



Kooncha Brown interviewed by Daniel Browning, Sydney, February 2023

Daniel Browning: [00:00:04] So interview with Kooncha Brown. We're in Lilyfield. The date is the 20th of December. Oh, no, no. Just. Just in the suburbs of Sydney. Western suburbs, you know, inner west. And it's Daniel Browning, sound recordist. And, um, it's the 20th of December 2020, a few days before Christmas. So, could I ask you to introduce yourself, like the way that you like to be introduced?

Kooncha Brown: [00:00:40] My name Kooncha Brown. I come from a small Aboriginal community called Walcha like. That's raised. And one of the like. And also in Bermagui, which is 12 K's south, 12 miles south of here. I want to go like I went to school at Bermagui Primary and I went to high school in the Roma. And. Have a few brothers and sisters. Most of them live here in Sydney. And some of them also live in the country and in Victoria.

Daniel Browning: [00:01:26] And there's a lot of you. How many? How many in your family can I ask?

Kooncha Brown: [00:01:31] I have four brothers and four sisters. They all have kids, grandkids. One of them is even a great grandfather. So which makes my mother a great, great. All my family. And also a lot of my first cousins, their kids call me Mama Cons Mom. Um. Yeah, because I also helped raise. Some of my brothers and sisters. Kids, My cousins kids. I helped my mother look after my three younger my two younger sisters and my younger brother. They used to run around calling me mom when I was a teenager, so. Yes, I've had lots of experience looking after kids. I wouldn't do it now. I get to look out for their own kids.

Daniel Browning: [00:02:35] Now, your name Kooncha is pretty unusual. Where did the name Kooncha come from?

Kooncha Brown: [00:02:41] My grandmother called me Kooncha when I was young, when I was a baby. She said, Well, I think I think it means black, because she used to say I was a beautiful little black baby. And that's where it came from. My legal name is



No One's Business, because that's that person died as far as I'm concerned. My name's Kooncha, and I've always been known as Kooncha since I was little.

Daniel Browning: [00:03:13] And you reckon your grandmother? I reckon that might be a word in language. So what? Where was she? Where was your grandmother from? Can I ask?

Kooncha Brown: [00:03:21] My grandmother's from Dimboola. She was born at Ebenezer Mission. New Dimboola in Victoria. Around. Uh, in the Grampians around that area. Awesome. Um. Yeah. Stall down that area. Watch watchable. Look, we're also due to cha cha were wrong. Judith among which is the Omeo area because I'm Jonathan Mann through a. My father's nine. Father's lawn. I'm also going to Kearney which is Gippsland where I. When we tried when we did the Family Tree. All native title. Did the family tree. Way from. Actually from Lake Tyers and around Orbost. So that area also doing. Um. My mother's father is human. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:04:43] Is well for you and you and country.

Kooncha Brown: [00:04:46] While ago would be considered the heart of your own country. Well, we were actually Vologda was the first. Um. Community to be given land rights within Australia, in New South Wales. So. Yeah, I. It's a small Aboriginal community. I'd say about 100, 150 people. You know, people come and go. That I haven't been home for years, So. Yeah, I don't know. It's changed a lot. I still have a lot of family who lived there. My older sister still lives there.

Daniel Browning: [00:05:32] And when you were growing up, can you describe? Well, I guess for someone who'd never been there.

Kooncha Brown: [00:05:37] It's surrounded by a lake. We could see the ocean on one side. On the other side, we could see the mount and we could actually see the snow on the mountain. Um. I used to get it when I was. You know, the teenager had to get up early in the morning just before daybreak. I'd go down and go fishing. I'd get some oysters, cut off a packet of fish, and then I'd go home before everybody else got up. I made sure I made a fire and cooked the fish, because back in those days, we never had



electric electric stoves or gas or whatever. So we had one of the male combustion stoves. I'd cook the fire, the fish put the jug on. Well, the kettle we never had. And then. Uncooked fish, I'd make damper or make fried bread, you know, make a bit of salad and whatever before everybody got up, so. Yeah, I used to do. Also looking after everybody else. I think I helped my mother, raised my two younger sisters, my older brother. My younger brother is now looking out for my mum. He's about 85. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:07:04] So in the nine, you were sixth born. There were three younger than you. Where were you in them?

Kooncha Brown: [00:07:13] I'm the fourth. Fourth oldest? Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:07:18] And some of your siblings had passed away when they were little.

Kooncha Brown: [00:07:22] Oh, my older sister, she was a baby. Um, and to my younger sisters after my between my brother next to me and my sister, the one of the girls I helped raise. So they passed away when they were babies.

Daniel Browning: [00:07:43] What do you remember was your first memory when you were little? When you're little. Is it something that you know, People often ask people this question. What's your first memory?

Kooncha Brown: [00:07:54] I think my first memory was look at it has to go back to living along the riverbank in Bay, Ga. Back then, the river would flow. Lovely big river. The government give each family like a To me it looked like a big circus tent. So each family had lived in a big tent. Mom used to lock me and. To my brothers in the in the car at night. So we'd sleep in the car, but it was like a station wagon, old green station wagon. She'd put a mattress in the back and we'd sleep in there and we'd lock the car and we'd wake up like this as the sun was rising. And we'd have to get up and go out. We had to feed. We'd go across the paddock and we'd always had to go to the river to have a wash. And back then it was old sunlight soap, but sometimes we'd still have to go and never was. Even if in winter when we'd walk across the paddock and there was frost on the ground.



Daniel Browning: [00:09:14] Hold down that way. Down in the south coast.

Kooncha Brown: [00:09:17] It can be Yeah but it can be up to so yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:09:23] So that your mum locked you in the car just to keep you safe.

Kooncha Brown: [00:09:28] Well we couldn't all sleep in the tent because it was my mother had about 18 brothers and sisters, but not all of them survived mine. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:09:40] So there was lots of family around. And there were more than just you kids in in the tent.

Kooncha Brown: [00:09:45] The thing is, we were. We were just raised by a mother when we were younger. My mother's sisters, we all need them as mothers, Aboriginal while so they became our mother if they had children or if the sisters had children are babies about the same time they would share the caring for them. They'd breastfeed each each one's babies. My my sister still do it. They said they'd look after him. I remember once. My mother told me, I should say, although she said a sister, one of her sisters. Paul, honey, Audrey was walking down the street. She was charged and he was with her charged up, mind you. And she had me on one tit and Timmy on the other, breastfeeding us in big Main Street.

Daniel Browning: [00:10:48] This is your younger brother, Timmy?

Kooncha Brown: [00:10:49] No. Timmy is my cousin. Yeah. Anyways, I'm. We will walk in. But your I will say my brother will say she was walking down the street. She had me on one side and me on the other. And then it's all this old said something. Oh, this white man. He said something to her. And anyway, so she gave me and Timmy, honey, and she went and just dropped him. The police were called, but the police knew who whom my family was because the place also helped raise my mother. He used to look after my mother when my mother was a teenager. He was an old sergeant in town. And he used to. He just said, Audrey, take your babies out. So he'd put her in the car or a nanny.



Nanny and take them out to Murry's flat. When we were living out there at the time or along the riverbank where we were camped.

Daniel Browning: [00:11:57] Bigger. That's what we call that South coast, New South Wales.

Kooncha Brown: [00:12:00] Yes, it's the only tar from Marine below. Aden's a bit further down. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:12:10] It's beautiful down there. Your own country.

Kooncha Brown: [00:12:14] Sometimes. Look, it's like, anyway, if you come from there, you know, you want to experience something different. So probably why I'm living in Sydney.

Daniel Browning: [00:12:25] I know when you were little, when you were younger, and you realized that you weren't necessarily like everyone else. Um. Yeah, just maybe a little bit about that. What you do. When do you remember being because you were loved and supported? Like you were never made to feel like you weren't. You didn't belong.

Kooncha Brown: [00:12:46] No, I was. I wasn't any different than the rest of the kids. I even thought I was a girl. Oh, I used to always hang around the girls. I'd play with the girls. I'd even make my own dolls. I'd grab sticks and, you know, I'd grab pieces of rag, grab a shirt and rip the arms off and make little dresses for the dolls. I'd cut my hand, put on the you know, I draw the the mouth and the nose on the doll, and I'd create my own little dolls out of sticks some. Yeah, but no, my family didn't care. They didn't really it wasn't an issue. Probably because we had a history of sister girls in our community, in our family, I'd say, Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:13:41] Now that word sister girls. If some guy, some white fella asked you what that meant, what would you say to them?



Kooncha Brown: [00:13:49] Well, sister girls being adopted as a term to. Because a lot of our mob, we we don't use the term transgender. Um, or some of us don't even know what the term transgender mean or transvestite. So it was adopted. It was actually adopted as a term to be used nationally at the first sister girl conference that was in Magnetic. I'm not sure what year it was, but it was the first sister actually is the only sister conference we had. Um. And it was adopted then. But although we use the term transgender for legal purposes, Sister Girl is actually come into the vocabulary more and it replaced the derogatory terms that were used in the past. Hmm.

Daniel Browning: [00:14:54] And what I love about that word is that it's his sister. And girl. So it's this idea of that you're part of a family still.

Kooncha Brown: [00:15:04] Well, it's actually given by the Aboriginal women in communities that said, well, you know, she, she's my sister girl. She's, she's just like us. So therefore, you know, she's a good person. So we're going to call her, you know, part of our sister. Hmm.

Daniel Browning: [00:15:24] And in, in Malaga, you weren't you weren't the only sister girl.

Kooncha Brown: [00:15:29] There were three of us. There's an older one. She was back in those days. We called ourselves camp. We never used the term sister girl. We. I didn't know the term sister girl until I come to Sydney and meet other sister girls in my early twenties. Back then, we were just the big girls or the sisters, you know, They'd call us the Big girls or Funny age.

Daniel Browning: [00:15:57] Now that term funny age, I'd never heard it before.

Kooncha Brown: [00:16:04] It means someone who isn't. Nw like.

Daniel Browning: [00:16:09] Everyone.

Kooncha Brown: [00:16:09] Else. Yeah. Funny how it is. Someone is different. Fame. Fame. Qualities. Yeah. So we were called Funny Ages.



Daniel Browning: [00:16:19] But that was a black fellow, I talking of talking.

Kooncha Brown: [00:16:23] Yeah. And it was a nice word, you know, It had to talk about us in a nice.

Daniel Browning: [00:16:27] We should bring it back.

Kooncha Brown: [00:16:30] We we say funny down home. I don't know where else they use it.

Daniel Browning: [00:16:34] So it's a word funny with a letter. H Funny H Oh, I'd love to know what it means when they find out what it mean.

Kooncha Brown: [00:16:42] Oh, well, that's, that's probably the easiest way to describe it. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:16:47] And there's no, um, it's not as if it's derogatory at all. There's no funny h doesn't sound to me like an insult.

Kooncha Brown: [00:16:53] No, it's not. It was used in a nice way, rather than use in a derogatory term, like, poof, the cat and all those terms.

Daniel Browning: [00:17:06] I haven't heard that one for a long time. Cat.

Kooncha Brown: [00:17:10] Cat was derogatory and still is.

Daniel Browning: [00:17:15] So, I mean, I want to talk about the things that you want to talk about. So you tell me what's next in that story of you leaving while a the like. What's most important for us to know about you.

Kooncha Brown: [00:17:29] Oh, let me think.

Daniel Browning: [00:17:31] Is it deciding to leave while ago? Um.



Kooncha Brown: [00:17:37] I. I think people leave, you know, because they need to grow. They need to find something different. You know, it's about you as growing as an individual. Whether it's for educational reasons, you know, you might want to go back later to help your community or, you know, certainly to contribute to your family. And that's one thing people need to understand that sister girls are we contribute and support our families and communities, you know, throughout our lives. And we've been doing that for years. You know, I've mentioned that I you know, I helped raise my younger three. My two younger sisters, my younger brother. I also looked after some of the kids. Um. Yeah. And I also look after some of the grandchildren, you know. So, everyone. Oh. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:18:49] Did your mom call him?

Kooncha Brown: [00:18:50] I know what a time to call I.

Daniel Browning: [00:18:54] Oh, he still like Bonds family. Still strong.

Kooncha Brown: [00:19:00] Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:19:04] So you've been caring for children and you had responsibilities to look after them.

Kooncha Brown: [00:19:12] I think you've got to understand I'm. For some families, sister girls are given a place within their family, which also creates that place within the community they live in. Myself living in the Redfern area, I. And I worked for ACORN. While I was at ACORN, I was actually co-opted onto the board of the Aboriginal Medical Service in Redfern, and I'm still there and it's been like over 20 years and I keep getting voted back on. So obviously I'm contributing. But it's also about, you know, making sure issues for, I'll say, a rainbow people. You know, in our communities are being addressed and being heard. And that was one of the reasons why I was co-opted onto the board. So sister girls are doing stuff around the community, around the around the country, within their communities. They're also raising children. And also a lot of rainbow



people are doing the same as well. So, you know, we're we're contributing to our communities as well. So.

Daniel Browning: [00:20:39] So, um, when you. Um, when you when can we say that? When you decided to come to Sydney. What happened? What happened there? You just realized that that you couldn't go anymore and that it was time to leave.

Kooncha Brown: [00:20:56] I know. It's sort of like. Like I've never I saw, like, come and I went back home and I come and, you know, so it wasn't just a big shift, you know, I'd come and stay. Um. Before I moved to Synergistic. Just come up for the weekends and I'd stay with friends. Um. I think I was just experiencing Sydney, but before that I used to come up. Holidays because we used to go to libraries, to family out there.

Daniel Browning: [00:21:31] You got family there at La Perez as well?

Kooncha Brown: [00:21:33] Yes.

Daniel Browning: [00:21:37] Where don't you have family? Because you got gunner Care now. You got all the way down to Lake Tyers. You got out to watch a black country in the Grampians. Then you got Dimboola and then, Oh, look, look. And then all the way up to Moree.

Kooncha Brown: [00:21:48] I think people have to understand a lot of the people from La Perouse, south Coast people. Yeah. So and also some people in Redfern as well. Yeah. So I'm related to people in Redfern as well. I'm. So yeah, I used to come up. I'd bring like two younger sisters, my younger brothers. I used to bring them up to Sydney for holidays. I'd take them to the show Easter time, Easter.

Daniel Browning: [00:22:18] By train when it had to get up this.

Kooncha Brown: [00:22:20] This way. Yeah. Well, back in those days I had to catch a bus to Nowra. Then I'd train from there to Sydney, so. Yeah, and longer. It wasn't easy with one of them, the youngest one who was a bit. What's the word?



Daniel Browning: [00:22:40] Boisterous, like.

Kooncha Brown: [00:22:42] One in his own way all the time. Thought he was the boss. But now he's my younger brother. He's now looking after my mum.

Daniel Browning: [00:22:53] So he's calmed down now.

Kooncha Brown: [00:22:57] He's calmed down a lot.

Daniel Browning: [00:23:01] So I don't know. I know it's hard to talk about years, but when when you decided to come here permanently and to never go home. When was that? What was. What was Sydney like? What was the scene like?

Kooncha Brown: [00:23:15] Well, I moved up here when I was about early twenties. Actually, before that, about 18, I think. I actually went to. I moved when I came up, when I was about. Fifth time. Um, I stayed for two for about six months. Then when I am. Um. On Christmas Eve. I walked in. Um. And then I walked in and put my bags in the room and then walked out into the lounge and my family were there all talking. And I went and stood in front of the fire. And then my older sister, she looked at me and said, Oh, what do you reckon, Concha? And then I looked at her and said, Oh. And then they realized I was there. And they just all they just saw Raspy nearly knocked me into the fire. Yeah. So it must have been a surprise because I was gone for about six months. I'm. And then I probably started coming to Sydney when I was about 18, I think. Yeah, back then I in 1920 I was also a trained by Aboriginal college. And then when we'd go out, we would go to Oxford Street or we'd go to the Clifton. The Clifton back then was I was probably a. I was. I liked it because there was so many black people.

Daniel Browning: [00:25:04] Clifton Hotel. Yeah. Where was that one?

Kooncha Brown: [00:25:07] I was in Regent Street. It's where the. I think it's where the IGA in Redfern. There. Yeah, I think that's it. So it was a pub and you know you'd get a lot of different age groups and I'd meet up with my sister and all of her friends. So yeah, because she lived in Glebe at the time, so. Hmm.



Daniel Browning: [00:25:32] So what was the what was it like on Oxford Street? So I guess would this be the seventies eighties?

Kooncha Brown: [00:25:38] Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:25:40] Just to give people a kind of sense of when it was.

Kooncha Brown: [00:25:44] Yeah, around then. Look, Oxford Street was way better than it is now. And if people think they're going out to have a good time, I mean, I don't know if they think they know what a good time is. I mean, we used to go out back in those days. We'd get Wednesday night, get on Sunday afternoon. So and mind you, I don't drink smoke. And I never did. I never took drugs unless prescribed.

Daniel Browning: [00:26:17] So did you keep going from Wednesday to Sunday?

Kooncha Brown: [00:26:20] Oh, tunnock's me. Everybody else did. So I just went along with them. Yeah, but we'd end up. You know, the Oxford back then was the Oxford Hotel was had. There was a corner there and all the blackfellas would congregate. The gays and sister girls.

Daniel Browning: [00:26:44] On the court there.

Kooncha Brown: [00:26:45] Yeah. Across from the courthouse and Taylor Square. I'd say about sometimes up to 30 people. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:26:56] All blackfellas?

Kooncha Brown: [00:26:57] Yeah. All that. Yeah. And they were from all over the place. But I sort of drifted away from them because I started transitioning. Um, as in transitioning, going on hormones and hanging around with our transgender and other sister girls back then. So I'm. I started hormones when I was about early twenties. Um. And. You know, like back then, sex work wasn't considered a bad thing to do as far as we were concerned. It's easy money for us, so we used to just go down back then. We used to get a premier line. That's all. The trannies worked. Gay men worked up at the



wall and. On Darlinghurst Road. So we weren't in primary alone, but they had a hierarchy. You had the top dog and you had a mob. And you know, if you weren't a part of that clique, then, you know, you had to fight your way in. But I remember saying to the top dog, I said, Well, if you own this piece of land, I'll leave. I'll respect you and leave. But it's not even your country. You don't even come from me. So I'm not leaving. Hmm. Anyway, so we. But back then there was clashes between the white queens, the island of Queens, and a lot of the Aboriginal sister girls. So. Hmm. You know, there was always fights then eventually a lot of the. Aboriginal and Islander queens marry. Cook Islanders, you know, all the Tongans all started hanging around together. And then, you know, we'd all come we'd all meet up at the Rex. Well, it's not there anymore at the krasny ne the fountain. And from there we go down to the line premier lined work. And money we made with, you know. We'd go out and we'd probably go up to the taxi club. But there were times when. Oxford Street had quite a few nightclubs and. A lot of them. I don't I don't know. I think there's only about three or four now. There's not many. But back then there was one, two, three, four. Five. Six. That's probably about seven or eight. And the taxi club. The taxi club was for everybody.

Daniel Browning: [00:30:05] All hours.

Kooncha Brown: [00:30:06] Yeah, 24 hours. So. Yeah, but the stairs was taped and a lot of people used to get thrown down by the bouncers.

Daniel Browning: [00:30:17] I remember the taxi club. I think it was a couple of years. I moved here in 90. 95. So it was still going at that time.

Kooncha Brown: [00:30:28] Hmm. Yeah. I wish I bring the tax cut back. Well, maybe they can't, but they could put in Oxford Street somewhere.

Daniel Browning: [00:30:36] Yeah, and I think it was there on the. I'm just trying to remember was there were AQIS. Now whether they used to be a club super club called Ark. And it was just around that area wasn't it.

Kooncha Brown: [00:30:45] Yeah. It's neat. Yeah. It's sort of like on your left from Ark. Yeah. And I still I think I reopened. So I think that's still there and it's probably one of the



nightclubs for trannies to go. But, you know, Soul Train is in for free all sister girls. But I feel like a dinosaur because they're all young.

Daniel Browning: [00:31:11] I didn't ask you a really important question, and you may not want to answer it. What year were you born?

Kooncha Brown: [00:31:16] 61.

Daniel Browning: [00:31:20] So that helps me because now I know around 1980 or around 19. Yeah. So we're talking the late seventies, eighties. Yeah. Wow. What was the music like.

Kooncha Brown: [00:31:32] This girl, Boy George. Earth, Wind and Fire. Yes.

Daniel Browning: [00:31:43] Barney.

Kooncha Brown: [00:31:43] Em. Barney. M Yeah. I love Barney. Whitney Houston. She was around, let's say, Michael Jackson. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:31:54] And we love us black fellas. We love, you know, African American music was, if you want to call it that. When we see them on on on the film clips and videos, because, you know, sometimes the clubs have the video is playing. That was the music that we got into because we thought it was a bit like us.

Kooncha Brown: [00:32:15] Hmm. Well, my idol was Donna Summer, and I loved Eartha KITT. I loved Aretha Franklin. Tina Turner. The Supremes. The bounding game. Well, there's lots of them. But my idol was Donna Summer. And also I loved Alison Moyet. I just loved it because. I don't know. Was probably because of your husky voice and I, I should say, share as well.

Daniel Browning: [00:32:55] You loved Alison. She did. Deep, real deep voice.

Kooncha Brown: [00:32:58] Maybe Shirley Bassey as well. Yeah. But I also liked Oprah. Hmm.



Daniel Browning: [00:33:05] Any particular opera that you liked? Um. Again. Big voices, deep voice.

Kooncha Brown: [00:33:13] Yeah, but I listen to a lot of women singers, like even now, the opera, you know, like I'm. What is it? Phantom of the Opera. And the opera is like that, So.

Daniel Browning: [00:33:29] I love talking about music because it really puts you in. If you if you weren't there and someone says, Oh, Donna Summer or we were listening to everyone in their mind and go, Oh, yeah, I know. I can imagine what that was like. So you described Oxford Street. Did you live around? Did you live around like Redfern? Where were you where you spend most of the time living?

Kooncha Brown: [00:33:52] Well, back then, a lot of the sisters sister girls lived in around the cross. So I'd stay there on the weekends or I'd stay round Oxford Street. I also stayed at Woolloomooloo Redfern with my aunty, so and I used to look after my other aunties to chill while I looked after her children and mother aunties to children while they went to bingo. So as soon as I went to bingo I said, Oh, well, I'm going out now. And I'd get home at 5:00 in the morning. They'd look at this stupid, Your dirty stop out. Where were you? Well, you just went to bingo. So. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:34:42] And what? Um. I don't know. Like what? Uh. What's the most important thing that people should know about about cuccia? I mean, if people. You know, maybe in 20 years of listening to this and maybe it's people from your family or people that you want to talk to directly, what would you say about your life?

Kooncha Brown: [00:35:07] Let me stop you there. Look, I think I think you just live your life, you know? But you just live delivered how you want to live it. These days. I mean, you shouldn't shouldn't be restricted. And after all, the only person who's going to make you happy is yourself. Hmm. So. I think just be yourself. You know, um. You know, at least if you be yourself. You're not. You're not. You're not going to believe you're not going to be judged by. Other people who don't really care, you know, and those people are going to judge. I mean, they don't really matter, do they?



Daniel Browning: [00:35:53] And many of us young fellows growing up, maybe young sister girls. Don't have the support that maybe you have felt when you were younger. The loving support of a family who just accepted you. Many people don't have that. So what would you say to someone who was kind of. You know, they don't come out anymore. But what would you say to a young sister girl if they needed your advice?

Kooncha Brown: [00:36:23] I'd say the first thing to think about is your safety. If that means confiding in someone who's. Someone is going to support you. But you would know that a friend. You know. Someone, an adult around your family member. Yeah, but certainly don't leave yourself vulnerable. You know where you are. Let it out from your family or. You know, it just don't you know, it may not be wise just to. You know, especially if you're young. I mean, in the past, I've known real young ones. I've come across a lot of young ones when I was younger, who were like 13, 14, were living on the streets, you know, prostituting themselves. This was back then in those days. But these days, you also got services, you know, that can support you. Like here in Sydney, you've got 2010. Assist the girls of the gender center. And you've also got swap as well. So I can't. So there's services out there that would support you as well and help you navigate how you might. You know, especially if you haven't disclosed to your family, it's about, you know, keep, you know. Being safe. Oh. Unlike me, I don't think I ever came out. I was always out.

Daniel Browning: [00:38:08] What does Uncle Noel Tovey say? I couldn't afford a closet. We were too poor. So there was never there was never a question of being out or being in a closet, or it was always just understood. Yeah.

Kooncha Brown: [00:38:21] I agree.

Daniel Browning: [00:38:24] So no closet and no coming out because it was already. I mean, I think everyone has it. I don't know. We all have a coming out story. Most of us do. But not, you.

Kooncha Brown: [00:38:36] Know, not really. Probably because my family accepted me when I was younger, so there wasn't any really coming out. I went to high school. I



had the best shaved eyes and best shaved eyebrows in high school, long hair. I took it around like the tomboys. They were blue shirts, gray shorts and J.C. sandals. And so the boys thought I was a tomboy, so. But my entire. I was pretty good at sports. That's probably why they thought I was a tomboy.

Daniel Browning: [00:39:17] And so. When you decided to transition, how were the doc? How was the medical treatment that you received?

Kooncha Brown: [00:39:29] I received really good support. The first thing you have to do is say, Well, I went to my doctor. Is that a lot of our transgendered clients. And my cousin was already on. Once I went with her, she passed away. Now, bless her, I'm. Anyone sat down with her and another friend because they were already on hormones. So I ended up seeing their doctor and then I saw a psychiatrist. And then from there, he prescribed me to see the hormone specialist or endocrinologist. And I started from there. And I think the first injection was like a relief, you know, like a burden lifted. And I felt, oh, you know, so I thought that's the first time. I it didn't take me long to transition would have have only taken me about. To fully transition would have only taken me about a year, I reckon. Hey. But it wasn't easy because there's a lot of discrimination. There was a lot of. You know, especially when you drop on the bus and you you wonder why people never sat next year. And I used to. I think I smelled. I said smell myself. And I think anyway, I know I never smelled because I'd put Chanel number five on that morning. I told myself how. But I think because back in those days people were. Very judgmental. And if you didn't look the part, I mean, Sydney wasn't an easy place to live. I think that's why we all hang together, all the sister girls. You know, we all got around in groups as much, say for what you've got to realize, back in those days, there were a lot of gay murders and. Yeah. So it wasn't easy. There were a lot of training murders as well. Some of the sister girls of nine were murdered. Hmm. So back in those days, I mean, I still happening now, but, you know, you hardly hear about it.

Daniel Browning: [00:41:57] You know, when you talk about pride, we all have to we also have to talk about well, actually, there's there's a lot of homophobia in the world. There's a lot of homophobia in Sydney. There's a lot of homophobia. Now it's out of Sydney. It's still part of our lives.



Kooncha Brown: [00:42:12] Well, when we talk about prod. We're not just talking about white. Jailbait. Q I hate. I plus people. You know, pride comes in all different colors. And I mean, one of the reasons why they created the new rainbow flag that represents pride. So. You know, I mean. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rainbow people still get discriminated within the gay community, within gay services. So, you know, we've got to be mindful there's still discrimination. I mean, you know, they're a reflection of the wider society in how they treat Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. And it's a shame really, because, you know, we're in what, 2000 and what, 22? Yeah. You know, and it's still happening.

Daniel Browning: [00:43:22] And I think that's a really important point to make. It's not. You know, as much as there's homophobia and there's also racism on top of that. So like this double effect of prejudice and it still happens to people like you and me in the community where we should be accepted.

Kooncha Brown: [00:43:45] Yeah, we still get discriminated against. You know, not only I mean, within the the jailbait Q I plus. Community, I mean, the wider community or what is, you know. I mean, especially in services, you know, or in. For, you know, for me to disclose it on a sister girl if I go to an appointment. Then. Some of the receptionists. Look at me, stupid. You know so. Oh, well, what are you doing here? Kind of thing. You know, if I say I'm transgender and I'm quite, quite upfront, I mean, I don't I don't hide anymore like I used to. I think it's just comes with you know, growing up maturity, I think because I'm a lot older. I don't have a problem confronting people anymore. Well, I think you have to sometimes there are certain times when you have to pull back and you know, because it's around your safety as well. I mean, you certainly wouldn't carry on like that if you had a football match. Although I have. Yeah, but normally, yeah, it's about it's also about safety. It's about talking up when you need to, especially when you need to. Especially if you're going there for to, you know, to. You know, you're going to be given a service or asking for service. And you know, you have a right to just like everybody else.

Daniel Browning: [00:45:32] And that's the kind of we're talking about medical services here or HIV or just test testing or whatever it might be, services that are offered by the medical community.



Kooncha Brown: [00:45:43] Yeah, but also, I mean. Look where medical housing when you go shopping. I mean, you know, they look at you in a strange way, it means they've sprung. In other words, they've really they realize you're transgender. But I'm. Yeah. I mean, there's a time, especially if there's a group of them that are going shopping, you know, and then they look at them because they always seem to figure out that, Oh, they're not women, they're trannies. Well, these can assist a girl. So but most of the time I don't. I look past that now. Yeah. I don't see it as a I don't. Let it become a barrier.

Daniel Browning: [00:46:36] Yeah. I mean, so I guess for some people they can't pass. They can't they're clearly, obviously transgender. And that can lead to they can be put in, they can put themselves or be be placed in danger by other people.

Kooncha Brown: [00:46:56] Yeah. And I think that some if it's a dangerous situation, that's when, you know, you do. You might have to keep quiet and just move away, move yourself, remove yourself from the danger. You know, especially if you're on the street and you're walking down. You know, I don't know. I mean, I don't I don't normally get sprung anymore. You know. But if I'm with someone who's just transitioning and they realize, you know, I'll turn around, I'll confront them. Hmm. But there were times when. You know, I'll threaten them. Are they gonna keep going? I'll ring my brothers up. But yeah, but most of the time, it's best to just. Removed herself from the situation.

Daniel Browning: [00:47:50] Sometimes it's hard like transfer views can be quite. It can be a violent form of prejudice, of violent form, of hatred. And it can be very hard to remove yourself. So you're on a train and you can't get off between stops or trains can be. People don't realize this. This is something that we have to think about on a daily basis.

Kooncha Brown: [00:48:11] Yeah. This is why I never used to sit down in the carriages. I'd sit when you first walk in.

Daniel Browning: [00:48:19] But the doors there.



Kooncha Brown: [00:48:21] Mind you had fights. I flogged this fellow once. Yeah, he was being very racist, derogatory, was talking about Aboriginal people in a derogatory term. Was a foreigner is drinking. And I sat down and I ended up. I ended up. It's confronting. And I say, if you don't like Aboriginal people, just go back and you turn around. He looked at me and he said, Oh, he said, he said, Are you Aboriginal? I said, Yes. And he said, Oh, well, is it what did your mother do, dip you in mud when you were born. And that was it. I got up and I just lifted him, I grabbed his bottle and he's lucky he took off because I to smash the bottle in his face. Yeah. And I thought. Anyways, I sat back down because I already asked a young Asian girl who was. I'll sit on my bag. So I asked for my bag back and the train was full. It was in the afternoon. I was going back to work at Ikon and when I sat down one of the young fellow because there was a lot of schoolboys on the bus, and I said, One of the young fellas said, Oh, you wouldn't want to be here. Osbourne And the train. I just cracked up laughing and, you know, I got back to work. I told my boss and my co-worker and I was sitting there with a straight faced child and not allow that experience. I just cracked up laughing. I said, I'm traumatised. I'm going. I'm. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:50:07] Yeah, cause you got it. These things, it's. It is traumatizing. It is sad. It is. When someone does that to you and racially abuses you or abuses you in a transphobic or homophobic way, on a train in front of a carriage full of people. It's traumatic and you can feel endangered. But it sounds like you have a sense of humour as well.

Kooncha Brown: [00:50:32] Well, I think you have to. Yeah. I mean, at the time it wasn't funny, but looking back then, people would laugh. Yeah, but, you know, you have to. No, I mean, you can't really take things serious all the time. You have to live your life.

Daniel Browning: [00:50:52] Now, let's talk about your work with Icon. When did you go there and what were you doing?

Kooncha Brown: [00:50:59] What happened was in 1994. I had the first. I'm going to a conference at Hamilton Dance just outside of Alice Springs. Guy. It was it was originally for Gay Man. But I said because a lot of sister girls showed up, I said, Well. I said to them, I said, Well, what are we doing here? If we're not included, then we might just



pack up and go home. So that's when they turned around and embraced us and incorporated us into the the agenda. And from there positions were created within the AIDS councils around the country. My position was created. At ACORN, although they were already two positions, male and female. And I think back then I my position was the first sister Gill. Position. I lasted at ACORN for about ten years. Really good support by a lot of people. Hmm. But not. But not some, if you know what I'm saying. Yeah. Yeah. But I enjoyed working there. I really did. I. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:52:29] And what kind of I guess you were outreach. You would have been working with other sister girls and making them making them feel like they could come to Aiken. They'd count. What was the AIDS Council of New South Wales icon to get help or to be to assist them to access services? Yeah.

Kooncha Brown: [00:52:48] Yeah. Well, Icon was originally for gay men. Um, but, you know, a lot of women. In a lesbian. I started, you know, being employed in positions I. I don't think I was the first trans person to be employed in Aiken, but I certainly was the first Aboriginal one of. And. My position was about. Supporting our sister. Girls are educating service providers, educating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Sexual Health Network in New South Wales and around the state around the country. A. I even was invited to go to several conferences to speak. I remember going to one of the major conferences as a big one in Tasmania. So me and my co-worker went down and they asked us to speak. And it was it was quite liberating because after the conference, after we got up and spoke. There were lots of people, mainly from the North End, who came up and congratulated me and thanked me for getting up and talking because they have a lot of sister girls within their communities.

Daniel Browning: [00:54:25] In the north of Australia.

Kooncha Brown: [00:54:27] Yeah, the northern part of Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory in South Australia. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:54:35] And Nacho being the National Aboriginal Community Controlled health organisations, that's the umbrella term. So. That was good that you got to kind of present to them and just state your presence, make your presence felt.



Kooncha Brown: [00:54:53] Well, back then, I mean, the way I saw it was I had to put myself out there. I couldn't just stay in office and, you know, do office jobs I had to like.

Daniel Browning: [00:55:09] You have to be visible.

Kooncha Brown: [00:55:10] That's right. I had to be visible, but I also had to know what what the issues were for us. And anyway, I've got to do that. I mean. You know, I was very supportive, but there were lots of sister girls who weren't supported within their community or within their families. So, you know, going out and hearing their stories as well. And, you know, to let people know that, you know, there was a struggle. There were there were a lot of issues we faced back then.

Daniel Browning: [00:55:44] I think that's the point of this oral history, too, is. Don't think we we weren't present. There weren't black fellas and black sister girls. There weren't black fellas and there weren't sister girls present in the scene during that period of time. We're talking the eighties, seventies, eighties and nineties.

Kooncha Brown: [00:56:04] Look, even before that, I come to the knock at the quarry knock out up here in Sydney, in Redfern. Back then there were lots of sister girls in Redfern. I was a. This was ten, 11, 12, something like that. Do they? And you'd always see groups of sisters, probably about 20 of them all walk in, walk around. They do a lap.

Daniel Browning: [00:56:34] Of the knockout.

Kooncha Brown: [00:56:35] At the knockout.

Daniel Browning: [00:56:37] They go round the Oval Redfern Oval.

Kooncha Brown: [00:56:38] They'd go back back then and everybody knew they were so, you know, they were related to someone or they were from some community and they'd be all green waving at everybody, you know, and all. I can't hear you, you know. So they'd walk around and people knew. But back then it wasn't about like these days a lot of sister girls or some trainees and sister girls want to pass. Back then it wasn't like



that. I didn't care, although some did pass, if you know what I mean. Yeah. So anyways, I'd walk around and soon as I got around to where they started, I'd sit down and I'd be charging on with whoever and it would leave the people just come and charge on and sit there watching the footy with them. So that was way before my time. Um. I've always known sister girls because my mother's older cousins, they. He had his two go cousins, one of them. And she passed away. She even got married to her husband. Why? Before marriage equality. And our community wasn't going to let people know that, you know, she was a sister girl. The priest didn't know. So she just got married. As far as we were concerned, you know. He was. He should have been with her husband. And she was so.

Daniel Browning: [00:58:11] So that history of sister girls of being accepted and big, big part of I guess you becoming who you were too.

Kooncha Brown: [00:58:20] I think it's a part of me being. Pray to live my life. You know, to not be restricted in, you know, and sort of like open the community up to the acceptance that there are people who are different. Hmm.

Daniel Browning: [00:58:44] Um, now I'll spend a lot of time asking you questions about the things that interest me. Is this something that you want? Is there a thing that I haven't spoken about? I mean, we can talk a little bit further, but there's. It's a big life, you know, It's a long life, and it's hard to kind of capture it all. But is there anything that maybe you want to talk about?

Kooncha Brown: [00:59:10] Oh, well, what am I doing now? I'm a student at tie. I'm doing fashion design. Um. I want to continue on in that area. I've already done some. Clothing, but I haven't created any things spectacular. But down the track I'd hope to. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [00:59:40] You see yourself as a fashion designer?

Kooncha Brown: [00:59:42] I'd love to, but it's a matter of just getting that experience down the track.



Daniel Browning: [00:59:50] What are you like on a sewing machine?

Kooncha Brown: [00:59:53] I can use the industrial sewing machines. When I first started typing, I mean, they've got. They've got the straight side. They've got about four or five over lockers. They've got a machine that sews elastic onto swimsuits. They've got a button. All that puts the buttonholes on the clothing, the one that inserts the button. So, you know, this is the industrial side, but on the. You mind saying this in which I haven't even taken out of the box yet? I've got a little deer. I've got to practice, I suppose. Once I start, then. Yeah. But I'm going back to Ty for next year. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [01:00:43] And what do you love about fashion or you love about. Is it the designing? Thinking about how fabric works?

Kooncha Brown: [01:00:52] I think it's about. I've always been interested in fashion. Well, I think it's about. I'll have to think about looking at our mob. And saying to them, Well, you can look good, too. Now, back in my day when we were younger, the men would say, Oh, what are you in makeup for? And then. Oh, What are you doing here? What are you dressing up like that for? Mainly came from the men. I didn't care because I remember going on one year. And I can also braid here. So I braided nearly everyone on the community, all the women. And a.

Daniel Browning: [01:01:35] While ago.

Kooncha Brown: [01:01:35] Yeah, I braided the hair. I, you know, waxed, waxed and plucked eyebrows, the mo, the legs, you know, And I give them a makeover. It might have been, like, to go out for New Year's Eve or something. And so I like to do things like that, all the women. And I think it's just about showing people that. You know, I mean. Can we We can look good and confident, too. You know, it's about getting us getting Aboriginal women and men out of. Trackies and t shirts and joggers. You know, let's say fashion's a bit more, you know, and it's like we've got to realize when people look at you, they want to see confidence. You know, I mean, fair enough. You can wear trackies and whatever, but they want to see confidence. They want to know that you can wear it well. And I don't feel comfortable contradicting it. Because if you're confident,



you're less likely to be a. Uh, degraded. Hmm. So I'll tell you, it's sort of like how you carry yourself.

Daniel Browning: [01:02:50] And a target for other people.

Kooncha Brown: [01:02:52] Yeah. Yeah. So. But also it's about making Aboriginal women feel beautiful about themselves. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [01:03:03] Um, pride is what we're all talking about.

Kooncha Brown: [01:03:06] Hmm.

Daniel Browning: [01:03:07] How do you. I mean, some people have pride that's instilled in them when they're little and they seem to just be be that all the time. That's not my experience. This pride and this shame and, you know, in our communities. Some of us, that means something quite profound and hard to get away from. But how does how do you. What does pride mean to you?

Kooncha Brown: [01:03:41] Prod. Well, I think. Pride is for the. Lynch Well. The only time I had pride was when it was. He'll put into the jailbait Q II plus category. Before that Pride was more about. You know feeling good about yourself. Self confidence and. Mhm. It was, you know, it was looking after yourself. So. But I'm. In terms of world pride. I think we have a lot to be proud of, you know? I mean, we've got a history, know, 101 years we've been here in Australia and, you know, being the oldest continuing culture. So there's a lot of pride there because a lot of us still, you know, we carry that culture. Some of us still carry that language. No, no. And I'm. It's a matter of. Educating non-Aboriginal people. About. What it means to us. Hmm.

Daniel Browning: [01:05:03] Because I think we were we were always proud as blackfellas. We didn't have a sense of shame. We might have just had among ourselves. Like, You can't be like that. You know, pull your head in, you know, like, that kind of thing. But not. Yeah, I think pride is something that we've always had. And we just call it that now.



Kooncha Brown: [01:05:25] You know, I think pride was always there. The same thing came in, I think, after Christianity, because, I mean, you got to realize we were walking around naked or I'm lap laps or whatever. We didn't feel any shame, you know. The example was my poor old aunt. He had walked down the street with two tits hanging out with me and my cousin on the other. So, you know, she was in shame. Yeah, I think it's. Trouble is a lot of us. We judge ourselves by what standards? You know, I mean, if you kind of black communities that I came. Yeah. I mean, you know, you can walk around dolled up or whatever daggy or whatever, you know, that I care. Some of them, some of them are quite good. They'll say, Oh, you look lovely today. I'll. What are you dressed up for? Where you go, You know, you've got to be gone. Somebody to be dolled up. Yeah. But if you get around like that all the time then you know it's accepted. They see you like that all the time. So. And that's pride. And it's pride in yourself. You know, there's no shame in being, you know, proud of yourself.

Daniel Browning: [01:06:55] I want to ask just one question about homophobia in the black community and transphobia, too. What have you what have you observed over your life? Has it been? Has it become. Is it is it better or is it is it just as prevalent as homophobia and transphobia transphobia in the wider community?

Kooncha Brown: [01:07:17] Look, I think it's. It's. It's a lot better now. But like I said back then, I mean. You've got to realize a lot of us are from families, so a lot of us have got. You know, there's rainbow people within families and communities. Um. You might get some homophobic and transphobic people within those families and communities. But I think generally Aboriginal people are more tolerant. And then a lot of other groups. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [01:08:00] And if you were saying that if one of your cousins said something, you that cousin would be raked over the coals, it'd be What happened?

Kooncha Brown: [01:08:10] Well, yeah. Yeah, well, if any of my cousins were, like, carried on about me when I was younger, they would get a. I would get a hiding. Yes.

Daniel Browning: [01:08:23] So your auntie is in your.



Kooncha Brown: [01:08:25] Yeah. From the parents? Some. Yeah. So they would be saying, now you can't treat country like that or you can't say things like that. Anna, you're not what? Carrying on like that with your own mob.

Daniel Browning: [01:08:43] That's too deadly. You know what? Don't be like them white people. Don't be. Transphobic, racist or homophobic or anything or phobic about anyone or anything because country is accepted.

Kooncha Brown: [01:08:54] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I think so in my experience is that me growing up in my community, it's given me not only a place within my community, but also my family's given me that place. Do you know what I mean? Because my family's accepted me. And mind you, my I've got an extended family, so I'm not just talking about my. Parents, my brothers and sister. I'm talking about all my family. Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [01:09:26] Biggest mob. We already said that.

Kooncha Brown: [01:09:30] Yeah.

Daniel Browning: [01:09:30] And so that what you're saying there is that because you're accepted there in that big mob of family that meant that you already took it for accepted that you had a place in the world?

Kooncha Brown: [01:09:45] Yeah. I. I think it started when I was. When I was younger, I. I'll have to tell you a story now.

Daniel Browning: [01:09:57] I love stories.

Kooncha Brown: [01:09:59] I first when I started school, I was about five. Mind. So me and my brother, we were taken away. I was three, my brother was seven. We were taken away from my mother. We were sent to Bulger like. Um, and we ended up staying with the manager for white manager manager for two weeks.

Daniel Browning: [01:10:26] Taken from beggar to Olga by the welfare authorities.



Kooncha Brown: [01:10:32] With the intention of the manager taking us up to the children's arms in Bom dairy. Um. From there probably ended up in Kinshasa. But my father threatened the welfare. He said, Don't you take my kids to the homes because I'll come looking for you. So we started with the manager was there for two weeks. We slept on the veranda, on the mattress, on the veranda. And then after two weeks. We were the so lady. Poor Aulani Goldy Ty came and took us and she looked after us and I was about seven. I think my brother might have been about. 13. So we stayed there with her. And then I started school there. And while ago we went to Burma. I was about five. And I was quite. Girly. Back then I started school. When I first started school, I said I didn't want to go into the boys toilet. I said No. I said to my brother, I said, No, I don't want to go in there. I've got to go into the girls toilets. And he said, Now, come on, Galileo. He said, No of boys in there. He said, I'll go and tell them to leave.

Kooncha Brown: [01:12:00] So I went in to see and the funny face, I told them, Why did I wait until they come out? I said, Now I'm denying now they're coming to the toilet. So I went into the toilet. Come out. Yeah, but after that. I did go to the toilet when I was in class. I tell her I need to go and see my brother. What for? Because I want to go to the toilet and take a look at me. Oh, why? Because I need my brother to come to the toilet with me. Anyway. So she'd say, Well, I'll take you to the toilet. You take me to the girl's toilet. Anyways, that's why, like I said, I always thought I was a girl, even when I was little. I'm. Then. So we and we stayed with Paul and Gold in our family shed like probably about 13 kids anyway, but a lot of them were teenagers or they've already left town. So she became our mum. She was. She was always our mom, you know, right up until she passed away. Bless her. So the family became our family.

Daniel Browning: [01:13:13] And Goldie, Ty.

Kooncha Brown: [01:13:15] Um. Anyways, when she moved to Wollongong, we moved with her. And then. Then they give mum a house at Pollock because they were building new houses. And then my mum and my, my extended my nan and. And sisters may have top. So then we were given and I think it was after. 67, 1960, we were given back and galley give us back to Mum.



Daniel Browning: [01:13:51] So that was how many years you were away from your mom.

Kooncha Brown: [01:13:58] I only got five years.

Daniel Browning: [01:14:00] What was it like when you went back to her?

Kooncha Brown: [01:14:03] Oh, no. Different.

Daniel Browning: [01:14:05] Hey, where you been?

Kooncha Brown: [01:14:07] Wasn't any different. I mean, we knew, you know. Just our mother. Oh.

Daniel Browning: [01:14:14] And so did that. Was it support being supported by, say, Annie Goldie and even just knowing within yourself who you felt like That's what made you kind of who you are today? Like not it wasn't just that you your mom said this is how you are and this is what you're accepted, that you're loved. It was a lot of people.

Kooncha Brown: [01:14:33] Know it was a community. Yes. Yeah. And I probably Goldie's we say poor old down our way because show respect when they've passed away so proud. And Goldie, we know. When she took us. I mean, we were. Just automatically accepted into that family. So. Oh.

Daniel Browning: [01:14:56] That's how it happened back in those days. But that's so, I guess, in a way. Kind of remote. You are removed from your mother.

Kooncha Brown: [01:15:04] Yeah, we were. We were, um. I was there when I was standing on the brand because she had a big brand and it was. Like I think a couple of weeks later when the welfare came up in a big black car monitor, the one that took us because I remember. My brother remembers it too, because I was in the car and I was crying, so I'd put that he told me and put his hand over my mouth to stop me from crying. You know, so. But anyways, a few weeks later, when we was done to Goldie, the car pulled up and we were standing on the front of me calling the guy called in



croaky and dialing. This is son cocky about my age. And in a car, we was on the chair. And then the cat was. I think it was the morning in the morning. But all the kids have already gone to school. We were we weren't at school then two young. Then my two cousins pulled up and they were sent next door. So I to my girl, Cousin Geraldine, in disarray. And when they opt out, I started screaming out. I got down off the chair, really excited, run around to them and gals stopped me at before I can get out. So I said, No, no, no. We'll get Randy out of that big car, Gus. So, anyways, I went not back on the chair with Crocker and looking down and was singing out to them. And I'm looking up and I was there was sort of like a. But then I lost. Felt lost. And then they saw me. And then I started smiling and waving.

Daniel Browning: [01:17:00] And these are two cousins who'd been dropped there at the house next door to you and Goldie's.

Kooncha Brown: [01:17:05] That family that was. They were related to that family. So that was good. But I don't think the welfare knew that.

Daniel Browning: [01:17:14] Yeah, the welfare just thought they were taking two children, two Aboriginal children to the home of an Aboriginal foster family.

Kooncha Brown: [01:17:21] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, they were, but they were related there. That family. Yeah. So I'm. And that's when Geraldine and Desiree.

Daniel Browning: [01:17:35] If they had cousins there, if you didn't feel family, anybody fully accepted you. But there were two cousins next door. Yeah.

Kooncha Brown: [01:17:47] We had cousins in a while ago, but we didn't know them.

Daniel Browning: [01:17:51] Hmm. I must. Lot of people related, you know, in communities, people other people don't realize this, but they're all interconnected.

Kooncha Brown: [01:18:00] Well, you got to. Really. Yeah. Yeah. Like people got to realize from. In Victoria, two Sydney, Kempsey further on up. You've got to realise people are related to someone, so.



Daniel Browning: [01:18:18] Anything that you'd like to say that we didn't we didn't cover or it's hard to know like where to. Kind of whether to keep going or whether to stop or it's such a big story. I mean, fashion design is the next step. You know, if someone were to say to you, what was the thing you're most proud of? In your in your life, in your career? Um, what. What were you most proud of?

Kooncha Brown: [01:18:50] I'd have to say my kids, my grandkids, I think my sisters, my brothers. You know, I think creating that acceptance in the first place for me. Yeah. And knowing that I have a family. You know that I can call on any time or I can go out and see my mother. And you know what I mean? Yeah, I think that's probably the most the proudest thing.

Daniel Browning: [01:19:26] Coach, it's been a real pleasure to hear you talk about your life story. And I just hope that we've covered some of the stuff that you wanted to talk about.

Kooncha Brown: [01:19:35] I think so. I mean, I'll probably think of things when you leave, but.

Daniel Browning: [01:19:41] Hey, it's not too hard. I can always drop back in. But I think we've covered some some major, major bits. If you've got a message for other sister girls or other black fellas in during Sydney, well, prior, what should, what should we all be focused on? What should we remember during world pride?

Kooncha Brown: [01:20:01] I think the first thing is be yourself, but also be. Be proud of who you are, you know. Also, be safe. Um. You know, we might think it's okay because a lot of other people are coming here, but you never know. But yeah, you just have to be on the guard, too, as well for yourself, for your own safety as well. Yeah. And. Hey, if you need help checks, just make sure you get them done and all that stuff. Yeah, but also enjoy yourself. And it's about networking, meeting people, meeting new people. You never know where it leads to. You might find a new building.



Daniel Browning: [01:20:53] If you need one and you need them like a hole in the head, I reckon.

Kooncha Brown: [01:20:59] True. I know. I'm over him.

Daniel Browning: [01:21:03] Me too. Couldn't you? Thank you so much.

Kooncha Brown: [01:21:05] Thank you. It's lovely meeting you. Lovely, Lovely catching up with you. Thank you.