

SUBMISSION:

This has been hard for me to write and be open about my life, especially to be open to the government who allowed my damage, as I am so untrusting and suspicious therefore I hope to remain unnamed in this following submission and have only the senate and committee know of my identity (I am trying to be brave). And as government I can only hope none of you will make my life harder for me. L

Thankyou for your time.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME:

I was stolen by state welfare, against my families will, and my own. A strange, big, intimidating, & aggressive welfare man came into our home and carried me away with a heap of threats about keeping me until I was over 18 years old!

Taking me for no good reason. They stated in my state ward files it was because my emotional and mental development was in jeopardy... and which it was... by their very act of taking me and locking me away in such a abnormal life!!

I was an only child but forced to live in institutions

with so many other children, which was suffocating for me, and most of these kids had been damaged somehow by the system, and maybe even their own families too.

I was refrained by many nurses and psychiatrists and strapped up and drugged and tranquilized against my will, with repeated needles until I was knocked out, over and over again, for many nights in a row in a mental hospital full of adults patients of mixed gender. They continued drugging me in that manner until I agreed to just stay there peacefully, but I was confused, sad, upset, and missed my family and wanted to go home.

I had a horrific allergy to the drugs which they covered up in their files, it is not even listed in my allergies in my files, total neglect! This allergy/fit made me suffer neck pain and headaches ever since!

Also giving me pills and saying: “take one whenever you’re upset.” I was upset all the time; I just wanted to go home. L

Though this experience & “advice”, I learnt too young that drugs could control feelings & emotions
L

I also suffered horrific, traumatising and needless dental treatment whilst in Warrawee.

As a result I am TERRIFIED of dentists, and I have suffered and put up with a lot of tooth pain since my mid 20s

A needless internal examination by a doctor whilst in a FGH. (Family Group Home.)

Because the family group home “mother” had an obsession to know when I got my first period in order to prepare and teach her when her own daughter later turned that age. I found that very personal and degrading as that kind of thing you would like to share with your own mother only!!

Staff members at Allambie witnessed from a distance, a group of children stab me in the stomach instead of stopping them, didn't even check that I was ok. I still have the scar although I have never had an operation, and there's no scars from any stitches because it was hushed up as a part of initiation.

Welfare LIED to me and my family, by telling us we didn't want each other!!

Lied again by saying I was speaking to them, and jumping to their own conclusions about me instead, as all I ever did say to them was that “I wanna go home.” Yet that was seldom noted in my files, only stuff I didn't say.

Locking me in various prison like institutions(4) for over 8mths, when I had committed no crime at the time that deserved this treatment!

Most of the food in the institutions, especially Allambie was terrible, and we were often fed the scrappy cheap parts of food, like liver or kidney stews etc... Cereal and porridge often had weevils in it. Sometimes we would get good food but it never seemed to be enough to fill us.

My family wanted me back, my Aunty was promised by welfare that I would come back, she even took on fostering other children as *they suggested*, but still they wouldn't allow me to go back to my own family & home and I was forced to spend over a year at a FGH against my will, I was prevented from going on any leave to be with my own mother, only to my aunty!

This FGH family were Catholic, where as my own family were protestants, although they never forced their religion onto me, I still felt uncomfortable living around it, knowing what my nanna thought of Catholics, which wasn't much.

My first social worker was only a student, and was far too young and inexperienced for a difficult case like mine. She grabbed me and shook me and yelled at me and said all kinds of nasty and untrue

things that made me cry, and said I was a liar. I was really sad and scared, but it was true, I really did want to go home, I was never lying.

I had so little sleep in those places, and so many nightmares, if my own nightmares didn't awaken me, some other child's nightmares would!

Giving us cigarettes as PRIVILEGES, yet now the government makes us pay dearly for this habit because of your increasing taxes on cigarettes, after what we've been through the very least we need is a cigarette!!

They did not try to find out what my problems really were, they just stole me and ignored my problems totally, and my every plea to go home. I had to act like another personality and not myself to eventually get out of the system. I had to go to church and do everything that welfare said; I had to ACT happy and normal as I could too, and pretend I had no feelings!

They demanded that I do well at school, but no matter how much I tried, I couldn't and it made me feel so dumb.

As well as being VERY degrading as well as slanderous... my file is full of lies, contradictions and cover ups, like how long I spent in Lakeside

hospital, also missing information, like 3 days I spent in Winlaton!

They blackmailed me into saying in children's court that I wanted to be a ward of the state, **I was not told what that meant**, I was only told it meant extra privileges like pocket money, clothes, and more freedom & privacy..

I was never told that it meant that I would cease to belong to my own family!!

Through much of my life I had blamed myself for being a state ward, as did my family and I had carried that guilt for a long time!

It also greatly contributed towards misunderstandings and rifts with my family.

I escaped as often as I could, but Melbourne was such a big dangerous city to a small girl from the country, Ballarat and my family seemed so far away. L

Family had given me things whilst I was in the Allambie institution and they can vouch for this, also things I had arrived in. We were NOT allowed personal possessions near us and we were told instead to let the staff lock it up in a “safe” locker. I had expensive earrings from my grand Aunt, footy jumper, t-shirt, beanie and scarf which the staff knew meant the world to me, they were given to a small boy in a wheelchair, and I did not have

the heart to take them off him. L

I loved my Nan dearly and missed her so much, she had heart problems and died not long after I was discharged, I felt I had been ripped of valuable time with her before she died!

WHAT HAPPENED TO OTHERS:

In large plain dormitories with many children
Crying was common, mostly at night.
Children sobbed to themselves, or woke screaming and crying with nightmares, especially the disabled children.

Insecure kids would often rock, and restless kids tossed around through the night.

We all suffered a lot of deprived sleep, especially those who weren't drugged.

Forced druggings that we all knew of...
and those that we didn't know of!

Forced druggings where tranquilizers would be injected into you to repeatedly knock you out.
Drugs, pills and serums to make you drowsy and the world around you seem hazy. It happened to me and I seen it happen to others. They also gave out the pills to kids with repeating nightmares, and never did they once tell us the truth about what these drugs were for, or what their side effects

were.

I knew from these experiences how it felt like to be drugged, and there were plenty of times I felt that way without even taking anything!

We just lay about indoors, whilst younger children played out doors with more energy and more able to find some enjoyment, some laughter, some play now and then.

Us older children seemed to have *little energy* most times just lazed around in our dorms.

I regularly went on hunger strikes, which was often simply ignored, but now and then they would force us to eat the horriblest tasting foods, or insist we drink ALL our drink which I am now sure were spiked, because it was the only times I would sleep, and I would wake up so groggy, and now as an adult, I can identify that feeling!

I noticed **the federal apology did not apologize for these forced druggings at ALL**, because, I suspect, they still continue, which does not help me heal at all! **I am still forgotten.! This hurts me a lot. L**

This began happening in the 1970s and 1980s, while corporal punishments and physical abuse became more unacceptable, DRUG ABUSE became the fashionable new *acceptable* way of controlling kids!

Excuse me but we are talking about YOUNG, impressionable, GROWING and forming minds here!

Solitary confinement still went on in Allambie whilst I was there, it only happened to me once as I told them being a only child, I enjoyed it!

Solitary confinement was in the section called Karrajong, it had a small room with nothing but a bed in it, and a small dirty window with bars on it and no light, and a door with a big lock on it.

Just before I arrived they had no doors on the toilets or showers at Allambie and there was NO privacy at all. I was horrified.

When I got locked up in there, Allambie had half doors on them, but they made me feel very self conscious, staff could creep and lurk about and see all, although the other children preferred it to no doors at all!

Degrading & embarrassing children in front of other children was common practice for staff.

Although I was never sexually molested in care, I know that it DID happen to some girls, one who ran away to become a prostitute in St Kilda instead of stay there any longer. A lot of the girls sung strange songs about the school teacher in Allambie, such as songs that made references to sperm stains

on his white trousers etc... This teacher favoured certain teenage girls he taught, and made their life a little easier, they got things like extra smokes etc... so they didn't expose him and put up with him I guess. I never got ANY favouritism from him, I just tried to stay away from him.

I know that sexual abuse among the children was also common, I had confrontations with other girls who came onto me quite heavy, and I knew of stories of other more unfortunate girls before me who had been given the broom treatment.

The other children at these places always had histories of abuses dealt to them while doing their time. It was common practice to talk about it all among each other, as there was often little else to do.

. There was often favouritism, kids were often treated different with the disabled, or the conformable usually being the favourites, who got more than the other children, they at least got noticed now and then by different staff.

They often stole children who had trouble going to school, and put them in a institution where they are told they don't have to do anymore schooling if they worked for them for nothing instead. This was ended in Allambie in 1980 just before I came

along, as the staff wanted to do this for me too, but it had just been stopped.

While I was in there I received very little education of any importance.

We had no family or any positive role models to learn any life skills off.

Things like budgeting, paying bills, how to hold healthy relationships, parenting skills, how to live on a pension and get thru every two weeks, etc...

We ALL heard each others stories, and why we were “in” for, what had happened inside these walls and fences before we had come, ALL of the history passed along to each new comer and there was seldom any happy moments to discuss, we all had problems, and we all thought we were unwanted and no good.

I have never stopped hearing these stories in my life, more so now than ever.

We were deserted and ignored, we had to just exist or survive the tougher and stronger you were the better you would survive and the more respect you would gain from other young inmates.

We learnt a LOT of WRONG things...

Learn to take risks and endanger our lives...

(Such as hitch hiking, something I am still forced to

do sometimes!)

Learn to not need love or anything nice from anyone.

Learn to be strong and tough, and not needy.

Learn that love is a weakness.

Learn to show your toughness so that no one will want to try and hurt you.

Learn not to listen to promises and get your hopes up, or you hurt more when you're let down.

Learn that we deserve nothing in life, and that we are nothing.

Learn to hide all of your feelings and emotions.

Learn not to trust anyone.

Be suspicious of ANYONE who offers help.

Don't expect help from anyone, be totally self reliant.

Learn not to depend on ANYONE for you never know when they may disappear! Little did we know the lessons we were learning would stick so hard for a lifetime!

Whilst in the institutions we had no love, no affection, very little attention (or the wrong types of attention-sexually abusive), no understanding no praise, no goals, no encouragement no privacy, no possessions, no security, no feeling of safety or stability or of being home where you belonged with people who at least cared. **No normality** at all.

Excess amounts of discipline, orders, routine, rules, by workers who had been taught to be heartless and robotic.

We were NEVER permitted to make our own decisions,
And we had NO rights only privileges which could be taken away at will.

You were ignored, patronized, taunted, threatened, always made to feel guilty and bad, taught to cover feelings with drugs or hide feelings,,

Things like forcing me to stop reading!! and go on excursions, trying to FORCE me to enjoy myself without my biological family.

Telling us to just get over our homesickness and ignoring what we were trying to say, **ignoring how we felt.**

Setting children up on each other and manipulating

them, so that they delivered the physical abuse instead of the staff, who often entertained themselves by watching.

They stole my possessions that my family had given to me that they had locked in a “safe” locker and gave some of it to a more favoured disabled child.

I and others now suffer very high travel expenses, high internet and phone bills, this has increased especially for me after the federal apology (with no stable service for FAs in place in Victoria at that time),

as Forgotten Australians we have NO qualified specialists to help us...WE are our own specialists, NO BODY ELSE UNDERSTANDS, but with our people spread throughout the land it has been expensive for many of us to support each other, to travel to other FA victims or call them up.

How can we trust services that show ineptness, lack of understanding, no answers, and is run by a former so called “care” providers, by the very people who damage children and create future Forgotten Australians (AKA Berry St). Open Place also it is NOT regional, will NOT come to Bacchus Marsh, there fore **I am still forgotten!**

AS A CHILD WHY WAS I PUNISHED IN THIS MANNER?

Because my family asked them for advice.

Because my family wanted me to have a good education.

Because I had learning and concentration difficulties at school especially with numbers (I still can't comprehend them!) and was often picked on so I would run away. (Welfare is to fault also for not picking up on my difficulties and likeliness of childhood ADD & ADHD no tests were EVER done)

I was never BAD or NO GOOD as a child, I did not deserve this, I had done nothing bad. I just simply wanted to go home.

Effects & life damage & scars:

My life has been far from normal, and I can now starting to see how institutionalization has impeded and affected my life in far many more ways then I had originally thought!

It's a better feeling to at least know I realize I AM normal... for all I've been though, even though to others who haven't lived it I seem as crazy as all the other Forgotten Aussies.

I find

NO TRUST

No children. (Because I know how easy welfare can steal children!) Instead I have two German Shepherds who think they are children, however I get no extra income or benefits for my babies! L

2 bad relationships, one of them often life threatening.

Seperation issues.

Over 10yrs now of living alone.

No love... no ability to love deeply or receive it. Fear and no trust of psychiatrists and doctors.

No trust and very little faith in ANY govt paid workers or govt department.

No trust in the things designed to help people! So I've often just had to go without and try to continue to just exist.

Unsociable for much of my life, a recluse that only ever hung around with other damaged people, some of whom I would later find out were Forgotten Australians too!

Living like a criminal for around 15yrs using “survival techniques” that I had learnt in institutions.

Deep and lasting emotional & mental damage

No energy since the forced druggings.

Joint pain since the Largactol (which I have only just started to study about and make the connection.)

Big authority issues, cannot take orders and could never hold a job. I have never even had a licence to drive because of how it's affected my life, and had a huge unlicensed driving record in my earlier years, it is something that has greatly affected my life and I wish I could get help with.!!

Headaches and neck pain since allergic reaction to their drugs.

Toothache and pain since my mid 20s

I am highly restless, and can't be pent up, often needing to get out, but without a car, can be expensive, I pay for public transport but often miss the last train home so have to hike and still lose my money on the unused train ticket!

I need room and space to live, I cant be enclosed in small spaces or pent up too long!

Personality disorders diagnosed in 1996 which had me put on a disability pension.

Upon leaving “care” I got straight into alcohol, as they had affectively taught me that substances can alter moods and feelings.

For several years I also got into crimes I had learnt whilst doing time in institutions, survival skills, things I had learnt from city children, to help pay for my alcohol addictions.

Then when alcohol became too expensive and hard to obtain, I turned to a speed habit for a couple of years, this was easy because of the lack of energy I had suffered since the institutions. Speed was the hardest addiction for me, and although I kicked the habit of repeatedly using it, I still fall now and then every couple of years if I stumble across it in bad moments. I have taken prescription speed such as Duromine, and I find it much more controllable as it is a slow release substance, safer too if it came from a chemist as it would not be laced, but this costs a lot on the black market, and I have low trust of doctors and tend to try and stay away from them.

I don't know how I have lived past the age of 40.

For 3yrs I had lived straight and off all drugs, and for over 12mths I had been off alcohol, but it was hard going and never seemed to get easier, as I cant seem to get rid of my past trauma.

I still control my feelings at times with substances like alcohol and pills, but at least I seem to control it now, instead of letting it control me.

Psyche services and shrinks can't guarantee me that they won't lock me away again, so I find it very hard to be open with them, or anyone, and still cover myself up as taught when younger.

Surprisingly to me I find sometimes in times of stress I still resort to the same behaviours I used to use as a child in an institution.

I suffer lots of heavy feelings, a lot of depression and heaviness.

A lot of anger which had NEVER simmered only grew.

Suffer from nervousness.
I often feel unsafe and paranoid.

.I suffer panic attacks and flashbacks

Erratic and suspicious thoughts towards "normal"

people.

Sleep disorders

Nightmares have always been one of the hardest things for me, as I feel I am actually reliving traumatic parts of my life over and over again each night.

I have tried to deal with my problems by myself because I don't trust people, and some things I have changed, but a lot of things I feel I will be trying for the rest of my life to change, that's if I can at all.

I had tried to hold employment whilst a teenager, it never worked.

I have done volunteer jobs though and I seem ok with that because I cannot be told what to do, only asked, and I cannot get sacked, and I have no boss.

I tried to be resident representative for the Wendouree West community renewal in an effort to address my fears of government, and learn some life skills that it offered as well, but in my opinion I failed, as I could not get over my lack of trust of government workers & depts etc...

I joined a football cheersquad which helped me tremendously with being able to socialize,

teamwork, and accept all types of people.
I also helped run junior football clinics for the club
for years, which was really good for me and I just
loved doing!
That is all over now, as the police busted me with
half a gram of marijuana leaf 2 yrs ago now I cant
pass a working with children check! L

I suffer very high internet and phone bills, as
Forgotten Australians we are our own specialists,
NO BODY ELSE UNDERSTANDS, but with
people spread throughout the land it has been
expensive for many of us to support each other, to
travel to people or call them up.

CONTROL

To grow up with totally NO freedom
No love or understanding,
Just control
They tried to control *everything*.

Controlled what you do.
Who you are.
What you did,
What you eat,

How you felt
What you thought.
Who your friends are.
Your personality.
Your will.
Your destiny.
Your mind.
Your spirit.

Rules, demands, regulations, orders,
commands, punishments, conformity, slavery,

Where you can't be boss of your own life.

Where you just want to grow up quick
And be your own boss only, your own person.

When you are suspicious of others
DEMANDS.

Where you don't like bullies.

Where you HATE controlling people.

Where you can't even take instructions.

When sometimes even advice seems like

control.

When the only good feeling you get in life is when you go against the grain, and against all the rules. It gives one a feeling of power which is addictive to those who had spent a lot of time with NO power!

And one can't fail if they don't even do what's expected of them.

All others EXPECTATIONS seem heavy defeating and crushing.

Some others are power pushers, controllers, leaders, manipulators and they tend to do it to an excess, they do this for the feeling of power they get from it

LOVE:

We only learnt to need love is a WEAKNESS. Those who showed any weakness soon became targets!

We had to learn to go without it, and learn that we are strong enough to, which often made us feel stronger and strangely more powerful.

When even the word love can make you feel uncomfortable!

We fast learnt very young, that if you really loved people they would break promises, they would leave you, and it would cause a lot of pain and hurt.

It's hard to love when one has so little trust.

With ANY kind of relationship we can have great difficulties mostly because of our issues with love, control power, and independence/dependency.

Sometimes we think it's easier and less hurtful (to ourselves and others) to live without company and live with so much loneliness, emptiness, misunderstandings, solitude, silence and isolation. (These things are more familiar to a lot of us, therefore less scarier than love, relationships and the unknown.)

As I can now see these deeply entrenched past lessons have been carried in me throughout my life since the institutions, and to think I spent a lot of my life blaming myself for being for these difficulties, in me thinking that *I* was a complete mental case because I didn't understand my reactions and feelings, not understanding why I felt and acted different to the rest of my biological family who were so loving.

This only scrapes the surface of the damage done to me and others.

OUR NEEDS:

WE WERE FAILED BY OUR GOVERNMENTS.
We were let down and were pretty much ignored then... and sadly still ignored now.

We ARE a separate needs group, we are a unique group of people that many outside the institutions do NOT understand and never did.

We need a **royal commission** into past and present welfare practices.

It hurts FAs the most to know there are still children suffering in these systems in similar ways they had!

To be truly **sorry** for past mistakes and crimes the government, churches and charities must pay for them, and learn from them, and then try to change it so we don't do the same mistakes, after all this would be cheaper for the government in the LONG run?

Others in society get punished in this country for crimes against children so why should this be any different??

We need **services** in each state for Forgotten Australians with on going funding.

Services that can be easily accessed by all if they are needed.

I am tired of being neglected, so are many.

A gold card would make us feel more special, than the gutter tramps we were so often told we were. It would elevate our status as we suffer from so many stigmas in society and always had L

WE ARE NOT ALL BAD PEOPLE, WE ARE HUMAN TOO!

Also a small **gold stick pin** to each FA that they can wear to departmental appointments and events where they need to be acknowledged as a Forgotten Australian would be fantastic, and it's not a lot to ask for!!

We need a **national fund**, where governments, churches and charities can chip in and help the ones they allowed become so scarred.

Many of us are broken people, and broken battlers financially...

Even **low interest loan scheme** could help greatly, and also have the added benefit of being self sufficient after so long funding itself!

Equal and fair state redress.

Abuse of any form is still **abuse** and any abuse can be traumatic and damaging!

Anything that **helps** our life's IMPROVE even a little, shows that you are indeed **sorry..**

Statutes of time limitation need looking at and fixing up as it is very unfair in our circumstances!!

We need more efficient and better access **to health, drug & alcohol dental and mental services.**

Unlimited services should be offered in the areas

of **adult learning, counselling, anger management, marriage & relationship guidance, parenting skills, life skills.**

We need **more studies and statistics** to be taken on our issues, so that it is learn and understood, therefore not repeated!

We need **affordable, safe and secure housing**, housing is a **VERY important** issue for Forgotten Australian, to have a permanent roof over the head and not to be kicked and shifted about like in our past. To have some space and permanent stability.

We need **attitudes to change within departments** towards Forgotten Australian, for example, the robotic, heartless and patronizing ways that DHS public housing in Victoria can come across to many of us, is enough to trigger flashbacks among the sanest of us!!

Some people in society say; “well *we* were never in care and we suffered as kids too!”

I say to them, “do you feel like getting justice?”, they often say.. “well no, they are still my parents.”

then I say,, “well how would you feel if your parents were the government or a mighty church? Would you have the strength to challenge them at all?”

So many of us were too afraid to challenge them, have the strength or courage to make a stand, we were only kids with no rights, so effectively silenced in many ways... but now as adults wiser for what we have been through, we are finding the courage to speak out. It's hard, it's very scary, but it MUST be done!

I try and stay proud, strong and keep my chin up, look at positives. Have a sense of humour and make others laugh, but a lot of the time it is just a mask, and no matter how I try the lessons & nightmares of my childhood continue to haunt me as they always had.

The best thing that could heal me is if I can look at today's systems improve for the kids, to know that no other child has to feel as we did, then I could look back on my own past and just know that the suffering wasn't for NOTHING!

Thankyou for listening to my submission.

Yours respectfully

Active member for CLAN & FAVAG