

To Whom It May Concern

I wish to make an email submission to the Senate enquiry into care in orphanages. I was placed into care in the UK in the 50s and again in Tasmania in the 60s. I was born in 1950 in the UK. I am prepared to give my information to the Senate enquiry but ask that my name and details be kept confidential from publication to any other source. I was unaware of the enquiry until I read an article on abuse in Salvation Army homes in the Herald Sun on 7th May, 2004. I felt a sense of relief after reading this article. I knew it was not before time. We have heard a lot about the Catholics and Anglicans but I had not seen the Salvation Army mentioned. The article gave a toll free number to contact Clan. I called and gave part of my story to a staff member. I felt I received some help just by sharing my story with someone who really understood something of what I had been through. I was placed in a Salvation Army home in the 60s and experienced and saw much abuse. I believe the address of this home was Lansdowne Crescent in Hobart Tasmania. The home resembled a workhouse, we were made to work every day and all day in dreadful conditions. The home laundered sheets for the local hospital. From early morning to late evening we laundered or ironed dirty soiled hospital sheets. Some of the home girls were intellectually disabled. They were forced to wash soiled sheets in large machines like coppers. They were dried, and then we had to iron each one until there were no creases left. I had the job of ironing sheets. There were work stations. Large tables, sectioned off, one for each 'home girl'. We had to rub velvet soap over the sheet and then carefully and quickly iron out every crease. We were supervised by a Captain who monitored every move. We were not allowed to stop work for any reason. The only time we were allowed to break was for meal times. Many times the food had blowflies, sandflies and other insects in it. Many times we went hungry. We had a set portion of food and were not allowed seconds. I remember the hunger, the work and the attitude of contempt from the staff. They made us feel worthless. We were locked in the home 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. We were not allowed out except for a supervised visit to the local store once a week. I was 15 years old when I went to the Salvation Army home. We had not committed any crime. But we were locked away like criminals.

I was born in the UK in 1950. Soon afterwards, my father was given 3 years to live. He lived for 7 years in absolute agony. He was prescribed strong painkillers which did not completely control the pain. He died when I was 8 years old. My mother had little family assistance or supporting parent income. My younger brother and I were placed in an orphanage several times in the UK. Care placements leave you feeling abandoned and alone, and this leads to a fear of being alone and abandoned in adult life. When there is systemic abuse by staff who treat you with contempt, this adds to the feeling of being discounted and of little value. I have experienced a lot of difficulty in my relationships. I believe investigations should be made into all institutionalised care and that organisations such as the Salvation Army be open and accountable for their actions in the forced labour of children in their homes.
Thank you for the enquiry.

I appreciate your efforts to provide much needed assistance.
yours sincerely