

## ***“All my relos”: Aunty June Barker speaks of her family history***

**Victoria Grieves and Paulette Whitton**

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**Abstract:** The interviewing of Aboriginal people about their family history, that is, about their relatives, on radio proved to be an innovation that provides a “snapshot” of a person’s history and identity. Interviews such as these can become more precious over time. This is the case with Aunty June Barker’s interview on BlakChat a program on Koori Radio and the Gadigal Information Service in Sydney, that is reproduced below. The exact reproduction of this interview in text provides an opportunity to explore Aboriginal English expression and sentiment, proof of cultural continuity amongst the Aboriginal people of southeast Australia, as well as hearing a unique and important story of one family’s history.

**Key words:** oral history, Aboriginal family history, Brewarrina

Aboriginal people in Australia are very engaged with their family histories and also with the family histories of other Aboriginal people. There are many ways in which these are being told in community settings, in biographies and autobiographies, published histories, through the medium of film, especially documentary. Many of us can learn more of this phenomenon from watching the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander channel, National Indigenous Television, NITV. Radio is also an ideal format for the telling of these oral histories of family and one Aboriginal radio announcer realised that this was possible on her program.

The segment *“All my relos”*, where Aboriginal people speak of their family history, developed from an invitation from Paulette Whitton, a former host of the BlakChat program, to Vicki Grieves to appear on this program on Koori Radio in Sydney. Paulette was interested to have an Aboriginal history segment and in discussion, she and Vicki came up with the idea of interviewing Aboriginal people about their family histories.

This program began in 2007 and continued until 2010. It was a popular success with the audience of the Koori Radio and BlakChat. The range of people and the stories that they had to tell was inspiring and engaging. It became apparent that Aboriginal family history reveals an alternative history of Australia to that of the history books. The stories that Aboriginal people hand down reveal, for example, transnational links through family members who came from many parts of the globe and who were incorporated into Aboriginal families.

These interviews were often an opportunity to listen to the wisdom of elders, the heads of families who had lives of service to their family and community in one way or another. Aunty June and Uncle Roy Barker are one such couple who developed their own cultural heritage keeping place “Goondee” at Lightning Ridge, and who also collected family genealogies over many decades. It was this knowledge of Aboriginal family history that made us curious to interview one of them. It was Aunty June who joined us on air from her home in Lightning Ridge.

What follows is a rare first hand account of a childhood spent in poverty and deprivation on an Aboriginal reserve at Brewarrina in NSW; the recollections of her grandfather, the famous activist for Aboriginal rights, William (Bill) Ferguson; the lives of her parents, her father, a pastor, originally for the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM), and her mother, an active member of his congregations, interspersed with Aunty June’s philosophy for a full and happy life.

Sadly Aunty June’s life came to an end on June 26 2012 and her husband Roy died within two weeks of her on 7 July 2012. They are people who are sorely missed and who will not be forgotten, their legacy of community service living on.

The transcript has been edited to retain Aboriginal English and modes of expression. The reader will notice variations from standard English in the dialogue between the three women. There is a formal way of showing respect to an elder for example. In this too it is important to note the way that contemporary Aboriginal English has the function of supporting people through emotional labour. There is a recognition of the burden and the form of communication used is such as to “carry” the other person though this emotion.

Vicki Grieves (VG): We’re very blessed to have Aunty June with us here today, Paulette. A very knowledgeable woman.

Paulette Whitton (PW): She is and I don’t know whether Aunty June remembers, because she gets lots of people through her house, but me and my family called in to see her and her husband, Roy, there. Sometime last year I think it was, after the opening of that Living Memory exhibition down in State Records in Sydney.

June Barker (JB): Yes, that’s right. Yes.

PW: Then I caught up with you again at the Yaama festival. So that must have been September last year. So how you been since then?

JB: Oh, real good thank you. And your family?

PW: They been excellent, too. Not too bad. But we did go to a family funeral there in Goodooga just last week as well. So that was a bit of sad news.

JB: Yes.

PW: It happens. It's part of life they tell me!

JB: Always, yes.

PW: So you're joining us on the *All My Relos* segment today, so you must have a lot of family history knowledge of your own. I know you've passed on a lot of history to a lot of people that have come looking for their mob, too.

JB: That's right, yes. That we do. Basically anyone that's been through the Brewarrina mission. Anyone out of there, you know, we can help them.

VG: Is that where you grew up, Aunty June?

JB: I grew up on the Brewarrina mission. But my mother was of the Yorta Yorta, I was born at Cummeragunja and my father was a Wiradjuri, Duncan Ferguson. And my mother was Blanche Charles from Cummeragunja.

PW: So how did you end up on Brewarrina mission since you were born at Cummeragunja?

JB: Yes, a long way away. It's through my father turning his life around and accepting the Christian way of life. He was sent out to Dennawan out here near Goodooga and Brewarrina. And even though I just said my people are Yorta Yorta and Wiradjuri, I got Murrawari and Ngemba people that I grew up with too. They're special to me. Yeah. A special song that I always remember, when my mum sang in a concert, in the Cummeragunja school-house, she sang a song called "Danny Boy" and my dad heard her singing and that's where they met.

PW: Oh, beautiful! What a story!

JB: Yeah. But little did they know then that they would travel life's road together. And she had a beautiful singing voice. And little did they know that that was God's plan, I guess, for them. For her lovely voice to be singing the hymns and that, with him, throughout the years when he preached the gospel. For over 50 years after.

VG: So your father was a preacher?

JB: Yes. Evangelist, yes.

VG: With which organisation?

JB: With nothing really. But he started off with the AIM. That was the Aborigines Inland Mission back in those days. In 1935 that was. But then he just lived a life as a Christian, and accepted the Christian way of life. And I'm glad he did because I never had seen him drink alcohol or smoke or swear. So we had a good life and good memories throughout our life. And he just devoted his life to the Aborigines' people out in this part of the country. Or anywhere really. Travelled around Australia, and that.

VG: And so did his family travel with him?

JB: In later years no. In the early days, we would just, yes, we did in the early days when we were kids. We went over to Walgett, and over to Tabulam, and over to Lismore. That was the Cubawee people there, the Tuncester people. I remember those people so clearly. I was a big girl, I suppose 12 years of age. They spoke their language. He was sent to Tabulam really, by the AIM. And the little house that we were supposed to have at Tabulam, it wasn't there, so we had to go on to Tuncester. And that's my memories. Over the years, I still remember those days. Then we came back to Brewarrina and that's where we remained. But in their later years they travelled around on their own, then. Over to Western Australia, South Australia. To Umawarra and Kurrawang over in Western Australia were Aboriginal missions. Yeah. But actually he wasn't belong to any denominations, you know. He just called himself a Christian. Wasn't belong to any of the churches as we know them today.

VG: And so he was preaching everywhere he went?

JB: Yes, of course, yeah. That was his life. And as I said then this beautiful voice singing with him. Hymns like "The Old Rugged Cross" and even when we went up to South Australia and years after, and I was talking to people in the Northern Territory, they'd always, we'd ask them, or Roy would say: "June's parents was up here 40 years ago, 30 years ago", "Oh, that's the lady with the beautiful voice", She had a lovely singing voice, my mother. That's why I mention that song today, "Danny Boy", that's where she was singing in the concert in Cummeragunja school-house, where they first met.

P: I'll play that song a little bit later, too.

JB: Oh, that will be good.

VG: Yes, Paulette and I were saying earlier how popular that song used to be.

JB: Used to hear it a lot. And living on the mission all we heard was, you know, country western music. We grew up with the country singers like Slim Dusty and Tex Morton and Buddy Rims. All those songs we'd hear. So today we still, we are, you know, these are popular music, is country music, to us. Anyway, as you get up to our age.

VG: Yes, well popular with a lot of people, whatever your age is.

JB: Whatever your age is. Yes, good music.

VG: I was going to ask about your father's family. Were the rest of his family heavily involved in the Church?

JB: No, not at first. My father's, father ... you might know this name, Bill Ferguson?

VG: Yes.

JB: He was one of our first to speak out for our Aboriginal citizenship in this country, back in the 30s, with people like Jackie Patten and William Cooper. And they're known as the first

Aboriginal activists. And Bill Ferguson was my grandfather, and none of them sort of took after him with politics. And my dad and my uncle Fred, they were the only two that accepted the Christian life at first. That's how life goes, people make their own choice.

PW: Do you remember much about your grandfather?

JB: Yeah. Quite a bit, yeah. Actually, I was down in Sydney last week or the week before. They're going to make this blackfella film. They're making a documentary on different Aboriginal people in this land that left a bit of an impression on people, and my grandfather will be involved in one of the documentaries they do. I met the girls there that work with that film. So I was flash, flying down to Sydney and staying down at Potts Point.

PW: Look out! Are you allowed to talk to us then? [laughs]

JB: Yeah. And in this old historic place where Major Mitchell used to live. Just must have been luxury, 'cause it still is. So I got to have a look in there. That's where the film, they done the film, just a bit of an interview with me. But I remember my grandfather.

PW: So can you tell us a little bit about what you remember about your grandfather Bill Ferguson?

JB: I remember his voice. I remember that he was kind and gentle sort of a man to us children, in which way a grandfather should be, I guess. And I remember—I didn't realise what he was doing, at that time—but I remember walking through the park coming from the swimming pool there in Dubbo one day, and I remember seeing all these Aborigines outside a little hall over near where the railway station is, there in Dubbo. And I could hear my grandfather's loud, clear voice coming through, without any microphones or anything, you know. And I knew then what they were doing there. They were talking about what have to happen to make things different for us living on missions with managers over us, and all those sorts of things, you know.

I've learnt a lot since reading the history and that, and know that he came to Brewarrina there and he wasn't allowed to have a meeting on the mission, they had to get outside the mission boundaries and that's off the government land and all the people walked off the mission with him, and he held a meeting there. I was only very small, but Roy my husband, he remembers. All the kids all walked off too, like kids do, following the mob. So things like that, like he'd go round and deliver...

Oh yes, another thing I remember is him writing letters. He never had a desk in the house in Wingewarra Street Dubbo. He'd do all those sitting there with his little, like a little black port<sup>1</sup> thing on his lap and writing. Forever writing. And people forever coming to my grandmother's and grandfather's house there and I know that they must've been coming,

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<sup>1</sup> A port is a suitcase, or a *portmanteau*.

telling him things, you know. With complaints. So, things like that I remember about him. He was a good man.

When his mother died, I think he was only 12 years of age, and he went to Warangesda down near Darlington Point. Strong Wiradjuri country. He stayed with his grandmother there to go to school for a little while. And he could speak his grandmother's language. And that's where he sort of set out from there, going into shearing sheds with his dad who was a Scotsman. In the shearing sheds.

And how he, in those early days, when he was only a very young man, he was something to do, secretary or something with the AWU<sup>2</sup> as a spokesperson for them, the shearers. So I think he was more or less self-taught, by the shearers, and could see the conditions of the Aborigines, and at a very early age he spoke out for, you know, citizens' rights.

VG: He sounds like he was a very smart man.

JB: He was, and also I know that when they held their Day of Mourning when Australia celebrated their 150 years of being in this country, a lot of them gathered there in Elizabeth Street at that hall there, and they held their meeting. It was a day of mourning. Because they said, you know, my grandpa said, we have nothing to celebrate, it's a very sad day for us Aboriginal people. And I was told by another lady a sister of, an Aboriginal sister from Nowra, that she was only a girl there when that was on, and after that meeting—the Day of Mourning meeting—they went out to La Perouse and they had a lot of flowers and they threw them in the water. Let the flowers float away like wreaths in the water where Captain Cook first came in and took the land. So you don't hear anything much about it, you know, those days. We know that the 26<sup>th</sup> of January is a day of survival. But we should still remember that it is also a Day of Mourning. Because even today, after all these years, Aborigines, they haven't got much.

VG: Yes, that's right. Aunty June, I've been thinking the documentary you were interviewed for, that might have been with Rachel Perkins. And it's called *First Australians*. It's going to be out on SBS Television later this year.

JB: Yes, it was.

VG: Did you meet someone by the name of Genevieve?

JB: I did.

VG: That's my daughter.

JB: True? Ah.

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Worker's Union (AWU) the trade union that covers industrial relations for the shearers and other pastoral workers.

VG: Yeah. Yeah, she told me she'd met you. Small world, isn't it?

JB: Yes. Good. And the boy too?

VG: Kieran? Oh you met him too?

JB: I met him as well. When I first met him I thought he was only 14 or 15. And I seen him driving down and coming down driving this neat little black car [Laughter] And I said: "Hey, I thought you was only a schoolboy!" He had a good laugh, yeah.

VG: He's 19.

JB: Yeah, that's what they said. He's 19.

VG: Yeah, well I better not talk about my family. I'm trying to talk about yours. [Laughter]. I just wanted to ask you. Your grandmother, do you remember much about her?

JB: Oh, very, a lot. You know, because she lived a lot longer than my grandfather did. But she was of the Gownes family. Now both their fathers—my grandmother and my grandfather—both their fathers came from Scotland, mind you, and married Aboriginal girls. And they came there to that Murrumbidgee area. As they said, that's where all Scottish people went in those days when they came to Australia. Like, you know, we know the Barossa Valley there's a lot of Germans there and a lot of people over here in Glen Innes from Ireland and all that sort of business.

But both my great grandfathers came from Scotland. One a Ferguson and one a Gownes. And the Gownes was my grandmother's father. And my grandmother—it's very, well, about her—she, she lived in a way—when they took over this big property, these people, whitefellas down there in the Murrumbidgee area, the station was *Togramaine* and this Gownes came to work on the station there as something and that's where he met my grandmother's mother. So that's a bit of history link there.

VG: Yes. I don't know where I heard it, but I heard somewhere that Bill Ferguson's wife was white.

JB: No, no. I'll just tell you the story now. It's interesting. When these people came and took up this property, this big property, there was this little white-looking girl living down in the—this must be going back now over 100 years—there was this little white girl down living with the tribal people, and they got her and they took her to the station, up to the homestead, and looked after her.

But her real black mother was down there and her father must've been a white man and through the white way, she was a little fair-coloured girl. And they reared her up at the station homestead as their own girl. And then when this Tom Gownes came there to work, here's the girl! Her name was Louisa Dews—and she was the girl that married Tom Gownes. And then they had a family where my grandmother came from, see? You understand that?

VG: Yes, now, I tell you what, you've got a great memory for all of this. You've got a very good way of explaining it.

JB: You know this is what I do, you know. With my family trees I do a lot for the boys down in Yetta Dhinnakkal, their family history. We've got the big book of records of the Tindale genealogies, that was done on the Brewarrina mission and other missions in 1938, and all back at the top of all those names and families there's full-blood—white and full-blood. Full blood woman and a white man. And this is how we all came about.

Paulette: True. Well Aunt, we might go to a musical break and then come back with more of your family history.

JB: Okay then.

PW: So stick around.

JB: I'm here.

PW: Don't go anywhere. And we'll go now to Jimmy Little's version of "Danny Boy".

JB: Righto, then.

P: Bit of a connection to...

JB: Yeah, yeah. I tell you too.

P: Both Yorta Yorta mob, bless.

JB: Yeah.

P: And I guess this is the song that your dad heard your mum singing, all those years ago.

JB: All those years ago.

P: Here's Uncle Jimmy Little and "Danny Boy".

P: "Danny Boy" there with Uncle Jimmy Little. A special song there that brought Aunty June Barker's parents together, there, all those years ago. And it is 11.47 on the Koori clock, we've got 13 minutes left of the program and in that 13 minutes we're going to talk to Aunty June Barker, our guest today, on the *All My Relos* segment, a bit about a special relationship in her life as well. We're also joined by Warraimay biographer and historian Vicki Grieves. Now, I thought we might talk to Aunty June a bit about a special relationship that's had an impact on her life, there Vicki.

VG: Yes, Aunty June, you were saying how this song “Danny Boy” was really quite instrumental in bringing your parents together. Perhaps you’d like to tell us a little bit about the relationship that you had with your parents.

JB: Yeah, I had a good relationship right up until their deaths, three weeks apart they passed away. And I can sort of thank them, I guess, from my heart, that I’m, you know, happy and glad of the life that, the example, they set for us.

Spiritual and caring—caring people—and this is the way I’ve always been. I care for a lot of people. I would have liked to have been a nurse, but I never had the education. But in the 70s I worked as a health worker in Brewarrina, and always wanted to do things for people which I still do today. Even though now the years are going by. And I still, you know, remember and care for people, and remember the life my parents lived.

And on the mission where we lived everyone lived a good life there. There was no alcohol allowed on the mission. Everyone seemed to be so happy. The kids without drugs, swimming and fishing every day. Swimming in the beautiful Barwon-Darling river that flowed by. Clear water. Now that same river is all polluted, we say, from cotton upstream. Up around, you know, Moree and Collie and all those towns where the poison must get into the water and come down. And we look at the river now and it’s no longer a beautiful flowing river.

But I like to think of the days, your memory—it’s good to have a memory, to go back to when you’re a child, to know the things you shared with the other kids on the mission. All our lives were the same: not much food, good parents. The main thing was no alcohol: we never seen like we see today. So that’s a good memory to have, just a group of Aborigines. There was a big mob there. Brewarrina, that mission, was like a little village.

Of course then you had the manager there who was in charge of everything. The manager who you lived in fear of. When I grew up I knew it was wrong to be living in fear of people like that. To live free is a good thing. To be free. But not only that then, you know, the kids today that I see, they haven’t had the life that I had. My husband Roy he had the same life there on the mission. We were always with our old Aboriginal aunties, and you’d be with them every day. And they were from everywhere.

I never told you that Brewarrina people, we grew up on that Brewarrina mission with the *Angledool*, they spoke their Yuwalaraay language, the people they brought in off Tibooburra, they spoke their Wangkumara language, the language of the Grey Range people, they brought—they never asked them, they were forcibly brought to Brewarrina Mission in 1938. Different people from Kamarlari, wherever, Wiradjuri people, they’d all be there on that mission.

So I grew up, you know, hearing people speak so many different languages, but yet the manager of the mission wouldn’t let them speak their language. Everyone had to speak good English, and he even used to threaten them, they reckon, the older people. “Shut up that

mumbo jumbo or you won't get your rations here this week". Now rations was very precious to the people living there. Tea, sugar and flour was the main staple part of the diet. Today, me having a little bit of medical–working with the health in Brewarrina—I know now that the white flour and sugar brought a lot of diabetes into our people. It's in their genes today, and this is why so many of them are suffering with sugar diabetes.

VG: Aunty June, just from what you've said, times were really quite tough for your parents. And yet you say they were good people. And you've talked about how, you know, they weren't drinking, and that made a difference. But what were the qualities, do you think, that your parents had that were so important to you as a child growing up?

JB: Well, I know they were very strong people. I think all that is in your heart. You've got a strong spirit within you. There's something there that it's good to have. Like today I look around, say, you know, at young people and there's something missing. Something missing from within them there, you know, the spiritual side of their life is gone. And I think my parents had an insight, a caring loving nature. I think they loved everyone and in return they got the same love from people too. So that's how I believe that they, you know—whether it was their spiritual acceptance of their Christian life—but there was other people there too on Brewarrina mission that had those same ways. Right up until their deaths they believed in what, you know, from the Bible.

And also, I'd hear them say from at the mission that Aborigines knew about a big fella in the sky before the whitefellas brought their bibles here. So, you know, there's people that accepted it and people that don't accept that life. But my parents, they were good, caring, devoted to each other and to the family even though they had nothing much to share. They was always, you know, sharing things, whatever they had. If someone came along and wanted a meal they were glad to give whatever they could give to people like that.

VG: Yes, some of those qualities are hard to pinpoint. It's just more about the way people have been, isn't it? I mean that they have these values of sharing and caring for other people?

JB: Well that's right.

VG: And it just makes them really nice, comfortable people to be around. Very accepting.

JB: That's the other thing. They all were. They weren't a vicious people, you know, back then. They all lived in peace together on these missions and the fringe-dwellers in the town, too, they were the same. There was good people in there living and working for the whitefellas up in the town. And, you know, a lot of them worked at the hospitals in those days. Girls in the laundry, the women in the laundries and that. So I think, you know, I can be thankful with the memory that I have of a lot of good people.

PW: Did your parents ever say to you and your brothers and sisters—mention anything about the life and the hard times they were having there, living on Bre mission?

JB: No, they didn't. But when I grew up I knew that they did live a very harsh life there. Especially when it would rain and you'd run out of food. I remember one particular time it must've rained for days and days, and we had no sugar, and everyone was without food, and different things, they were running out. So my mother said "Dad, you'll have to go down to the big house and see the boss and borrow some sugar".

So I went with him, I took along a big milk tin, and by the time we got down there, there must've been a dozen or more people. They all wanted stuff too. Flour, tea, sugar and that see. Knocked on the door down there. It took him a long time to come out, the manager, and he'd just look at you. I was a big girl standing there. And then my dad said "Boss"—you know, you had to call him boss, Mr whatever his name was too—"Could I borrow a bit of sugar? We'll repay it, you know".

And he sort of grunted and went in and got the key for the storeroom. Everyone followed him in and got what they wanted. And here's these big barrels of stuff in the storeroom, all rations. Brimming full. Big square barrels, they were. And the big full tea boxes and everything. Sugar bags and whatever.

But I always remember when we went home with the sugar, my dad he said to my mother "Don't ever send me down there anymore like that". And I knew what he meant, that it must've been so humiliating for him to go down and borrow that bit of sugar. And this is how your life was. That's the only time, you know, I'll always remember that. Him saying "Mum, don't ever run out of any sugar any more".

Because it must've been so embarrassing and humiliating for him to go down there. And the rest of them too. To ask for a bit of sugar.

VG: Yes it's a very heart-rending story in a way. Thank you Aunty June, for sharing all of that with us. And it tells us a lot about how families are really important and very supportive of one another and always have been, in Aboriginal society.

JB: Yeah, they always shared whatever they had back in those days. And cared. Not just my parents, but all the old parents were, you know, like that. Good people. Aboriginal people. And we don't want to forget them.

PW: No, I guess that's also an example of the strength of our mob to survive those terribly hard and restricting times on their lives.

JB: On the missions. Not only at Brewarrina, but it was everywhere. And that's one of the reasons why I think my grandfather wanted to do away with the managers and all that. He knew. They knew.

VG: Yes, you know, it was just another one of those things that Aboriginal people have had to endure through history, isn't it?

JB: That's right. All through the years all the things that happened to our people everywhere, it never left us bitter. You know what I mean?

VG: Yes.

JB: We still—we accepted that way. You know it was accepted. And Aboriginal people on the whole they weren't violent people. And I think they proved that at the Olympic Games [in 2000 in Sydney NSW]. They were expecting the blackfellas to do this and that and even frightened of them throwing a bomb or something. But everything went off peaceful there.

VG: Yes, well I'm so glad to hear you say that. I mean Aboriginal people aren't inherently violent people. And if people do become violent it's because of the level of stress they have to endure in their lives. But my gosh it sounds like your parents dealt with a lot of stress in a really constructive way.

PW: Absolutely. Well Aunty June, we've got to leave it there. We've run out of time, but we could talk to you all day.

JB: Well best wishes to all our people, whoever hears this today. Love you all.

PW: And best wishes to you, aunt, too. Take care.

JB: Okay darl.

VG: Yes, all the best to you and your family.

P: That's Aunty June Barker there, Yorta Yorta woman and grew up on Bre mission out there in northwest NSW, and storyteller as well. And speaking to us a bit about her family history there, and I'm sure you've found out a bit of Australian history. That's what it was like for Aboriginal people right around the country, not only just on Brewarrina mission. Some were a bit harsher than others, of course. But yeah, that's a bit of history into our wonderful country that we call the lucky country, Australia. It is 12 o'clock now, so that's it for the BlakChat program. Stay strong, stay deadly, stay beautiful. [End of recording]

**Victoria Grieves**, ARC Indigenous Research Fellow at the University of Sydney is Warraimay from the midnorth coast of NSW. The first Aboriginal graduate with BA Honours and with a double major in history, her book *Aboriginal Spirituality: Aboriginal Philosophy and the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal people* is widely accessed and much cited. She is currently developing the ARC funded research project *More than family history: Race, Gender and the Aboriginal family in Australian history*. Vicki works to progress Indigenous Knowledge within Australia; her approach to research is cross-disciplinary and deliberately from a Warraimay epistemology.

**Paulette Whitton**, BA Communications (Journalism), an award-winning broadcaster, has been Koori Radio's Programming Manager since late 2011. She was formerly the host of Koori Radio's flagship program, Blakchat. Her experience includes researching for ABC

TV's Message Stick and as producer on AWAYE! Paulette lives in Darug country, but her mob come from Goodooga, southwest Queensland and the Gamarilloi nation of northwest NSW. Her father grew up in the notorious Kinchela Boys Home in Kempsey making Paulette a "Kinchela kid". Paulette sits on her local council's Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee and continues her passion for researching her family history.