

Young Indigenous Meatworkers' Gazette

News letter of the Boys from the Bush Projects, Rural & Remote Area Work Scheme (RAWS)
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This space is reserved for the logos of those meat processing companies that have or are engaging BFTB workers

**In loving memory of our dear friends
and most special carers
Sue and Bob Jones**



It was sometime around late Friday morning when our dear friends, Sue and Bob Jones, and loving carers of our four girls from the Northern Territory, had tragically lost their lives in a road accident.

We have been devastated by this and we just don't understand why such an awful thing should happen to these beautiful people. Things like this should not happen and we are not sure how or if we can ever recover from this.

Sue and Bob are survived by their 16 year old son, Steven. Our hearts are bleeding for dear Steven.

Steven, we are so sorry. We are sorry that there is nothing we can say or do to help ease your suffering other than to say that our hearts are with you. For certain your parents are in everlasting embrace, where they know they are in the presence of God and eternal peace.

How did this happen?

Our dear friends Sue and Bob were so happy taking our girls into their home and hearts. Sue said to me that *"This is what we want. This is our calling. This is what God wants us to do."* But Bob and Sue wanted a larger vehicle to transport their girls around. They found what they were looking for on the internet; a good second hand Tarago for sale in Brisbane at a good price. Their plan was to travel to Brisbane from Leeton by bus and then by train, take possession of the vehicle and then drive it back home to Leeton. They would be back by the weekend. On their way home, they only got as far as Ballina, when the unthinkable happened.

We have just received a report that it was another bloody truck driver that caused this tragedy. He didn't stop and the police are still searching for him.

Why did Sue and Bob take in four girls from the Northern Territory?

The plan was always to place only one of two Northern Territory girls with Sue and Bob. Joyce Briscoe from Yuelamu in the Northern Territory arrived in Leeton first and was the first to be placed with them. A week later, Sasha Neal arrived from Santa Teresa.

It was planned that Sasha would be placed with another family, but Sasha wasn't keen on this idea and asked if she could live with Joyce.

Milton spoke to Sue and Bob about this and didn't hesitate to agree.



Pictured above from left to right: Joyce, Bob, Sasha, Sue, and Steven

A month later the mother of Joyce Briscoe asked Milton if he would also take one of her other daughters, Sabrina Briscoe. It turned out that Joyce had also asked Sue and Bob if her sister could join her.

At the same time, Milton received a call from the mother of Shannon Palmer in Yuendumu saying that she had heard about Joyce living and working in Leeton and asked if her daughter could also be offered the same opportunity.

Milton agreed to try and then set about holding discussions with JBS Swift about the employment of a total of four girls. JBS Swift were very pleased with the

performance of Joyce and Sasha and so they agreed to employ Shannon and Sabrina.

Shortly after this discussion with JBS Swift, Sue and Bob approached Milton requesting the opportunity to also take in the two other girls. This was also the request of the girls' parents.

Milton accepted everyone's request, and then Sue and Bob set about converting Sue's sewing room into a bedroom for Shannon and Sabrina.

Sue said to Milton that if she had a bigger home she would love to take in even more girls. *"I just find them so beautiful"*, Sue said.

Some words from Joyce, Sasha, Shannon and Sabrina

"We miss them" said with tears in their eyes. *They told us we are their daughters."*

"They were just like my mum and dad. I lost my mum and dad before and now I have lost my mum and dad again."

"They were kind and caring to us."

"Their last word to us was goodbye. We love you all so much."

"They always made us laugh."

"When Milton took us to a motel on Friday, Steven said to us 'I love you all, you will always be my sisters.'"

Boys from the Bush Projects' message to certain DEEWR staff

In the midst of this horrible tragedy, the behaviour of certain staff members of the Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations (DEEWR) towards dear Sue and Bob and these poor grieving girls was absolutely appalling. Their insensitivity, racial prejudice, ignorance and arrogance was shameful; an utter disgrace to the Australian Public Service. Their conduct will not go unreported.

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