ALEC KRUGER
1924 - 2015
ACTIVIST, SOLDIER, AUTHOR, STOCKMAN

By CRAIG DUNLOP

ALEC Kruger – author, activist, soldier and member of the Stolen Generations – passed away on Sunday at the age of 90.

“I’ve had an amazing life, and a rough life,” Mr Kruger said in 2008.

He was by then in his 80s, but at the height of his public profile, having published his autobiography, Alone On The Souls, in the months before the apology to the Stolen Generations.

“It’s about time they apologised to us after all these years of pain and hurt,” he said.

“I feel better in my heart and soul.”

Politician and friend Warren Snowdon remembers Mr Kruger as one of the Territorians closest to his heart.

“In his ninety years, Mr Kruger encompassed the richness and diversity of recent Territory history, its opportunities and struggles, its rewards and adversities,” he said.

In 1979, Mr Kruger was one of the key informants to the Bringing Them Home report into the Stolen Generations, where he told the story of his life in excruciating detail.

He was put to work on the Bloomsfield family property at Love’s Creek from the age of 10, where he was sometimes left for long stretches during the dry season to tend waterholes and soak. During his time left out in the bush, he was befriended and cared for by a group of “wild” Arrernte, who initiated him and taught him their traditions. Of his white bosses, he was unequivocal: “most slaves had it better than I got at Love’s Creek,” he wrote in his autobiography.

In his late teens he discovered that the Bloomsfields had not been placing his wages into a government trust.

“In disgust, and lying about his age, he joined the army as a 17-year-old – where Aborigines were treated equally to the white men they were fighting alongside of.

By his 40s, Mr Kruger had joined the Australian Labor Party, encouraging Aboriginal workers to unionise and enrol for the vote.

“I became a true believer in the Labor Party and social justice campaigns. Even though I was still a lone wolf and scared of pushing myself forward at meetings, I had become an activist,” he wrote.

Mr Kruger came into the national spotlight in 1997, when he took the Commonwealth of much of my work at Labor to the High Court, seeking remedy for the Stolen Generations.

He lost his case, with the only Territorian judge on the bench, Justice Toohey, dissenting from the majority.

Throughout his life, the memory of being left alone near the soaks as a child remained a source of deep trauma.

“Today I still dread being alone. I get terrible panic attacks where I can scarcely breathe. I blame it on the isolation of much of my work at Love’s Creek,” he said.

Mr Kruger died surrounded by family.

Apology

In the March Fresh magazine issue on sale Wednesday 18th February 2015, the coupons SuperswishXtra & 3 in 1 Spray Squeegee on page 67 have been advertised with incorrect offer description. The correct offer description is SuperswishXtra $10 Off and 3 in 1 Spray Squeegee $3 Off.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

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Peace at last for hero of Stolen Generations

A baby boy has been found dead in the back of a car outside a Victorian home.

Australian author Sullivan Stapleton has landed a role in the drama pilot Blindspot.

Lane, but how far inland it tracks remains uncertain.

“Once it goes overland, Central Australia may get some moisture, with most of it over the central parts of the Northern Territory,” the spokesman said.

Rain and thunderstorms are forecast on Sunday and Monday due to an airstream that will drag moisture from the tropics towards Alice Springs.