

my name is Rosalie Bridgland. I was born Rosalie Ryan on 12/6/1952 and I have 2 sisters one 8 months older and one 2 years younger. The first 5 years of my life was spent living with my paternal grandparents, my mother, my father who was an alcoholic, his mother who was also a very heavy drinker and an Aunt of the Ryans who lived in one of the bedrooms. Due to all the drinking my father did he was unable to hold down a job and he was very unhappy in his marriage. We were often ~~woken~~ woken at night and bundled into the next door neighbours home till the fighting & screaming and smashing furniture was over. This was a regular thing and during the day it was our Nanna who helped us out the window and into hiding as my father often came home through the day and was often brought home by the Police after all night drinking binges. It was frightening and our mother never seemed to be around much as she hated everyone of the Ryans and caused so much trouble & stress in their home. I don't know the sequence of events that led to us having to leave our grandparents home. My grandfather died, my grandmother became very ill with cancer so we could not stay there. My father had a cousin whom he was very close to, Aunty Joy, as she was always known to us. When the events at the Ryan household unfolded he contacted her after his father's death as he had inherited

quite a sum of money from his father, who was a wealthy man when he died. He wanted to ask her what he could do to look after his 3 children as his drinking was getting worse. He was living on the streets and he hated my mother and did not trust her. Aunty Jeff who is a nun in the Catholic Church suggested to him that he place us in a boarding school and pay the fees up front so that the 3 of us would be looked after till we finished school. This he did and my older sister & I went to St Joseph's Convent in Muttaheng. My younger sister stayed with my mother as she was too young to come with us. The nuns at the convent were warned about our mother that she was manipulative and money hungry & despite this she managed to trick the Mother Superior into handing over all of the money to her on the promise that she could buy a house & reunite her children with her. Of course this never happened and whilst Mother Regina was alive we were allowed to stay at the school as she felt so guilty at what she had done. However when she died of cancer when I was about 8 the arrangement died with her. Our mother dumped us in a home in Bowral and then left us with different people, relatives of relatives, anyone who would take us in. My older sister wrote to the Catholic Church at North Sydney

some years ago to ask them for information regarding this matter (for her own personal use). Of course she got a letter back "Thanking you dear for your letter but we can't help you dear, we don't know anything". This "error of judgement" made by an employee of the Catholic Church turned my life upside down and was to have serious and long term consequences that still affect my life today. Eventually my sisters and I were placed in an orphanage when I was 9 years old. We were left at St Catherine's Orphanage in Brooklyn by our mother. I never saw my father again. He came to the boarding school once or twice always drunk and I imagine when he found out what my mother had done he just gave up & left us to our mother. Life at the orphanage was hard, we were always starving hungry always cold and we saw little of our mother. We were placed every holiday with complete strangers and it was always some where different. I never understood why I was never asked back to any of these foster homes, one in particular where I got along very well with the 2 girls. It wasn't until I read my wardship file that I ^{discovered} I was wanted back but as the Catholic welfare did not co-ordinate with the state welfare this never happened. Six months after being at the orphanage my mother had not paid the money she agreed to so the Mother Superior there contacted the state welfare and with our mother's consent we were made wards of the state.

This was done as the state paid the Church to take care of us. I don't recall the number of foster homes I was sent to but many of these people had no intention of having a child for the holidays to give them some home comforts, and a taste of family life, some wanted house maids, someone to do the housework and watch the younger children it was often a relief to get back to the Orphanage. My oldest sister was sent for one Christmas holiday to a family who wanted a quiet child, the same age as their daughter, who was in need of the company, as she was dying of a brain tumor and confined to bed. She died some weeks later and my sister who had spent her holiday thus far reading to her and whatever else she could do was sent on to another foster home. These people were on the emergency list, they had missed out in getting a child for these Christmas holidays so it was not as if there was nowhere else for my sister to go. This was what the system was set up for, not with our best interests put first but to fill the needs of families and the Church was so grateful to these people. They never gave any thought to how difficult it was to arrive at complete strangers homes, especially Christmas and fit in and adjust to their ways. He just had to cope and put on a brave face which I did.

When my older sister left the Orphanage to stay on ~~at permanent~~ with the foster family she remained with till she married, my younger sister & I were very unhappy. There was never any understanding of the pain and loss that was felt when my sister left my life forever. I was called selfish because I cried, one day she was there, the next day she was gone. There was no warning that you were ~~losing~~ losing your sister, no period of adjustment and you were just expected to go on as if she had never existed. The same approach was used when my younger sister & I were sent for the Christmas holidays to a family with an older daughter. This girl was working and I was in sixth class and my sister in 4th class. We didn't like her or her parents but she was lonely as her 2 brothers had left home & were married and she was spoilt and always got what she wanted. We would find out just how self absorbed & ~~difficult~~ difficult she was later on.

As we were non state wards and the Orphanage only had a primary school it was evident that I would have to leave at the end of the year when I finished sixth class. Whilst we were playing in the back yard ^{one day} we were called by the sister supervising and without any prior warning these were the foster parents we had spent Christmas holidays with. We were asked right in front of them whether we would like to

~~We~~ go and stay with them on a permanent basis. As both my younger sister + I disliked them intensely we both hesitated as we did not want to live with them. They were an old and distant older couple whose own children were grown up, in fact they were already grandparents. When we hesitated the sister then told us that very few people would take 2 children and if we wanted to stay together this would be our only chance and the decision was made for us. Looking back this was a disaster in the making. I now understand that this couple took our hesitation at their offer ~~so~~ badly and we paid for it for the next miserable 2 years of our lives. The day we arrived there our mother rang us in the afternoon. Of course we had not seen her for some time and naturally we both became very upset + cried and asked her to come + get us. The phone was slammed down and we were taken into the lounge room and told that we would not be allowed to see our mother whilst we lived there as they were not going to put up with all this nonsense. Of course this made us cry even more, we both loved our mother we did not understand then that she was never going to make an effort to get us back and of course we did not know what terrible things she had already done to us, we believed everything she told us including

How much she loved us and her reasons for not coming to see us very often wherever we were. She was quite beautiful, always very well dressed and she was a fantasy as was all her lies but as children we did not understand this. She kept telling us that it wouldn't be long now before she bought a house and we would all be together again. We lived our whole childhood waiting for this to happen.

However that afternoon as we sat broken hearted at the thought of not seeing our mother again, this foster parent, this heinous man came in and belted the living playlights out of my sister + myself and I must have cried in front of either of them again. I did all my crying at night, in bed, except when he came to my bed, then he nearly suffocated me. As I shared a room with my sister. I didn't tell my sister about this till I was in my thirties. I was so surprised when she told me she had suspected something like that was going on, as he had done inappropriate things to both of us in front of his wife and he often stood stark naked where he knew I would see him. Their daughter Mary teased my younger sister to the point where it became cruel and then they humiliated her when the stress caused her to stutter very badly. When I tried to protect her it only made things worse so I felt helpless and had to watch and do

nothing which they enjoyed. I began to complain to the welfare about what was going on except for what he did for me. I was too afraid to say anything I knew they would not believe me, it was hard getting them to believe anything. The welfare officers would come to the school and in front of the whole class, the news would tell me "The welfare people are here to see you" and as the class sniggered I would be interviewed outside the room where one and all could see. It was humiliating as children were just as cruel then as they are now. The two years we spent with these people were just terrible, the only consolation was that my older sister lived with her foster parents in the same area and I was re-united with her at school as she went to St Felix's Bankstown where my sister + I were sent.

However things at the foster home got worse and I wanted as did my sister to leave.

I did not know that the welfare people were going back to these foster parents and telling them everything I complained about. I could hear them talking in bed about me and I used to put my fingers in my ears as it was dreadful. Circumstances fortunately changed things in this home. The three of them, Mother, Father + daughter went away (we stayed with one of their sons + daughter in law who were very kind to us) and on the way back they

Had a dreadful car accident in which he broke his neck and was in hospital for months. Having been brought up by the Catholic church I believed God had finally punished them, him in particular as he was flat on his back + could not move his head for months. By this time we no longer pretended to have any feelings for any of them and we did everything we could to not have to go + visit him in hospital. We no longer spoke to Mary or her mother and the tension in the house was unbearable. These people took us in for the money they received. Their daughter-in-law told me at the end that even she had spent time crying at the things she saw them do to us. When I read my file I was staggered at the total inaccurate accounts they gave of this 2 year period in this home. There was very little of our life documented, most of the documentation was forms requesting clothes, requests for money for everything we needed + not that it came as a surprise, things I never received. Arrangements were finally made for us to leave this misery and we were sent to stay with my older sister's foster parents son and his wife. Once again this was another disaster waiting to happen. This time this family was a young family with a toddler and a new born baby. Something was wrong with the baby as he screamed day + night. We were supposed to spend the

remainder of the Christmas holidays there and then ~~as usual when~~ the son who was kind and loving man and believed he was doing the right thing asked the welfare if we could ~~both~~ stay on a permanent basis. His wife went along with it only under pressure, she did not want us there except to do the housework & help with the children. Once again the welfare Dept had not thought this situation through. It was somewhere for us to stay and they didn't have to worry about us. We were just names to the Department, our needs were not important and anyone with any brains could see that a young woman, an unhappy woman with 2 small children was never going to be able to cope with 2 noble children, especially traumatised children who had already dealt with such cruelty and lack of love and emotional support all of our lives. We just stumbled from one crisis to another and already a great deal of problems were silently building up that would affect us for the rest of our lives. Everytime I hear in the media of an incident that happens in a school or in a street and counsellors are sent in droves to help the students and the parents if even if they were not there at the time I feel like screaming. It makes me so angry, we had nothing, no-one to talk to no safe place to go, no security at all. We

were powerless & helpless but that was of no concern to the welfare, they must have believed - we didn't have parents therefore we didn't have feelings and we didn't deserve anything but the basic needs.

I recently was told by an employee of the Department of ~~Human~~^{Community} Services "well what do you expect, they fed you, clothed you & put a roof over your head what more do you want." This was 2003 - and I've been told that things that were done back then and language that was used back then would not be acceptable today but it was at the time so don't be offended. Standards have changed from the sixties & seventies - well you could have fooled me! Just because they were considered acceptable didn't make it right!

I lost my younger sister at this stage in my life. This foster home broke down very quickly for her and she was dragged screaming from my arms and taken away. I still hear screaming to me, "don't let me go, don't let them take me", but they dragged her out of my arms and I never lived with her again and I did not see her again for some years. I was very depressed once she had gone, we'd been through so much together, at least we'd had each other now I was really alone. I developed agoraphobia a few days after I started at a new high school. I was ill with a urinary tract

Infection, I did not know what it was, and I wasn't able to tell anyone, I didn't know how so I put up with it and I was afraid of my class, they were so different from me confident, with parents I felt like a fish out of water. I had always had my older sister at school, she was my only friend so this was a daunting experience and I just couldn't cope. I didn't want to leave the house as when I did, my heart raced, and I felt like I was going to die. My foster mother then had to explain to me the facts of life as I was about 13 years old and no-one had explained to me what ~~was~~ happened to me just a week or so later. I was very sick (I was to find out when my son was 3 years old that I had a rare platelet disorder as he did) which explained why I was often very unwell at these times and especially the first time. No-one believed me and I was asked by this foster mother to stop pretending to be sick so I could get out of doing the housework. I couldn't rally myself much as I tried and so she rang the Welfare Dept and asked them to remove me immediately as ^{according to her} I was lazy, surly and wouldn't wash my clothes. I wasn't informed till the day when my bag was packed and I was taken away in a large black car. I had no idea where I was being taken to till I arrived at a large grey

depressing looking building which was Bidura, a remand centre for girls.

I was deeply distressed by the betrayal of my "foster father", who a few days before I was thrown out, went away for 3 weeks. I had become very attached to him, I had let my guard down and before he left he kissed me and told me he would miss me and I did likewise hugging him as a daughter would and his last words to me were "I'll see you in 3 weeks when I get back". Of course he knew I would not be there when he got back, all the arrangements had been put in place, except for the phone call to the Department - I didn't suspect a thing, I trusted him completely. Apparently he didn't have the stomach to tell me the truth, that I would never see him again and coupled with what went on in Bidura, what happened to me there, was to define my relationships with men for the rest of my life.

Bidura was my worst nightmare. When I arrived I was taken to a room where my bag containing everything I owned in my life was taken away and nothing was ever returned. Even the clothes I had on were taken from me as I was told to put on the stock clothing and given a toothbrush and a comb which I was told would be the only ones I would receive so don't lose them, carry them with you at all times.

Then my head was thrown over a basin and I was released, not that I had lice, this was the regular procedure and I was then told to go out in the yard. There was barbed wire all around the top of the fences little children from a babies section set apart from the centre but put in the same backyard with all these girls crying & wandering around. There was nothing to do all day and I was so frightened as there were many tough big girls wandering around picking on younger girls & myself. My young sister I found out had been sent here when she was taken from my arms and was bashed unconscious by 3 girls and had to be put in solitary confinement for her own safety. She was never the same after spending six weeks in this place. No-one could ever be. She turned into a hard tough person who didn't care about anyone else or what her actions cost other people (including my sister & myself when we all caught I esp. in later years.) For two days in this place I was tormented by a group of girls about a doctor. I didn't know what they were talking about when they kept telling me these awful stories of what this man was going to do to me. I thought they were just trying to scare me as I'd never seen these type of girls before, always swearing and fighting. I saw police coming and going bringing girls

to this place and we had to line up 3-4 times a day for roll call. There were no doors on the showers and I was totally terrified when I was given a bed in a separate building which had bars on the windows and the door was locked every night. I often saw a man with a torch walking around outside and I remember always trying to stay awake all night as some of the girls smoked and I was frightened that they would set fire to the building and we couldn't get out so I wanted to be sure I could bang and make enough noise to alert this man so I wouldn't die in this terrible place. I still am terrified of being in a room with a large number of people, I couldn't understand and in fact I stopped going to the movies when I was a teenager and working as I had severe panic attacks once the lights went out. My young sister loved the movies and was always asking me to go with her which I tried but I couldn't enjoy the films as I was fighting this panic all the time and so I stopped going. These panic attacks continued on all through my life even when my only son was young and I was a single parent taking him to the M.C.G. (I live in Melbourne now & have done for 25 years) to watch the Cricket & the Football I was always in a state of total panic with the crowds, thinking we

couldn't get out if something happened, we'd be crushed, but I loved him so much I went anyway as I didn't want to disappoint him in any way.

My day finally came when I was called in & told I had to see the doctor. I will never be able to explain how I felt at that moment. I was taken in and having never heard of all the diseases I was asked if I'd had (venereal diseases) I was unable to speak and when I was asked to lie on an examination table in just a hospital gown with an elderly man pushing my legs apart I just wanted to die. Now I understood what these girls were taunting me about and I remember as I walked out of that room feeling dirty and so horrified by these diseases I was told about and this doctor examining me to see if I had them and if I was a virgin I ran for my life and the effect of this experience is still haunting me to this day. I have to be given a drug when I have a pap smear or examination done that causes amnesia as these things cause me to feel so depressed for weeks that life is unbearable and I can't stand the pain of reliving that day. I wasn't always that way, I had learned to put up a front and pretended that anything that scared me I could handle and I blocked out all the memories and the fear that went

along with them over my teenage years till I had completely wiped out every memory, unfortunately I wasn't able to wipe out the depression and panic attacks and anxiety that went along with everything I seemed to do. I was afraid to be alone, I had never been alone till I was 15, I had lived all my years of my childhood with people around me telling me what to do and when to do it so when I was old enough to leave school I entered a world I didn't know and didn't understand. None of what happened to me in Bidura is in my Wardship file. There is the date I was sent there and the date I left. There is one page of an interview with a welfare officer about my future yet that says I was seen on ~~several~~ occasion since her arrival at Bidura on the 16.5.66. The number at the top of the page has been changed written over by pen the last 3 numbers to keep the sequence of pages in order. Nothing about the doctor or anything else is there and it is my belief that my file has been tampered with to remove any unpleasant or distressing events for want of better words. I left Bidura and was taken to King Edward Girls Home in Newcastle. Once again I was not told where I was going and I too had now changed. I was filled with anger at the treatment I received whilst at Bidura and I couldn't have cared less

anyone what was to happen to me. I was no longer timid and bending over backwards to please everyone so they would like me. I'd learnt very quickly in Belara what was needed to survive in this system and you had to be tough and aggressive and so that's what I became. Not for long though, they knocked that out of me in King Edward. Once again emotions were banned, disappointments, unhappy events, well these type of things never happened as far as the Matron that ran the place decided. I recall spending one holiday for 2 weeks with my mother & my younger sister whilst I was in this place. This was the first time since I was 5 years old that I would live with my mother & one of my sisters. I was so happy and I loved being with my mother. I cried so much when I had to go back. I wanted those 2 weeks to last forever. I had not ~~been~~ seen my younger sister since we were separated at our last foster home and I wouldn't see her again for some time. My mother promised me she would have me for the next holidays (2 weeks again). I was so excited and could barely get through each day as they seemed so long and time seemed to slow down as if to make me wait even longer. Two days before we were to go on holidays the Matron called me in to the dining room and told me with no much pleasure that I would not be going away for the holidays, let alone

going back to stay with my mother, she had sent a telegram to say she couldn't take me and so I spent the next 2 weeks in the home alone as I was told no one would take me on such short notice. I was so glad of that I didn't care about staying on my own I was so brokenhearted I don't even remember those 2 weeks what I did - I was put to work helping the staff do all the cleaning jobs that were done each holiday, but I really don't remember as all I could think about was my mother. I think that is why I get very anxious when good things are about to happen to me, I'm always thinking something will happen to spoil things & very often they do which is life, but I'd rather not get excited about anything even now and I am 52. I was to have another terrible disappointment due to the incompetence of the Welfare Dept whilst at King Edward. This home was in Newcastle so it was impossible for me to see my sisters as they were in Sydney. The Dept never made any effort to keep the bonds between siblings alive. When I arrived at King Edward I met a girl called Lesley and she & I were best friends from day one. It was the strong friendships that got one through the rough times in these institutions and she was like a sister to me. We were inseparable. A lady used to visit me, she was a relative of the foster parents my sister & I lived with for that short time. She was a kind young woman

who worked & lived in Newcastle. We got on really well & she would come & take me out for the day every month or so. I must have talked about Lesley all the time as she picked me up one day and said she had a surprise for me. She had organised for me to spend the Christmas holidays that year with her mother & father & her young sister. Her young sister was born very late and was the same age as myself about 1/4. Once again I was very excited as I would be able to see my older sister whose foster parents son was married to this girl's ^{older} sister. I was picked up another day by my friend who told me she had another surprise for me. She told me that she could see how close I was to Lesley and that all had been arranged with the Department & Lesley was coming on holidays with me to her parents home in Sydney. Well I was so happy and when I told Lesley I remember we danced around together holding hands, we were so excited. A few days before the Christmas holidays we were called into the dining room to be told who we would be staying with for the holidays. This was how it was done for each holiday. Your last name would be read out and then the name of the family. My last name began with an R & Lesley's came after me so when it got to my name I was horrified as I was placed with a Hungarian family and Lesley's name was read out & she was to go with my friend's family. I burst out crying and without

Thinking blurted out to the Matron, that's a mistake, Lesley & I are going together. I was told to stop crying, nothing could be done now & I would have to accept it the way it was.

Four weeks into the holiday and 2 days after I'd broken my leg, I had plaster from the top of my thigh to the start of my toes and was in bed I had a phone call from Lesley who was very excited and told me her good news. She & my friend's sister got along so well she told me that she had been asked to stay on and be fostered permanently so she would not be coming back to King Edward ever. I was absolutely devastated and cried and when my friend got on the phone she told me I was being selfish and should be happy for Lesley and hung up. I never saw either of them again. I was happy for Lesley but once again the pain of losing my friend overwhelmed me but I had to put it behind me as emotions were not allowed.

I hated King Edward and the thought of not having my best friend to get through another year completely broke my heart. It was to be some 36 years later before I learned that the Dept had me listed as living at Bidura and they had placed me with this family I learnt that from my file, not that it was written down that way, I worked my way back and just happened to see that note. These mistakes were common, the files are something to behold, they are inaccurate & sloppy, they make me think of the saying: never at the

truth get in the way of a good story". as some of the stuff that is in my file are just "nice stories, it never happened. They often confused you with another child I'm sure of that.

My only triumph in my childhood was passing my school certificate in year 10. Despite all the traumas and in spite of the Welfare I did remarkably well. We had to go to an outside school where of course the girls treated us (as soon as you were asked where you lived and you muttered Dorly Street) that was it. We were called whores & sluts and no-one would have anything to do with us. We sat together at lunch time & morning break as "home girls" and ~~we~~ sat alone in my classrooms as I was the only girl in year 10. I was always a year younger than my classmates as I began school when I was 4 - to keep my oldest sister company and because there was no-one to look after me at my grand parents place. I don't know why my mother didn't look after me so I was sent along as my sister was very shy and I was to keep her company.

Despite having to contend with a broken leg in plaster for 3 months and having to do all the rehabilitation work myself, I walked around the courtyard for hours pushing myself through the pain to hold my leg up. The Department noted in my file on all occasions that I suffered no inconvenience with a broken leg and needed no extra help! No one in my class would carry my school bag for me so I was always in trouble for being late. I had to throw my case up & down 2 flights of steps and slide down my outside ~~staircase~~ (somehow I managed) but it was very hard not doing a friend's ~~work~~.

The fact that Mabron Wallis says in my file that I passed with more than a great deal of help and a lot of effort from them makes me want to vomit. That was my effort, you couldn't get a replacement biro or pencil for the term (or anything else) if you misplaced them so I often had to remember school-work & rush to write it down after school with Lesley's pen. We had very little privacy at King Edward. By that time in the late 60's we at least had ~~the~~ doors on the showers but we were not allowed to have our own supply of sanitary items. They were locked in the cupboard and we were only allowed a certain number a day, and when we wanted one we had to ask a staff member and wait till she unlocked the cupboard and gave us one often in front of other children even the young primary children. Because of my bleeding disorder I had very heavy periods and yet I was not allowed to use any more than the allocated amount. I was told I was wasting them so for 18 months I had to stuff toilet paper, lots of it down my undies especially at school. We were not given any for school, and I was far too embarrassed to ask the nurse for help. It was so uncomfortable and I would end up being so sore & chapped it nearly drove me mad. The same thing applied to ~~to~~ my toes. To stop us getting Tinea (Athlete's Foot) we had to all wash our feet in a bath before we got into the showers, that was exactly the way to spread it

and I would (after contacting it a few months after I arrived) spend nights tearing my feet & toes to ~~pieces~~ pieces, they were so raw & bloody at times, I could barely walk on them and the constant burning & itching was terrible. It took over 9 months to get rid of it with medical treatment when I left the home & finally got up the nerve to ask a doctor what it was.

It was the same with my tonsils. I suffered so many severe attacks of tonsillitis throughout my childhood that were left untreated by the time I was 17 they had to be gouged out they were so rotten. I had to have 28 stitches in my throat and was in hospital for weeks as I was so ill after the surgery. The same applied with my appendix. I had to have it out that same year as I was often sick after eating and it was not the Welfare Dept that looked after me, it was the couple I worked for. They picked up on both those problems when I was at work and as they were very kind people and my employer's wife (they owned & worked the business) thought of me as the child she could never have they put me in a very expensive private hospital and paid all the bills. I didn't of course know that at ~~the~~ the time. There is not one account in my file of having tonsillitis even though I would tell whoever I was with at the time my throat was sore or I had a stomach ache no one believed me as usual. When I began work I had no clothes. The Child Welfare Dept did not issue us with any money or anything for that matter to

help me get a job. Once again it was my employer who went out & bought me 3 outfits to wear to work, I had one old dress when I left the home and very little else. As the Welfare Dept did not check on my mother very closely, even though they knew what she was like, she took most of my wages and all my savings eventually as well. I lived with her in a boardinghouse. I had a dark room with a bed, a wardrobe and a chest of drawers to live in. The Dept thought that was quite adequate but my employer was horrified when she saw it so she took me to live in her beautiful home till I married which was some months later. The Welfare Dept had my young sister & I living with our mother for years. I lived with her for a few months and my young sister never lived with her, they actually had us all living together in a bed-sitter with one bed!

There is a lot more I could write in this submission but a lot of the cruelty by the nuns & the ~~Departmental~~ Departmental staff will be written about by others I'm sure. I went through having to eat my own vomit when I was 2 years old & placed in Waverley Babies Home in Sydney. I would be made sit at the table every lunch time and I don't why I always vomited my lunch back up but I had to sit there for hours till I'd eaten it. I had never been away from my grandparents home till my mother put me in there because she was sick with her 3rd pregnancy. I was very

frightened so perhaps that's why. I have tried to show more of the emotional horror & trauma that I went through as did my sisters and many other children. It affected us all very very differently but no less painful. My whole world fell apart when I became pregnant with my son. That's when all the emotional trauma I went through really began to have its effect on me. I suffered so severely from panic attacks & anxiety that I had to seek help from a Psychiatrist. I had no idea what was happening to me. I wanted to have my tubes tied when I was 18 years old but no doctor would do it. I didn't even want to have children not because I didn't love children but I was always afraid if I was left on my own I wouldn't be able to look after them and I could never have put a child of mine in an institution, or not look after them myself. I have been on my own with my son for 17 years. I am unable to maintain a relationship with a man I would never understand why with both my marriages to good kind caring men I fell into the worst depressions and had to leave for my sanity. I've never felt depression like that since my 2nd husband left and I can't bear the thought of ever being with a man again. I have no feelings for them. They are like objects to me and I choose my 2nd husband because if I did have a child he had all the qualities I wanted my child's ~~father~~ to have. He has been and is a wonderful father & we have remained friends something people don't understand as he left me for someone else. But where there is no love there can be no hate and I really like him, not love

I wanted to be a teacher, a primary school teacher. In an interview at Bidwa I told the welfare officer who came to see me I wanted to be a teacher and I was quoted as "being rather unusual in that she has ambition to finish her schooling and take up teaching as a career. I had good potential" unquote. Well because there was no help so I could stay on at school I didn't become a teacher and by the time I had my son I was 26 years old and then became so ill I could never return to school. There was no time or money to do anything for yourself whilst you were single. Every cent was spent on taking care of yourself, putting a roof over your head and of course I looked after my mother for 30 years because I desperately wanted to please her so she would love me. Of course nothing was ever good enough and at 45 years of age I gave up trying finally realising that the fantasy mother in my mind never existed. Much the same happened with my younger sister - I was never able to re-connect with her as a sister, she was so different and she also had a terrible lot of emotional problems. I didn't reconnect with my older sister till I had my son even though we saw each other and kept in touch as much as we could as she married & had her first child at 19 and moved to Newcastle. I had to get to know her all over again, we were strangers but we love each other very much and it was wonderful to have her in my life again and we are a close knit family these days.

The last thing I would like to mention in my submission is the terrible mess the Child Welfare Department made of our trust fund. My oldest sister Charmaine Ryan will be telling this matter in much greater detail so I would like to cross reference this with her submission as she does not have as much to write about. I never got a letter from the Department (none of us did) to even tell me I had money in a trust fund and if it had not been for my sister's foster mother none of us would have received a penny. I didn't know about the trust fund till I was about 18 years old & I found out from my younger sister. The money was from the divorce settlement ordered by the Supreme Court Matrimonial Division when my parents divorced. It was my father's money and it was to be placed in a trust fund and invested till we were 21 years old. My mother was not allowed to be a trustee but there were to be 2 trustees and my mother would have approval. As far as I have been able to work out through Mr. T. Meader of the Dept of Social Services in the last 18 months the Dept set up a legal action file to get another trustee as my mother in her usual fashion would not approve the public trustee. Without the Welfare knowing she got her hands on the money which was being held by my grandfather's solicitors Murphy & Malone (known now as Hunt & Hunt) and placed it with Dawson & Dawson who were struck off the Registrar shortly after my younger

Sister received her money.

I cannot understand how the Child Welfare Dept lost the plot and cost us many years of money as the solicitors used the money & did not invest it till my ^{last} sister was 17 years old.

That is when I spoke to the girl in D.O.C.s trying to find out if Jerry had any information for me about tracking down what went wrong. She told me the Dept had no further information for me and when I asked her if that was it, (I am furious about this matter) that's when she told me about having a roof over my head etc. ~~so~~ I should be grateful for that and I'm just supposed to forget about the trust fund as if it is of no importance. It is of great importance to me and I will be pursuing this matter right till the end, as I will be the Catholic Church's debtor. I hope I have been able to give some insight into the possible emotional problems that being "in care" caused me. I still suffer from them, I find it very hard to do things for myself eg, spending money on myself even for the necessities, I feel as if I am being selfish, I'm happy to spend it on everyone else but not myself, and other things I've spoken of. There are scars that will remain with me for the rest of my life. We have received nothing from the Welfare Dept, I didn't even receive a letter to inform me that I was no longer a state ward, I don't think they could be bothered. All I can say to ~~them~~, the Welfare Dept & the Catholic Welfare is "Thanks for nothing but the terrible price we paid for care from you. It was & still is a nightmare."

over/

The Child Welfare Dept + Catholic Welfare stole our childhood, breached their duty of care in taking care of our money + trust fund which shows just how indifferent they were to our future. They destroyed any semblance of self esteem, dignity and feelings of self value. They used us as a commodity caring more about foster parents needs than ours. Their screening process was limited to the accommodation these people could provide + little else.

They demeaned every ounce of emotional + physical pain + suffering we endured by completely ignoring it. They turned me into a robot with an utterly confused mass of hidden emotions that were to explode later on in my life to the point where I was in and out of Psychiatric hospitals for years the cost of which I had to pay for myself. What happened to civil rights civil liberties the rights of children. They didn't walk over them or trample on them, they drove a tank over them and despite them saying so it was not acceptable and it was not right.

My sister + I were used as subjects in a social work student project being undertaken by the Dept of Social Welfare in conjunction with the Catholic Welfare Bureau, I had to find this out when I read my file. How dare they. I have had to walk away from writing this submission on many occasions as I've become so angry I've been shaking with anger + disgust. Civil rights, civil liberties I don't think so?

I would like to add this information on to my submission which I wrote earlier. My older sister was going to write about this matter but due to illness in her family she has not had the time to do so & did not have the following information.

On the 30th May 1962 our parents were divorced. My father was an alcoholic and our mother was mentally unwell then and has been all of her life. She was unable to look after the 3 children of the marriage and she was very interested in money and had by this time already taken the money that my father paid to St Joseph's Convent in Miltapong (see earlier pages). The Supreme Court Matrimonial Causes Jurisdiction ordered that the sum of ~~2~~ 2401 pounds 11 shillings and 8 pence be placed in trust for his 3 children till we each reached 21 years of age. Copy of Supreme Court Order enclosed.

It appears that the money was sent to Murphy & Maloney who were our Grandfather's solicitors and nothing was done with this money so it appears until 23 February 1965 when a letter was sent by the Welfare Dept to Murphy & Maloney (now known as Hunt & Hunt) this change of name occurred some months ago) to inform them that as of the 30th November 1961 we were admitted to State control (see enclosed letter). They ask Murphy & Maloney to give them any information re this money as our Mother Mrs Nora Ripan would not discuss the matter with them but she gave them the name of the firm and a name Mr. Mossesly who may have had knowledge of this matter.

On the 26th March 1965 The Welfare Dept wrote to the Public Trustee as our mother had asked that the Public Trustee be the sole trustee of the fund. Our mother hated the Ryan family almost as much as she hated our father and would not have anything to do with our uncles (2 of whom were Executors of their fathers, our grandfathers) Mr. P.D. Ryan's will. This hatred and mistrust ~~encompassed~~ was directed at anyone at all that had any connection to the Ryan family.

The letter (also enclosed) states to the Public Trustee that a copy of Murphy & Maloney's reply (which I do not have a copy of) together with the Order made by the Supreme Court were attached. The Welfare Dept, Director Mr. A.C. Thomas asks whether the Public Trustee would consider acting as Joint Trustee with the solicitors (Murphy & Maloney). On the 10th June 1965 Mr. Thomas wrote to Murphy & Maloney referring to ~~his~~ ^{their} letter of the 26th Feb 1965 regarding the estate of the late P.D. Ryan (our grandfather). They advised Murphy & Maloney that the facts were referred to the Public Trustee and they were prepared to consider accepting appointment and that in the circumstances Mrs. Nora Ryan (our mother) was being interviewed & her views sought. (copy of letter enclosed)

Also on the 10th June 1965, the S.D.O. of Butwood asks in a memo to someone in the office to interview our mother at her address at 59 Kentworth Street, Strathfield (our mother never owned her own home and rented privately & moved often) and have her sign the attached statement, if she is agreeable to the Public Trustee administering

The fund, signature to be witnessed. (Copy of memo enclosed).

As there is no date on the following letter to Murphy & Maloney from Mr. Thomas of the Welfare Dept I can only assume it was written sometime between 10th June 1965 & the 23rd Sept 1965.

This letter states that our mother would not agree to the Public Trustee being appointed as sole Trustee and that she would be contacting Murphy & Maloney re this fund. Mr. Thomas also asks if Murphy & Maloney had been contacted by Mrs. Ryan and what was the present position in this matter. (Copy enclosed)

On the 23rd Sept 1965 the S.D.O. Burnwood advises (on what appears to be an in house memo) that reference is made to Mr. Bergin's report of 20th August 1965 (which I do not have a copy of).

It states that Mrs. Ryan should be interviewed and asked what action she intends to take regarding the trusteeship of the fund. Murphy & Maloney were prepared to act as trustees if Mrs. Ryan would nominate another trustee. Murphy & Maloney's letter of the 15th September 1965 states that Mrs. Ryan has not been in touch with them.

She should be asked the names of the persons she intends to nominate as trustees of the fund.

Legal Action File Reference. (Copy enclosed.)

At this point it is obvious that our mother was not going to name any trustee's to administer the fund. She trusted no-one especially the Solicitor's of the Ryan's and the Welfare Dept. After speaking to a Mr. Terry Meader at Dept of Community Services) in the last 12 months we established that the

Legal Action File, something he had never heard of nor had their legal Department whom he checked this out with, was most likely some action taken by the Welfare Dept to have the naming of Trustees taken out of our mother's hands. I rang Murphy & Maloney myself but had no luck. Mr. Meader then had D.O.C.s solicitors write to Murphy & Maloney but they replied that they did not have the money back then & could not help. This of course does not concur with the letters enclosed. They of course have not yet been advised that their are copies of this matter & they were involved.

The Court Order for this Trust was made on 30th May 1962. The first letter written to Murphy & Maloney was on the 23rd February 1965.

Where was the money that was supposedly being held "in trust" by Murphy & Maloney at this time. They at no stage deny having the money and even suggested they would be happy to act as a trustee?

Nothing was done about our money from the 23rd Sept 1965 by the Child Welfare Dept until the 25th January 1967, (according to my file) - when Mr. Thomas of the Welfare Dept writes to the Crown Solicitors referring to his letter of the 19th September 1966, almost a year later, (a copy of which I do not have) asking the Crown Solicitors whether they would act for the Dept in this matter. (Copy enclosed). From the 9th November 1967 till the last letter in my file regarding the Crown Solicitors dated 1st July 1971 there are 9 letters sent to the Crown Solicitors asking

what the position of the Legal Action File is. It appears that the Crown Solicitors who had the Legal Action File, which was never returned to the Child Welfare Dept (to this day) did nothing regarding this matter. I have copies of these letters. My mother applies for my restoration to her in 1968 when I was 16 years old and a letter was sent to her stating that as from the 2nd February 1968 I was to be restored to her care but ~~not~~ discharged from Wardship.

(Copy enclosed)

In July 1968 an in house memo states that as both myself + my younger sister were now restored to our mother it is considered that we could now be discharged from Wardship. However as legal action is progressing in this case + is being dealt with by the Crown Solicitors a Mr. Madden of the Crown Solicitors states that at this stage it would be unwise for the girls to be absolutely discharged. (Copy enclosed).

When I was 17 years old a report form was written regarding once again my discharge from wardship but there is no further information regarding the Legal Action File which is still with the Crown Solicitors. On the 5th January 1970 the solicitors office was contacted again re the Legal Action File and ex Mr Madden states that he has been on leave and that he would now look into the matter + phone back. (Copy enclosed) Nothing was done as usual and the ~~the~~ Director of the Welfare Dept writes on the

23rd October 1970 a lengthy letter to the Crown Solicitors outlining the position of ~~the~~ myself + my 2 sisters and whether our interests in the Trust Fund would be protected if Guardianship was transferred to our Mother. (Copy enclosed).

Once again nothing is heard from the Crown Solicitors despite more letters being sent to them asking for an answer to the above letter.

On the 1st July 1971 Mr. Madden of the Crown Solicitors was contacted on behalf of myself + my 2 sisters by the Welfare Dept to see if there was any possibility of Legal Action being finalised before our younger sister turned 18 years old. (Copy enclosed).

That is the last entry on my file. Neither myself nor my 2 sisters were ever written to and told that we even had a trust fund. At no stage did any of us receive a letter informing us that we were no longer state wards.

Whilst all of the above was going on over the years my elder sister was allowed 4 visits from our mother a year and over this time she constantly told my sister's Foster mother "that her children had money".

When my sister was 17 in 1968 her Foster mother decided to take her to the Solicitors office where our money was being held obviously our Mother told her where the money was. The Money was in the hands of Lawson + Lawson who upon receiving a visit from my sister + Foster mother

confessed that they had had the money for about 8 years & had "forgotten" to invest it. How could this have happened. All the years of dealing with the Crown Solicitors were a complete waste of time as it is quite obvious that the Child Welfare Dept had no idea where our money was. How did our mother once again get her hands on our money. Dawson + Dawson were using our money for themselves and they finally put the money in The Newcastle Building Society after my sister's visit. They were subsequently struck off the Registrar for fraud (I believe)

As each of us turned 21 altogether from the original £2401.11.8 pence we received about \$5,500 dollars. This money was supposed to be invested in 1962, and it was not invested or put in a bank account until 1968, and only because of my older sister.

My father served this country in the Army in World War 2. He was stationed in New Guinea and was on the Kokoda Trail. He lost most of his stomach due to his time there and drank heavily after his return. This was his money and he wanted it looked after for us till we were 21 years old. I never knew my father, only vague memories of him before I was 5 years old. I did not know that he had died at age 55 till 6 months after. I was 32 weeks pregnant & had just arrived in Melbourne

with my husband due to us moving because
his job

I was unable to attend his funeral as I
did not even know there was one and
that 6 months had passed anyway.

It makes me sick to think that my father
served his country and yet the government
of the day treated his 3 children with
such little regard for our well being
and could not even look after his money.
Was that such a big thing to ask after
all he gave for this country?

I cannot believe that the Crown Solicitors
took such little interest in what should
have been a fairly straight forward legal
case, and that the Child Welfare Dept did not
from the first letter they wrote to Murphy
& Maloney establish the whereabouts of the
money so they could keep tabs on it & make
sure as our Legal Guardians that our
mother could not interfere in this trust
fund which she obviously did, just as she
was allowed to walk away with our
boarding fees paid by our father in good
faith to the Catholic Church. We were let
down by both the Catholic Church & the State
Government and the cost to myself & my 2
sisters of both these injustices cannot be
counted in either emotional terms or monetary
value.

I wanted to be a teacher, I was considered an
intellect & mature girl when I was interviewed
in Bidara and it was noted that I was unusual

because of this. I wanted to go on at school till year 12, however that meant I would have to live in an institution for another 2 years and contrary to my file which states that I could not cope with the strain of more school it was the thought of being imprisoned for another 2 years that I could not bear.

So I have no career, I still suffer emotionally from the dreadful things I endured "in care" and I will grow old alone as I have been for the past 17 years. Because of what happened to me I cannot maintain a relationship with a man and cannot even share a home with one, even though I have died on two occasions with 2 miscarriages. No amount of medical assistance of which I have been through many years of help. I am still separated from my sisters who live in N.S.W. I live in Melbourne as this is where my only child was born so this is home. I have a Government Home Loan which was organised for me by a Doctor & a social worker who thought they were helping me never knowing they were placing me in a situation where I live below the poverty line paying a mortgage which is now almost double what I borrowed plus I get no rent assistance and I have to pay rates and all the expenses of so called owning a unit. I have lost all my money that I used to purchase this unit after my divorce so once again I feel the Government has influenced my life just as they did when I was a child. There was no help then and there is no help now. However I would like to point out that I have

lived my life without dwelling on my childhood. I worked all the time, sometimes 2 jobs & have never received a sole payment in my life. I put all these years away and even though I did not know what I was doing in a world I did not understand I bluffed my way through with the help of kind strangers. These people bought me clothes to wear to work as I had none when I left King Edward. They paid hospital bills for me to have surgery in private hospitals and even took me in to their home till I got married. The Child Welfare Dept never helped in any way. They did not ask me how much money my mother was taking from me only how much I earned and they asked my mother that. I earned \$14.50 and my mother took \$10 a week from me. She also took my \$20 savings, making me feel responsible for her & her happiness. I took care of her for 30 years. I was her mother & she was very clever in making me feel that my father's failings were somehow my fault, and that her life had been made miserable because of him and the three of us.

I was 46 years old before I realised that she had in fact never loved me or my sisters and she used us and expected us to take care of her. I no longer have any contact with her as she is very debilitating to be around and I cannot forgive her for what she did to us as children, taking our money & leaving us in the care of the Church & the Government.