

SCHEDULE

The Family and Community Development Committee is requested to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on the processes by which religious and other non-government organisations respond to the criminal abuse of children by personnel within their organisations, including:

- 1. the practices, policies and protocols in such organisations for the handling of allegations of criminal abuse of children, including measures put in place by various organisations in response to concerns about such abuse within the organisation or the potential for such abuse to occur;*
- 2. Whether there are systemic practices in such organisations that operate to preclude or discourage the reporting of suspected criminal abuse of children to State authorities; and*
- 3. whether changes to law or to practices, policies and protocols in such organisations are required to help prevent criminal abuse of children by personnel in such organisations and to deal with allegations of such abuse.*

In undertaking the inquiry, the Committee should be mindful of not encroaching upon the responsibilities of investigatory agencies or the courts in relation to particular cases or prejudicing the conduct or outcome of investigations or court proceedings.

The Committee is requested to report to the Parliament no later than 30 April 2013.

.....

To: Family and Community Development Committee
Parliament House

Only a Royal Commission will give you the answers.

"Abuse was not the failure of the system. It was the system". Sue Boyce

Reports of three national enquiries into the experiences of children in out-of-home care which have been undertaken in Australia over the last 17 years engage explicitly with history, making recommendations in relation to records, record keeping and memorials, in order history not be forgotten.

Projects have been put together to document the history of Forgotten Australians, improving their access to archival records, are central to the initiatives announced by the Federal Government in the wake of the Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants on 16 November 2009.

The various reports emphasise the importance of history for Forgotten Australians who 'don't have the mementoes of childhood that are taken for granted by most: photographs, school reports, and happy memories of birthdays, Christmas' etc.

Many children of yesteryear have come forward and told of their abuse at the hands of clergy members to the various state and federal governments sanctioned inquiries, still government sits back and does nothing.

In 2004 we saw the handing down of the 2004 "Forgotten Australians Report" which included the Indigenous, Child Migrants and the Non-indigenous

Throughout many of the Forgotten Australians testimonies on which the reports were based is finger pointing that existing histories present a far too rosy view of the past. Many policy analysts who have used history as a means of writing about the old situation, the accusation of slackness is directed primarily at historians, the profession which has by tradition claimed ownership of the past.

As children whilst in state care in a catholic orphanage we were not given: -

- Love
- Understanding
- Education

- Quality of life
- Basic Nutrition
- Goals
- Guidance

However, we did get in huge doses: -

- Beatings
- Torment
- Raped
- Sodomised
- Solitary confinement

The above was not spasmodic it was every day some child was getting tormented, bashed or raped.

“Because they could. “

The Catholic Church was the largest participant for the intake of children into its Institutions and orphanages in Australia in the twentieth century. This inquiry is asking of the sexual abuse within the Catholic Church and other institutions not under the state. However there are fears amongst many, how can an inquiry be had without the inclusion of those institutions which were and still today run by the State of Victoria.

What of the many who were physically abused under the care of the catholic church and like minded other organisations to the point where they had passed out only to be woken by a bucket of water, then the abuse would then continue. What of those children placed in solitary confinement, what of those who were and still are in mental institutions; who speaks for them.

Does this inquiry seek the answers for this kind of abuse, does it seek the truth for the large number of children that ended in mental institutions and are still there today.

We still do things today, society tells us, is outside of the normalities of a well adjusted and cared for child.

I was placed in a catholic institution run by nuns at a very early age, I was there until I was about 13 and half years old, it could have been longer.

There was never a day there when I could say I was happy I had to be constantly on the alert for fear of abuse by way of beatings being molested by nuns in the chapel area or just tormented because they could. Fear is a very powerful weapon; those who were suppose to care for you knew the power they had. Throughout my adult life, stability was not a luxury I knew, I could only blame the system I was raised in for my inabilities.

As adolescents we were always, between a rock and a hard place. Why? We were never shown life skills to survive in the real world, no values, never knowing how to start a conversation; still with many of us today, making friends with

others, trusting others, feeling comfortable in your own skin, never knowing how to care for ourselves, never knowing for a long time what services were available for those children who had nothing to start with, many of us are still too proud to get our Medicare card or even go on the dole even though we maybe homeless.

Where are many of these children, now adults today?

- Prisons
- Mental institutions
- Homeless
- Jobless

The state and federal governments has let them down, refusing to accept a duty of care.

"A spokesman for Attorney-General Robert Clark said the government started the inquiry following a recommendation last year from the ground-breaking Cummins inquiry, which did not recommend an inquiry into children in government care. He said the government has apologised to those who suffered in care and provided \$2 million each year to help victims deal with their trauma."

(<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/abused-orphans-take-fight-for-justice-to-un-20120805-23ny8.html#ixzz22ioNU8o>) 06/08/2012

Recommendation 6 from the forgotten Australians report might I suggest to the Family and Community Development Committee they read the Forgotten Australians report to ensure they know exactly what had taken place in so many institutions controlled by church and state.

"Recommendation 6.

8.125 That the Commonwealth Government establish and manage a national reparations fund for victims of institutional abuse in institutions and out-of-homecare settings and that:

the scheme be funded by contributions from the Commonwealth and State Governments and the Churches and agencies proportionately;

the Commonwealth have regard to the schemes already in operation in Canada, Ireland and Tasmania in the design and implementation of the above scheme;

a board be established to administer the scheme, consider claims and award monetary compensation;

the board, in determining claims, be satisfied that there was a 'reasonable likelihood' that the abuse occurred;

the board should have regard to whether legal redress has been pursued;

the processes established in assessing claims be non-adversarial and informal; and

compensation be provided for individuals who have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse while residing in these institutions or out-of-home care settings." (Forgotten Australians Report p 20 8.125)

I would also like to point out the funding the state government has put aside each year (\$2,000,000) falls way short of what is needed, approximately 110,000 children were placed into institutions and orphanages around the state many children left uneducated and when it was deemed they were old enough they were then put out into society not knowing what was expected of them, these children today are known as the **Forgotten Australians**.

Deprived of a chance to be someone, instead today we are known as the **"Forgotten Australlans"**.

I invite the committee to research the numbers on the demise of the Stolen Generation and equate them to the Forgotten Australians which did include indigenous, non-indigenous and child migrants, many were also stolen from their parents, death by suicide, homelessness, prisons, drug addiction, mental institutions, alcoholics and PEDOPHILES you will find the figures are very similar whilst also alarming.

Everyone has a Right to a Quality of Life

It is not just the catholic church this inquiry should be about it should also be that of the state, whilst this state government pontificates and judges the rights or wrongs of the various non state institutions I believe it cannot give a fair and just result at the end of this inquiry.

Only a ROYAL COMISSION can give a true account and answers to the end of **Child abuse** across this state.

"One of Australia's leading academics on royal commissions, Professor Scott Prasser of the Australian Catholic University, said royal commissions were not judicial inquiries, despite often being chaired by retired judges. They were "circuit breakers" needed when there were serious allegations raised in public, and concerns that existing institutions were unable to adequately deal with the allegations.

"They seek the truth," Professor Prasser said." The Herald Sun 07/08/2012 (<http://www.theherald.com.au/news/local/news/general/petition-call-for-royal-commission-into-church-sex-abuse/2644748.aspx?storypage=2>)

Let this state be the leader for a **Royal Commission** into child abuse and lets include those atrocities that happened to so many children in this state in the last century and still happening today.

Regards

Garry Harrison

A FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIAN