backyard. There is a tendency among, not only Muslim communities, but any community under pressure to think we have our own problems that are so pressing that we can't afford to look at anybody else's, but really I think we all need to hang together, to put it crudely. But it's possible to get so absorbed with one's own issues that one never looks beyond. Also, and I've heard this said by Muslims and non-Muslims, that Muslim women in Australia are the most

persecuted group, and well, that's kinda arguable. Which Muslim women are you talking about in particular, and compared to *who*?

Alia Imtoul: Why is it a competition anyway?

Sue Stanton: Exactly.

Shakira Hussein: It's worth taking your head out of your immediate issues and to look for the commonalities in things like political processes. So, it's worth looking at them from that point of view, but it's also worth looking so you can see that other people are struggling too and so that you can learn something by seeing how they're going about dealing with the challenges that they face. In many ways, for a lot of people it's about survival issues.

Sue Stanton: I just wish we could engage more with white women and for them to be on this learning curve as well. Like I said, I've spent a lot of time in academia and I've just as recently as last week a white lecturer was talking about the situation for Muslim women in Australia and how all sorts of inappropriate behaviour towards Muslim women in academia and how they're forced into these situations where there's inappropriate contact with males and there was no prayer facilities for them and stuff like that. I wasn't trying to make it difficult and to appear to be anti-Muslim or anti-Muslim women, but I said to her: "well you know, Aboriginal people have been putting up with this same stuff for 200 odd years and nobody's given a hoot about that." But, she took it as an attack on Muslim women, but I was just trying to say that this same situation exists for other people that don't come from a white background. So, I became the baddie once again. They miss the whole point of what you're trying to say and of course that's going to continue because she went away thinking that I was attacking Muslim women. But I guess it's getting back to your point [Shakira's] that even us Aboriginal women get wrapped up with our own issues, you know?

Goldie Osuri: Yeah, the struggle is an ongoing and continuing one, and it's not a competition. But I think it is a recognition of the historical situation for say, Indigenous women and the historical situation for Muslim and Indigenous communities. But in those histories, there's also that notion of how different people within those communities respond differently. People seem to have a hard time looking at both of those things.

Alia Imtoul: I think people have a difficulty in dealing with that complexity, and that's what I really appreciated about these workshops is the constant acknowledgement that things are not simple, and that's why sometimes it takes us a really long time to get our sentences out because even the language that we use is complex, like our choice of words. Everything's got to be qualified and it might sound messy and whatever, but I think it's just a reflection of, and understanding that things are really *really* complex. Because

everywhere in most other places, there's this constant pull or push towards essentialising or simplifying everything. That's really frustrating for me, with lots of conversations I've had with a lot of people.

NW: We actually had an example of that today...a member of our group, who is against the Intervention, criticised some of the Indigenous women who are campaigning against the Intervention for not apparently talking about child abuse. In particular, she isolated Barb Shaw that she hasn't said enough about child abuse. It raised an interesting conversation because Aboriginal women have been campaigning against child abuse and trying to get governmental support for many years. But why should our women actually be portrayed in the media, why should we need to convince the Australian public that we care about our children and that it's a human thing to care about your children? Why should we be in the position where we have to convince white Australians of our humanity?

Alia Imtoul: It's for the same reason that Muslim communities are constantly being told that we have to prove our humanity by saying we're against the killing of civilians or terrorism, however loosely terrorism is defined. It's because there's this push for Aboriginal communities and Muslim communities to be dehumanised in most instances in the public representation. So of course, you have to first prove how human you are before you can be allowed to speak.

Nicole Watson: But expecting us to prove that just demonstrates her privilege...

Alia Imtoul: I can't speak from an Indigenous perspective, but often, from a Muslim perspective, even well meaning people who want to support Muslim communities, they first need to check [and ask you] "Like, you're against terrorism, *right?*" And the fact that you think you can even ask that question. Not just the asking, but the fact that you feel that you have the *right* to ask me that question says a lot about white privilege.

Nicole Watson: It makes me think of that Norma Khouri book, *Forbidden Love*, and it proved to be a fraud. But what it actually revealed was how willing the average Australian was to believe the worst, and the popularity of that book in Australia revealed so many ugly trends in our society but we never had that public debate that we should have had.

Shakira Hussein: Even once it was exposed, there were lots of people who said that it was still a good thing that it got published because it drew people's attention to this real problem. I've taken part in these really cranky online discussions with people about this and I've read people saying: "oh, but really there are women getting killed by honour killings in Jordan, never mind that activists against honour killings in Jordan said that this had set their case back years and

never mind the fact that she had magnified the number of women killed by, you know, several times, and as I remember it, added several decimal points. But, it was worth it because there was a real problem with honour killings and now people were aware of it because apparently they weren't before. [The focus was] not that it didn't play on preconceptions on honour killings and Arabs, but [the focus was on] people [being] previously ignorant about it and now the scales had dropped from their eyes.

Shakira Hussein: I think that's something that could be drawn out more, the parallels between the Intervention and Third-World aid.

Sue Stanton: That's a good idea.

Alia Imtoul: Rescue missions.

Goldie Osuri: Humanitarian missions.

Shakira Hussein: Packing people off to Afghanistan is a big one. And when you hear about people talking about aid workers in Afghanistan trudging around in their four wheel drives and their armour plated vehicles, it reminds me very much of what's been said here and elsewhere about the NT Intervention, about how it's being delivered by people who have no point of contact with the communities that they are supposedly rescuing.

Sue Stanton: Marcia Langton (2007) talks about the Intervention being this reality show and she does this comparison of what's happening in Iraq at the moment, how war porn has become this reality. It's very contradictory to read that article and then to know her view on the Intervention. Like she says to me, "but you support the Intervention don't you?" And I say: "no I don't". It's like it's a crime if you don't.

Nicole Watson: It's really insidious how the likes of Marcia have used *The Australian* newspaper to personally attack anyone who expresses a contrary view to her.

Sue Stanton: That's what I'm saying about Aboriginal people colonising other Aboriginal people. I mean that in that sense because that's what is happening. We've got Noel Pearson, Warren, Marcia, we've got a whole heap. We've got Yunupingu in the Northern Territory. They're our leaders.

Nicole Watson: They've also disempowered us terribly. They've also disempowered our friends on the Left as well to a certain degree.

Sue Stanton: Yep. I know, it's really horrible.

Nicole Watson: They certainly don't represent us, they represent no-one but themselves.

Sue Stanton: Exactly, they are doing their own Empire Building, that's what it's about. That email I read today, and the ordinary folk that I talk to, men and women, refer to all those people like as "Southern specialists", and people are actually bragging in the NT that they are bringing up good "Southern specialists", Aboriginal people who are educated. Like "hello, I'm here. I'm educated. I'm a Blackfella from here". But they bypass us.

Well, like \$287 million now for the Intervention so-called going into Indigenous education. But yeah, it's all about breaking down. I tell all Aboriginal people: "we're finished. They're killing us off. You want to know that, you want to believe that because that's what they're doing". Moving all that culture, taking them away from community and they bring them into town and give them this so-called education at Kormilda College or St. John's, or wherever they send them. Some of them come down south here and then they go back to communities where's there is no infrastructure, no employment, so what's it about? It's about assimilation, it's about killing the culture.

Nicole Watson: I question these non-Indigenous philanthropists who are contributing to the boarding school scheme. If they really want to help Indigenous people, why don't they actually go into communities and help them there?

Sue Stanton: Like that current affairs program last night, this wonderful white manager has gone up there to get the Intervention going around the NT and she's proud of the fact that they've erected fences around people. They are living in tin shacks with cement floors and no running water and she puts up these big fences, and the poor women are paying about \$400 for a round-trip go into the nearest town to do grocery shopping. I was thinking: "why don't you buy a bloody bus so that people have got transport?" They pay \$220 each way to do their shopping. It's really horrible stuff, and the Centrelink and all the other mob that are dealing with Aboriginal people about payments and income quarantine and stuff, they don't allow them into the building. They go out one-by-one and talk to them out on the footpath where they are waiting in 38 degree heat. And this is what's happening to people right now.

Shakira Hussein: And there's a lot of worry amongst non-Indigenous Centrelink recipients about making it comply with racial discrimination legislation that they will just sort-of...

Alia Imtoul: Like the Aboriginal people are the guinea pigs?

Shakira Hussein: Yeah, yeah.

Alia Imtoul: Like, "try it out there". That doesn't surprise me.

Sue Stanton: That's the purpose we serve.

At this point Goldie drew the interview to a close, thanking all for participating and expressing the hope that the conversation could continue in the future.

Dr. Sue Stanton, a Fulbright scholar, is a colonial historian who uses colonisation, gender and race as analytical categories in all her teachings, writings and presentations. She has a PhD in History/Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies, Charles Darwin University (2007). She is currently engaged in Aboriginal Visual Histories project [Jan-July 2009] – Centre Australian Indigenous Studies, Monash University. See: <http://arts.monash.edu.au/cais/research/visual-histories/>

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