



## **Our Kitchen Table - The Howell Family Photo/story credit - Meaghan**

You see that woman front left? That's my Mum. The strongest humble woman I know. When my mum was a little girl about 3/4 in the year 1956/1957 she was forcibly removed from her family in Pt. Augusta S.A under the Aboriginies Protection Act/Assimilation Policy, she was luckily placed in a loving foster home who cared for her as their own. But at the age of 12 welfare came and removed her from her new family and placed her into a children's home. She was told by the government officials that her foster family no longer wanted her.

It took many years for her to see and understand that neither her birth family nor foster family willingly gave her away. They both loved and very much still love her unconditionally and we are lucky enough to have been able to connect with our family and country and also have strong ties with mums foster family.

Mum has faced many more challenges throughout her life but has never let any of them (even losing her eldest child and only son to suicide 20 years ago) stop her from being the caring, open, loving woman she is.

I am 1 of 5 children, my 3 sisters and I are the best of friends. My family come together as often as we can. We follow our cultural kinship system where we are each just as responsible for all 16 grandchildren of Mum and Dads as they are each our own and they all see each other as brothers and sisters. That's right, 16 Grannies, 4 daughters, their partners and any other family members and friends whom need to be surrounded by love and family sit at our Christmas table (tables now).

We all assist with the cooking but 1 cultural tradition that my Mum doesn't follow is elders 1st. She makes sure the Grannies get their feeds 1st (youngest to oldest) then she insists our guests go next, then her children, Dad and once we are all sitting and eating Mum will get herself a plate....

Even with the biggest mob to feed there's always leftovers and for days we continue to come together and have Christmas fest at mum and Dads. We are waiting for the Christmas Day Mum will let us fuss over her as she so deserves.

We are all missing each other terribly during this COVID times and stage 3 restrictions but we hope that we can all sit around Mums table again this year for Christmas. I have also attached another more recent photo of Mum and Dad and most of their Grannies from Christmas 2019.

We can't all fit around the kitchen table but in our family, mum and dad and the strong connection and respect we all hold for each other is the heart of our mob.

Warmest Regards, Meagan

The Kitchen Table is an initiative of Celebrate Ageing Ltd, a charity combatting ageism and building respect for older people. The aim of #TheKitchenTable is to promote respect for older people in families. The project documents portraits of families at their kitchen table and their stories about who is in their family, what they are eating and how respect for older people in their family is shown. More information on the project webpage: [celebrateageing.com/kitchentable](https://celebrateageing.com/kitchentable)