

Dear Beanie,

I have received my copy of the Senate Report through my sister Kay O'hare and would also like to join 'clan'. When you read the stories of these people it makes one feel so sad to realize just how many of us there were.

My story started in January 1944 at the tender age of 7½ years old when my mother took me & three sisters and a brother to Dalwood home and left us there we did not see her again for many years - my memories of Dalwood are not happy ones - my first is having my head shaved and soaked in kerosene the next is of the many beatings with sticks or whatever else was at hand.

We were then charged at the Albion St Children's court of being neglected children we were then separated - my two younger sisters sent to an infants home and my six year old brother sent to a boys home another sister Kay and I were placed in 'Bidura' at Glebe there we were given hard labour scrubbing floors, stairs and cleaning the toilets carrying heavy buckets of water and mops in the dining areas. We were forced to eat meals that were cold and weevil infested and get it for the

next meal. We were also given uniforms the same as everyone else the size didn't matter they just came off a trolley small or large in size it seemed we lost our identity and became one of many.

Later Kay and I were fostered out to an elderly couple, it was here I started to wet the bed and did so until I was nineteen years old it was a heavy cross to bear. I was also locked in a chook shed without water in extreme heat on many occasions, while they went out. We weren't there long before we were put back in Bidura for my disgusting 'lezziness' - bed wetting! Kay was then fostered again I was on my own in Bidura for a time then I was fostered to my mother's sister it was disastrous I became a complete loner and had no one to turn to I could not relate to her children and felt so isolated her husband would come to my bed at night I think every night and sexually abuse me I shut myself away and was devoid of any feelings I existed in a dream after a year or more my Aunt caught him at it and took me back to Bidura that day after calling me any disgusting thing she could think of it was the day before Christmas. Once again I was subjected to Dr Green's fingers as he internally examined me. It was at this time I met my sister Sandra we slept in the same bed as the 'home' was overcrowded, - It was awfully

uncomfortable with both of us being punished and ridiculed and made to wash the sheets for my bedwetting it did not help an already fragile relationship with Sandra.

I had to be put in hospital about this time with mumps and on my return to Bidura Sandra had been fostered out again I was alone again. It wasn't long before I was fostered to my Aunt a different one she was very abusive she took all my bedding away and gave me stacks of Sydney morning heralds to use instead they were my mattress pillow and covering and they didn't need washing I was also subjected to her husband's probing fingers I would hide anywhere even under the house in a hole I'd dug to avoid him eventually leaving there and living at Lewisham hospital where I worked, I was fifteen and knew nothing of life or how to care for myself. I never once knew what it was to get a hug kiss or cuddle It doesn't need to be written that I wasn't equipped to deal with life on my own or know what it was all about, however I did have six children and successfully raise five of them (one died) to be loving responsible adults but I am sure my early life left me with many mental scars an inability to remember faces or relate to other than those that are family.

I think it is wonderful that Clan is

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bringing these dark times out into the open and encouraging us new grown children to write about our trials and hope that this sort of treatment will never happen again.

This letter or any part of it may be used to help this happen.

Regards
Val Jeffrey

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