Gloria’s story 4

The connection for myself to the land is really, really important. I need to get in touch... I need to always be in touch with myself and just not by alcohol, drugs, drink... You know, all that kind of stuff. It doesn’t appeal to me.

I play the spoons. So whenever we travel, the spoons come with me. Always travel with my spoons or clapping sticks. I make my own clapping sticks.

I teach the kids all about the bush and that is really, really important. I gotta keep the connection. And there’s a saying that I always use for myself, ‘You can take a Bardimia away from country, but you can’t take country out of Bardimia.’ And I guess that would be for the Australian people maybe how they feel, I don’t know.

That’s a little motto of mine I keep for myself, and my family has all developed the same motto.

I use bush medicines. I teach the kids about the culture, about the animals, what you can get from them.

Every year, black fellows see a lot of bungarra’s... That’s a medicine. And the fat, you can use the fat for painting. You can use the fat to help you better yourself. You get the fat, rub it on your skin, and it keeps the skin nice. Things like that.

I’m just learning about... There’s three different kind of little shrubs here in the area where I live, probably all around actually, but I’ve noticed here. One that’s medicine bush. Because they’re all really closely related, there’s one particular part on the bush that you have to look for... You know that’s the medicine bush. So I’m still getting a little bit of confusing with it, so I got to get it right. I wouldn’t like to teach somebody and they get sick. Oh goodness me, I don’t think I’d ever live it down.

And the waterholes, waterholes are important to know.

I get my kids to study the birds when we’re out in the bush. I’ve taught them that if you haven’t got water around and you need water, you watch for the birds. When the birds fly up off the ground and go straight up and then down, you know there’s water there, because they’re not going away. You can hear the cackle and the play from them. Those kind of things for me is really important.
Teach all the kids to track. They know how to track. They know how to find their way North, South, East, and West. Tell the time from the sun from the ground. Just basic simple things, but other people don’t think it’s simple [laugh].

I find that with people who get sick and... Like, really sick. Diseases like kidney disease and alcoholism, domestic violence... Coming back to country may be a healing. When the oldies know that they’re not gonna last forever in the city, they insist on coming back home. But I find with the medical profession, they don’t want to know about it. They don’t understand that they’re our last days, we gotta go home.

And it’s like the same with people in jail, the law doesn’t understand that... If there was someone put in jail for a serious crime like murder or something... The law doesn’t understand that these people have to go back home and face disciplinary reaction from our elders. It has to be so, because otherwise it goes on and on and on. And maybe next time you do another one, and next time you do something else wrong.

Discipline is really important, and the understanding. Medical people need to understand that Aboriginal people got to go back home. They have to go back home. As soon as they’re asking, ‘Let me go home.’

They should really have somebody there that knows of these situations, know how they feel.

White fellows just don’t understand. One of our elders now, in [regional hospital], she wants to come home and they won’t let her home. They reckon that we haven’t got the qualifications to bring them home.

We might not have the qualifications, but we’ve got the home environment and without asking them, we know that it’s their time to pass on. That’s why they want to come home. They want to be in their country, not in foreign country.

I wouldn’t like to be down there... When it’s time for me, I’m going to be in the bush. I don’t care if I dig my own hole to be in the bush, but I’m going to be in the bush. I’m not gonna listen to no doctors. As long as I live, I am going to be in the bush. If I had my way, I’d be buried out on [Rock], coz that’s where we all originated from.

You have to come back home, then our spirits are free, we know that we’ve seen justice for our land and we’ve done the right thing on it. Make the old ancestors happy. We come back home. That’s the main thing.

I wouldn’t change my culture in myself for anybody. Too important to me.