

The following transcript is provided for people with a hearing disability or those who are experiencing audio-visual difficulties. Learners are encouraged to watch the video where possible to gain the full benefit of this educational tool.

Cultural Capability for Mental Health eLearning

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‘Losing Home’ Iris’ Story

Iris Paulson, Aboriginal Ministry Elder, Brisbane QLD:

“My family is from Cherbourg, I was born there. Mum and dad were taken away from their homeland onto Cherbourg, put on the reserve there at Cherbourg. We had everything than an ordinary big family would have in those days, self-supporting, had a little garden and had some fruit trees and my mum and dad was very particular about that.

Even though it was tough in those days our family grew up well balanced. But for mum, for a super intendent to come down there and to say to her, ‘you’ve got two days to pack up, we have a house for you up in the community’. It was the middle of the week and I was only twelve and I happened to be sitting with her on the stairs when the guy came and told her that and she said ‘I don’t think I can go until my husband Huey comes home’ and he said ‘sorry’, he said, ‘the truck is coming down in two days’ time’.

I couldn’t imagine what my father felt coming home to an empty house that was his home. That’s what they used to do, and that’s what they did to us as a family. I just wonder just what it would be like if a white family, any white family, would feel, if a man worked so hard and came home and found an empty house with no family there and just expected to accept it because you are under the Act of the Queensland Government.

It affected my dad very, very much so that at one stage he had a drinking problem. The same man came and tried to talk to him, and because my dad was a forestry worker, he owned a rifle and he said to that same man: ‘If you walk into my yard here now, I am going to shoot you’.

Because he said that they came up and got him in the paddy wagon, took him off, locked him up. A man who worked in the forestry work for so many, many years, out in the open spaces, it would send him crazy and that’s what happened to my dad.”

Thank you to **Australians Together** for the permission to use this video.