

24<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Carol Adams

The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA A.C.T 2600

To Whom It May Concern,

**RE: Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care**

I was a State Ward most of my childhood (from age 2 to age 16).  
I was with foster parents and also in State Institutions.

I was lied to and abused; I didn't realize the extent of the deceptions or the risk I was put at until I was an adult. I will be as brief as possible.

At two my brother and I were made State Wards. We were separated and sent to different foster people. I could always remember the baby. I would tell people that I had had a baby. My foster parents would constantly tell me of my parents being in jail and told me I would follow.

Mr Bowman (I think that was his name) the Child Welfare Officer would call and believe everything said about me. I have spoken to the people who were the neighbours at the time and they all knew I was beaten and had also realised I was lied about.

They tried to tell the Department what was going on, but the Department didn't want to know.

I was then put into Bidura, there I was assaulted and lied to again. At Bidura there was a psychiatrist Margaret Sheehan - she is the only person I can recall being kind to me. She was the one who told me the baby I would talk about

There were people who tried to help me at times, but the Department caused them problems and threatened to charge them till they were forced to stop.

One of the worst things was, I was told my brother Barry had been killed in a road accident, and he was on a bike. I was even told he was killed on Durum St Carlton. Many years later I went to the Department to a Terry O'Mara to find out some health records. I asked him if he could give me details of where my brother was buried. He returned to the office, upset and called my friend into the office to be with me. He said my brother was not dead and I had another brother that no one had even bothered to tell me about. I cannot explain how devastated I was and angry that the Department was reaching out and causing me agony at that point in my life.

To this day I suffer the aftermath of The Child Welfare Department. The damage done to my back is visible in x-rays and I am in pain the majority of the time. My current health and quality of life (or lack of) is a direct result of the treatment metered out to me all those years ago.

This is only a brief skim of the things that happened to me in the care of the Department.

State Wards suffered the most as they had no family to complain to and no one to confront the staff. I would have to write a book to even begin to detail all the injustices that were commonplace in the institutions.

The treatment the Department metered out to the children had far reaching effects. My children suffered for the treatment I received at the hands of the Department, so two generations have been directly affected.

I can supply further information, names, dates and incidents if required.

Regards,

Carol Ann May  
Carol Adams