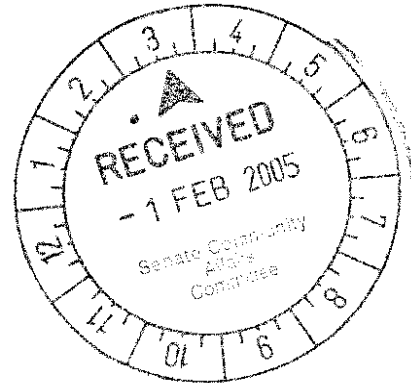


29 January 2005

Mr Elton Humphries
Community Affairs Senate References Committee
Inquiry Into Children In Institutional Care
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Humphries,

PHILLIP HOUSE -SUBMISSION

My name is Janice Petrie and I am known and was known as Jan Petrie at Phillip House, Kariong New South Wales.

I was employed at Phillip House as a casual Youth Worker from 1977 – 1982. I witnessed the management of both Mr & Mrs Ireland and Mr & Mrs Dray.

As a result of my employment at Phillip House I am still currently in contact with Elizabeth Vicha, Doreen Kingsley (nee Sims), Maryanne Burrows and Lyndal Rumsby of which I am aware they have all submitted submissions to this Inquiry.

Approximately 14 years ago I met with Elizabeth and Doreen at Elizabeth's residence (in Burwood at the time), and another ex-staff member Jennifer Morton was present (another Youth Worker). On this occasion Elizabeth and Doreen opened up to us regarding certain things that had happened at Phillip House, we were both shocked at the things that they were saying and with the emotion it was being said to us made what they were saying believable and credible. At this point I knew both Doreen and Elizabeth were telling the truth. Over the last 14 years since we were first informed of what happened at Phillip House and what the girls' have recorded in their submissions their stories have remained consistent and still talked about with the same emotion shown 14 years ago.

Lyndal came to my home to write her submission and I was shocked at the effect of doing this had on her after all these years. From vomiting when she first thought about writing her submission with severe headaches. These symptoms only subsided when the submission had been written. I also saw how elated she was when she dropped the submission into the letterbox. Finally she had a voice and someone was going to listen to her, as all her previous attempts had failed.

In December Elizabeth, Doreen, Lyndal, Maryanne and I got together for lunch. I was dismayed at the hurt and the betrayal that is still very much apart of their lives and to me it is perfectly understandable. Maryanne quietly looked at me and said "I don't understand how anyone could have worked there and not known what was going on". I replied "I understand exactly what you are saying and I have to agree with you, because we all should have been aware". The hurt in her voice and the pain she still carries must have a big impact on her life.

I would like to ask if the Committee is aware of how much pain and how difficult it is for everyone who has sent in a submission and how it opens up all that they have tried to put behind them. This must take an enormous emotional toll and a lot of courage to be able to do it.

I would like to see the outcome of this Inquiry make sure that laws are put in place to prevent these injustices from ever taking place again. I also wish that the Government's involved implement the findings of the "Forgotten Australians" report otherwise it is not worth the paper it is written on and therefore causes more unnecessary trauma to victims.

I am writing this to validate what Elizabeth, Doreen, Lyndal and Maryanne have included in their submissions, even though I did not witness it.

If you need any further information about this or my time at Phillip House, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above numbers and address.

Yours Sincerely

Janice E. Petrie

JANICE PETRIE