

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE BY RELIGIOUS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

THIS PART OF THE SUBMISSION IS FOR PUBLICATION

1 This submission addresses the adequacy of the policies, procedures and practices within religious and other non- government organisations that relate to the prevention of, and response to, child abuse. It suggests reform to help prevent abuse and ensure that suspicions of abuse are properly dealt with. The submission arises from personal experience.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

to as "jailhouse talk". I transferred to another department at my workplace, asked management who I made aware of the threats to make notes of them, and followed advice to stay away from the NGO, the junior managers, and their cronies.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1.6 [REDACTED] It is clear that such failures of governance, where they are discovered, are sometimes covered up. People associated with the NGO [REDACTED] have stated publicly that it historically suffers from poor management, while simultaneously enthusiastically promoting its engagement with activities for children. Children's services of any kind ought not to be synonymous with bad governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

2 The remainder of this submission offers analysis and makes some suggestions with respect to the corporate governance of organisations dealing with children.

2.1 Incorporated associations and co-ops do not have the rigorous reporting requirements that modern corporations do, and are easy targets for criminal misconduct. Nonprofits in general are opaque, and have little incentive to pay attention to good governance. Where nonprofits are sustained by grants there are no clear pathways to complain to the grant providers about misconduct in the organisations they fund.

2.2 Organisations dealing with children should be at least incorporated under Federal law as Companies Limited by Guarantee. This structure provides for a minimum of continuous and transparent reporting, and would bring NGO's dealing with children in line with community expectations of good corporate governance and transparency in the private sector.

2.3 Alternatively nonprofits could be licensed to provide services to children through a licensing and inspectorate infrastructure.

2.4 There should be uniform guidelines and reporting standards for organisations dealing with children. These could be modeled on Federal Work For the Dole (WFD) reporting. Many non profit organisations are by now familiar with and are experienced in WFD acquittals, which are essentially a regime of continuous disclosure monitoring the ongoing operations of involved Non-Government Organisations.

2.5 The State Government should provide incentives for the board members of an NGO dealing with children to engage in continuous education and training for their roles in and responsibilities for good governance. Most training in the nonprofit sector focusses upon obtaining funding, for example two thirds of the training offered on the ourcommunity website is structured around grant applications. A stronger focus upon good governance and operational transparency would at least alert NGO board members to their responsibilities.

2.6. Organisations could be subject to an ongoing accreditation process administered by a State agency if they wish to run programs for children.

REPORTING MISCONDUCT

3 It should be easier to report misconduct.

3.1 One of the State anti-corruption bodies should be empowered to investigate cases of misconduct involving organisations dealing with children [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A single body charged with investigating misconduct would at least be able to take a long view.

3.2 I believe the case for establishing a Royal Commission on Child Abuse in the state to be overwhelming.

(signed) [REDACTED]

Dr S Middleton

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