Clarrie’s story 3

I’ve had a friend of mine stuck in [psychiatric hospital] by the mental professionals.

And he didn’t understand English to understand the question, so he was there for six months. We had to go and get him out, because the mental health professionals were asking the wrong questions and he didn’t have the ability to answer. That was dangerous. This was the mental health professionals. Whereas I had to go down and just about interpret for him. Got him out of there. And you ask him a question, he shrugs his shoulders.

Because he couldn’t answer the intellectual white fellows jargon, he was in [psychiatric hospital]. And they kept him there. And he would have still been there, because the white mental professional was thinking on a different wave length as [him] who is a tribal Aboriginal, recently come in from the bush.

A legal service lawyer was asking an Aboriginal chap why he hit somebody. Well, look… Provocation. He says, ‘Did he provoke you? Did he provoke you?’

‘No he didn’t.’

Alright. Then I was walking past and I heard him, I said, ‘Hey, mate, did he make you wild?’

‘He made me fucking wild, alright. He was teasing me.‘

I said, ‘Yes, he was provoked.’

And the white fellow said to me, ‘Keep out of my conversation, I’m asking a question.’

I said, ‘You’re not asking a question. You’re using a word that the man doesn’t understand.’

He didn’t provoke him, but he made him bloody wild, he made him bloody angry… So this is why we have an Aboriginal Legal Service, this is why you have an Aboriginal Medical Service.

There was a lacking in legal service, the Aboriginal Legal Service… Even the white lawyers could see black fellows going to jail mainly because they couldn’t answer in English.