



Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs References Committee
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Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

My name is Wayne Isles, from the age of four to the age of sixteen I have been placed in a number of ward establishments due to being a neglected child and mental homes due to mental abuse and physical abuse.

The first home was **Royleston, state ward home Glebe** at the age of four years of age, the year was 1962, and as well in 1965 I spent time in **Royleston**.

North Ryde Psychiatric Centre childrens unit, in the year 1967 – 11th August, for trying to end my life at the age of 9 years, suicide attempts because of abuse from my step father. I was returned to **Royleston, Glebe – November 1967**.

State ward home Mittagong, Turner or Sutter Cottage, year 1968

Rydalmere Hospital, in adult ward 21-01-70, after seeing my sister indecently assaulted by my step father. I myself was indecently assaulted by a male patient at the hospital in the male toilets. **I was only twelve years of age with adult patients.**

Yasmar Boys Shelter 8/4/70, Ashfield – NSW.

Toombong special central school, year 1970 – Mittagong training school Mackellar

Yasmar Ashfield NSW boys shelter 25/8/71

Returned to **Royleston – Glebe NSW 8/9/71**

Berry Training Farm, Berry South Coast 1971 year 6/12/71

Callan Park and Gladesville Psychiatric hospitals 15/1/73

Metropolitan boys shelter 26/02/74

I would like to mention a few of the things that happened to me while I was a state ward and also make a few comments based on my experiences:

- Children should not ever be placed in a ward with adults in a psychiatric hospital and should always be supervised. At Rydalmere Psychiatric Hospital in 1971 I was placed in a ward with adult men and was sexually assaulted in a toilet block by another inmate.
- At Gladesville Hospital in 1973, I told a male nurse that I felt sick and wanted to vomit but he got angry with me and refused to let me go to the toilets and I had to swallow my own vomit.
- When placed in a secure unit at Gladesville, I was pushed and shoved into the showers by two male nurses.
- At Rozelle and Gladesville Psychiatric Hospitals, I was placed in adult wards while only 15 years of age. At Rydalmere Psychiatric Hospital I was placed in an adult ward when I was only 12 years of age.
- While in an adult psychiatric ward, another inmate told me that he had swallowed live ammunition. I then copied this when I was returned home and swallowed live bullets.
- I now have copies of the reports and psychiatric assessments carried out on me each time I was admitted to the various Psychiatric hospitals (from my DoCS file). These reports show that I was never found to have any serious mental illness (other than depression) and the majority of psychologists and psychiatrists could not explain my extreme behavior or suicide attempts. Only one psychologist's report stated that the behavior was only present when I was returned home. He wrote that he believed that something in the home environment was the reason for my behavior and he recommended that I not be returned to my family. I was then moved to another ward home and once again returned to live with my mother and abusive step father.
- At Toombong Special Central School Mittagong, an autistic boy was placed with all of the other children and was sexually abused. Austistic children should not be placed in the general school population.
- After suicide attempts at 9 years of age, I was never given any counseling or any ongoing support.
- After my sister was abused by my stepfather, he went to court but the judge was an old army buddy of his and so the case was dismissed.
- At age 4 while in Royleston I was assaulted by a staff member. I was hit across the hands with a ruler for sleep walking.
- At Royleston in Glebe, it was a common punishment for children to be locked in a cupboard under the stairs for a couple of hours at a time. This did not happen to me but I witnessed it on many occasions.
- At Royleston, an officer used to frighten the children by telling us that if we tried to run away, we could be murdered. He claimed that one of the children from the home tried to run away and was murdered in the park. I found out later that this was not true, that a child had been found dead on some vacant land near the home but the child was a local child and nothing to do with Royleston. This story had been used to terrorise us.

- Also at Royleston, we were forced to eat porridge that had weevils in it.
- It is important to remember that these things happened in recent history (ie the 1960's and 1970's).
- At Berry Training Farm in 1971, I was sexually assaulted by a group of boys in the hay shed on the property near the river. I don't believe that there was enough supervision of boys at that place.
- My file from DoCS contained many judgmental comments about my mother and it seemed that they had no understanding that she was being constantly bashed by my stepfather.
- Also in my DoCS file, the district officers observed that Jamieson (my stepfather) was aggressive and smelt of alcohol but they never looked any deeper. They never seemed to review the file to see that there was a pattern and that he had a history of assault. I now believe that my stepfather suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from being a prisoner of war at Changi in World War II.
- It seemed easier for the welfare to keep moving me from place to place rather than address the real problem which was the physical abuse from my step father. On many occasions, I went to school with bruises and other injuries but no one ever picked up that I was being bashed at home.
- As a child I had no rights. I was seen but not heard. DoCS put the blame on me for my behavior without ever asking what was going on at home. When the district officers would visit the home, they never took me aside to ask how things were going, my step father was always in the room.
- Agencies such as ARC and PEP need more funding to provide support to adults.
- There should have been support, counseling and follow up once I turned 18, especially since I had a history of suicide attempts. There was nothing at all available; I was dumped like a hot potato.

My brother Barry was also a state ward and he never got any support or counseling and died at the age of 32. By writing this submission, I also want to give him a voice. If it wasn't for my inner strength, I would not have survived this. I hope that my story gives other people hope. If this Inquiry does not learn from past mistakes, it is doomed to repeat them. No child should have experienced this in the past and no child should have to experience it in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Wayne Iles
12th February 2004

