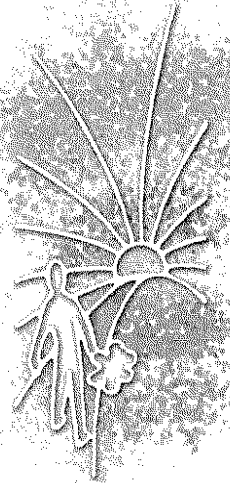


26<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs  
References Committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra . ACT. 2600.



Despite what  
you feel...  
You can heal.

I have enclosed my story for your Committee enquire I apologise its late, I only came upon it and the timing was right in my life today, is just that to be able to do this for myself. So please respect this as a acknowledgement of importances this has been for me, as a huge part of my healing Journey. to be able to put back the "Shame" where it needs to go! For me Now to be able to move on, in my own empowerment of who I am today, and the faith and Blessings I've received by walking through all this with other "SURVIVORS" today doing there Healing Journey, So that today I can loudly say "I am A Survivor" in every sense of the word, Being Functioning, Being Strong Being responsible and accountable, and all this I achieved myself!

Blessings

Alison Ewens.

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My story in my own words, said my own way? Do you even understand the enormous challenging this is for me to do, to speak out my anxiety of my childhood spent in Homes, Fostering situation as a child. Do you even care or understand the whole reasoning behind the need that I have today to sit and writing this from a healed place inside me, that needs to voice and have the truth come out for the first time and to be relieved of the burden in carrying this pain and hurt and suffering and grief and deep sorrow impacted upon me, through the treatment in these instructional establishments of being a State Ward not having the sense of belonging or security or identity of any family. I have been told to just SHUT UP! Speak only when you are spoken to! This is what you will answer! Even to be able to tell my story of my life, through the eyes of a STATE WARD child, my way. The impact this has had on my well being as a person, has longed been carried as a social stigma against me. To be able to write in a clear enough way to have some depth of meaning, to have a comprehension of what events during childhood, that shaped my view of a living Hell and closed me down health wise, long after the years of being locked in and put away from the world why because I had no family, my family abandoned me and I was left an orphan, first in a catholic orphanage then when there was no support from my family at all, I became in the custodial of the Governments problem to look after me to which they placed me in foster care, that was great until after 9 years of looking after us they were told they couldn't adopt us even though they had been promised when they chose us out of the catholic orphanage there seem we were caught up in the bureaucratic ness of it all, that caused real problems in that family against my brother and I and the threats because they had no rights in keeping us to which caused much bitterness and sadness and upheaval that ended in ruin because trust had been broken and their fight to keep us after 7 years had failed them and they were prepared to have the hurt on them if my parents came back in to collect us, and so all negotiation between all parties broken down and once again we my brother and I suffered the consequences in a bad way, because of insecurities from them and felt by us, and as children we can only react to what going on before us. Yet no-one ever gave us a second thought or asked or counselled us, I wasn't worth that treatment of knowing anything, always shut out, I was only a child a minor who had no rights no voice no expression and who was in a state of shock after trying to piece together what and where I fitted into this world and why I was being sent to then a institution called Biruda in the first place. After having been picked up from a foster home in which I had just spent the last 9 years belonging to, my brother and I. This foster home also had it's trouble for me because it was a place I never had as a permanent sense of a home because the people looking after me always kept, reminding us that we were there's and that we were only on loan can you imagine the insecurities this set up in an already insecure child who was desperately trying hard to fit into this family, and wanted to belong and loved. To experience this family before me and feeling the cause of the family breakdown due to the husband cutting off because he could not adopt us permanently, after such a long time in their care to be told, they were always able to adopt us out after leaving this orphanage (we were from a family of seven children my older sisters were sent off to St Joseph Home with my bigger brother and we were left to go to St Anthony's Children home in Croydon,) were I was with my two younger brothers trying hard to come to terms with being spilt and separated from my family which had a huge trauma on me, so much so that I refused to eat and demanded my family come to me before I would eat again which is what my older sisters now remember back about trying to keep us all together from a hopeless situation, we were all put in. Then along comes my foster parents, who then took my

brother and myself and left my younger brother to be adopted by other people wanting him, and yes he was adopted out name and all, which fascinated me years later as to why he got the okay and we didn't. So many questions left unanswered that seemed so unfair and unjust. The next thing I knew we were then living in fostering care which did not have a good bases right from the start of lies and misrepresentation from there point of view which effected both of us on a emotional level and caused huge instability levels on both sides which then escalated and poison the whole structure of being in that family, which both myself and my brother had to endured as a result of fostering gone wrong where this had broken down and we were all living in fear, fear of what they said was my real family coming to take us at anytime, which left us feeling very vulnerable and we as children mirrored that and all the other senses of trouble that came in that feeling of living in a unsettled situtation that kept escalating as a result of there unhappiness of the situation and where it stood in fighting the Government to be able to keep us, He the foster Father went to many Government Heads to try and fight to have it all over turned and have us adopted, it all seemed now knowing the events just so out of hand and unfair to have had to cop, though we as children had to pick up the pieces and fight for survival in what had become harder and harder situation to follow for a child that I was then burden with the responsibility of looking after my brother and myself , were things were breaking down and the crack were beginning to show, The foster father then started to physical use violence on us both, emotionally abusing authority over us constantly until it got bad enough that we both ran away at different times I also got sexual abused by a friend of the family, to then not be believed, that I was the slut at the age of 9 years old with feeling no more protection or trust left at home I then, constantly began to seek getting in trouble at school and got label there as uncontrollable and then expelled for all attention seeking behaviours, why because I needed protection and help and couldn't get it at home. After many interviews at different schools It was over, one day just like that the way I had come into that home. I remember having a interview with the department heads at the time to case study what was happening, as a child I knew this Trouble again a threat that was in front of me, so I just shut up in fear again, and told him I wanted to leave I didn't feel safe anymore with either of the way myself or my brother was being treated by them. With this decision made by me it was to be that we were collected to be taken elsewhere, that elsewhere was out of the fire into the frying pan, I was headed for Birdura in Glebe with my brother in the car it was a stony cold trip away from where I had known and spent the last 9 years and still I wasn't even sure to where we were heading though anything had to be better for us than what we had been through living yet what we had just left was great in so far as they were well off people, we went to the best schools I knew that, with them, yet apart of me was wondering if it all could have been different had truth been explained to all parties involved with both fostering parents knowing that we were only temporary theirs, this was definitely not the way to live life!! You try this yourself You have no idea!! That's abuse it was what they wanted so desperately to adopted us and were lead by false lies misrepresentation at what she kept repeating had ruined there marriage and life having had the whole experience happen for them and us. And this is what I was left as a explanation to the whole outcome that built up to huge stress and anxiety and a sense of failure for me to content with yet again. Rejection and abandonment yet again done to us and we the innocent victims to then be taken with my brother to this place and then told to get out of the car we had arrived and as I got out of the car and walked in my brother was left behind in the car and taken to another place down the road for Boys only "Roylson" in Glebe I was

beside myself with grief at having him leave my side something which had never happen before to us, we had never been apart or separate like this before, this too had a huge impact and effect on me, to be in a place like this was so jarring to my soul.

I was devastated right through to the core with again no explanation to what was now going on or happening in my life, where I was, or even who I was and why these events had been taken No support, total Darkness of expression Shock had been set upon me to work out all these things by myself. Had I been bad, was the imprint left on me, as was Guilt, and imprisonment of the circumstances, total isolation and separateness. These things were all stripped from me the moment I entered this intuition as my name was entered into the books and I became a number with a uniform and clothes given and all else taken from me as any kind of reminder to a past that I may have ever had, gone just like that stripped and treated like a I had done something so horrible bad, to be even in a place like this. The next days that followed were even worst as reality of where I had been put came for me, the staff were of further fear for me as they repeated the fear for me that I was now in a place where I may never get out of that they had complete control over me and whatever happen in this place stayed in this place and no one could ever find out or else they could make your life even more hell for you, so the days that followed all became a blur I totally shut down inside myself for my own protection and became the observer and witness there to all sorts of abusive behaviours, always keeping in mind that if I did not cause trouble and kept my head down and mouth shut I would be spared and they would go light on me and apart from sexually acting up and performing in the showers, and being bullied to do jobs of cleaning and laundry work I managed to keep my days from becoming increasing unsettled and suicidal despaired to what or where my life was to go. Each week I was told that this was a deporting place and that I would be leaving next week if I was being a good girl and doing what was asked of me, next I was given cleaning jobs upstairs for the one in charge of this place and bribed to do explicated acts with her and she would make sure I would be okay and go to a good place for doing things her way, I hated her and hated this place and for me being in such a situation as to not be able to say NO to her for what she was asking me to do to her these activities made me sick inside the next thing was the intrusion of the doctor who examined me, and at no time was there any child protective person you could go to help assist you that was not a involved in all the deals of this place. I use to have appointments with a psychologist who would give me a list of all my family members names and when I ask them to help me find them they laugh and said that was it . There was no way they could track that information or even try. So there again I had a huge emotion of helplessness and inadequateness at being given some information that I never knew before handed to me and not being able to do anything about it at all, why do this, why give out this information in such a cruel manner, of being trapped in a place like this and not being able to be free, why because you don't have anyone in your life to help you other than the Government who are suppose to be your legal guidance and who, were your main abusers, abusing you in a place where they were suppose to be caring and supporting and giving and being the parents you were mean't to have. This was a huge thing to be reveal even to myself, Instead you were poorly treated as a person, abused and told to shut up and cope it sweet, because you were in a place like this, so you did not have any rights as a person and who cares about you anyway. Yes I had huge regret and humiliation to get though with this labelling of being a delinquent in the states care they kept telling me. The next thing I knew I had a few visitors asking me how things were in there. I felt I could not say to

much in case it got back to these people and it was then that I began to feel these new feelings of mistrust and deception going on around me enough to be fully cautious in my being and constantly on the alert and attentive, Then the time had come to move on from here and to chose another destination for myself and my brother as I kept telling them I could not go on without him, and wanting information in regards to him and even asking could I go and visit him and they allowed me to do that and when I did he revealed to me the same thing about the abuse he was receiving in the place. I had my own struggles going on I said too, as well as some of the trainees that would enforce themselves too on you at other moments, there were rules for some and rules for others and each of us knew the silent code, and what that mean't for us if we did not abide. I was so pleased the day arrived to leave to go to a new establishment in Wellington the Government was trying out and my brother and I had been picked because other families had the opportunity to go there too, and it was were they were trying to re-establish family contacts with each other again, I felt good to hear this as I felt this was a good start at finding my family after all these years, as I knew nothing about them and was told nothing. It was great to be able to be with my brother again as he held me responsible for breaking up from our foster parents and he had had a second chance to go back to them while I had been in Birdura which I did not know at the time, which I then felt cheated upon because they did not want me, even with all the trouble caused and received by them I still loved them and wanted to desperately belong to someone no matter who or what they had done for it was better than not having anyone. Or having any reasons for being in this life as I saw it.

This home was different and had a feel of something good going for it so it incoperated families living and being together sharing a family feeling and being able to be together as they would be in a real home, and I like this a lot the family that operated it also had a family (of three daughters a husband and wife ) we had a room to myself which felt great to have personal space after so long sharing a dormintory in Glebe, this was luxury and the whole set up was inspiring in the country and I could even go to school down the road in a outside school and be normal again these things I carried doing though I had a hard time catching up with subjects missed, and the social feelings of being known as the girl from the funny place locked up, I always tried even hard to over compensate for this lack by replacing it within me and not wearing it on the outside for the world to see and hurt me with again. I tried hard to help run the place with all these kids in it too and keep them together like ducks watching over and protecting them, I again became the observer watching the staff and being viligient to what was happening I had a good repal with the operators who use to invite me in the there place for treats of being with them and they would ask me about my life story though I much more wanted the feeling of belong and felt I was likening there company and family a lot though I did not have special time with there kids only while watching TV did we all sit around together. It was after a time being there yet again things started to go funny familiarity was again in breach after a physical touch from the operator made me understand something else was on his agenda that wasn't on mine, which made me very uneasy and unable to trust him either, I blame myself yet again for being such a open target and being receptive to being human living in this way, total dependent on this establishment that had been given to me had a almost perverted way in which to response of being yet again a victim open to and willing to negotiate a way out of this situation if it pleased the right person in charge, there always seemed a bargining power influence behind the goings on in these places that could be settled in such a small way, with discretion where no one would notice or know about, and there would be no telling having to be

involved. Silences would be rewarded attitudes. So yet again I was placed in the situation of having to perform favours in discretion and places set up by him, all the time bargaining my life to be able to be set free one day in the near future, so again I did my time just doing all that I had to do with minimal stuff and being trying to stay out of the way invisible to most in this place, and there were other times when I did stand up and have my say I would be scrubbing the cement floor outside in a order to break my spirit which would not be broken at all by these places no matter what they inflicted on me as punishment I would still be defiant and do things my way, so as not to lay down to every whim they ask for. The end goes like this I to was found by my real family as there memories of me being out there was remember and there search found me and it was then that I was released into the care of my aunty who said she never gave up hope of finding me and how upset she was that I was taken away like that from them and nothing ever told to them again of my whereabouts, to imagine something like this could have happen and to what reason there were for none of my real family being able to step in and be told or ask assistance from them to help support me as they did much later on in my life when I was back in touch with them it was a crime that my life had to be like this when I have since been reunited with my whole family now all seven of them bar one my brother who did not make it and past away with the stress and strain of it all that he carried as a burden towards himself. The rest of my family all have had similar story to be told of where they went and the foster family they went and the treatment we all suffered as a result of kids being in care suffer, because I did not get off to a good start in the first place and it was all the extra layers that kept getting put on after that, that went from bad to worst those days still hold much pain and sadness of years and it was the effects of what was created after that too that kept building upon what had been put there with abuse that kept me entrenched in acting out and going from one addiction to another Drugs, Alcohol and substances and then turn myself to prostitution until my body could not stand the treatment I was holding onto and all the emotion I was carrying as a direct result of those days in my childhood left to fester inside of me, which resulted in Hospitalization of tumors and cancers so yes I have suffered heaps for my past and have learn't heaps too, I am now working for a organisation called Mayumarri which is a place for survivors of childhood abuse this is the only place after I have written this letter to you, that you would help assist and understand it's a place that has perform miracles on me in my healing and life that I now dedicate my life for informing other of this place to seek empowerment and life skills to overcome grief loss and life suffering in many forms, where core issues are looked at and you in turn work at them at your own pace and with your own understand of what and where you have come from to become a functioning interdepent person capable of writing letter like this one to you in support of the distance I have travelled to make it to you today the way Iam All I ask of you is the recognition of this place as a place of importance for all abuse and generational abuse where survivors can come That write into to and you can support them now by giving them this address as a place of hope and understanding to look at there pain and make life changing reconciliation processes that help heal and change the world for the better, rather than staying in the pain seeking revenge and payment for a life of shit you assisted me though obtaining in those places. All I ask today is some form of forgiveness from you the Government upon looking at my case in a written apology that could give me back my own self worth as a human being having lived that life struggling in all that and value as person who only wanted to belong and felt I was denied that right in those places because of the treatment and cruel over use of power from the very

people in authority gave me. I need this apology today to release me from the pains of my past and to help assist me out of victimhood that I still get into when having any dealings with any government official places or person.

The situation of these times has to be explained for what they were truly like and for the story to be told from the truth of what I experienced to be able to help me get myself back with full identity of who I truly am today now I healed and let go of this story that held me back from walking ward