

Dear Senate Enquiry,

I am writing to you today on behalf of my father , who spent approximately 10 months in St Heliers boys farm home in the early 1970's, he's now 53. He has trouble dealing with what happened to him, he has a strained relationship with my brothers, anniversary memories affected their bond, and is basically illiterate. He doesn't sleep as nightmares takeover, he cant even attempt to be in a crowd. He is taunted everyday but the events that took place in so called care. All of these factors plus more prevent him from telling his story.

At about the age of about eight, my dad stopped going to school, for no real reason he just didn't want to.

My dad was quite often caught truanting, Always found by the same welfare officer, He was always taken to Yasmar Children's court, And as my grandparents always attended court with him, no punishment was given.

Then one day, my grandfather received a letter saying that the welfare officer wanted to see my dad at the King street, Newtown office. My grandfather couldn't attend so he sent my dads 16 year old sister with him.

When they arrived at the office they were taken to Albion street children's court where the Judge either wouldn't or couldn't hear the case, he was then taken to Yasmar Children's court. Where he was given a general committal. He was held at the Yasmar detention centre for several weeks before being taken to St. Heliers Boys Farm home, Muswellbrook.

On his first morning here, with my dad in it, his bed was thrown in the air, my dad on the floor, mattress on him, bed on mattress.

But could YOU personally imagine scrubbing rocks and foot paths with a toothbrush? My dad did this.

Could you imagine cleaning a floor with a brick and socks? Or standing 2 feet from a wall with your hands behind your back and your legs spread? With your head on the wall? For four hours? Or more? My dad had to.

What about a closed fist "massage"? the worse part of that punishment was having to wait your turn and listen to the boy in front of you get his?

My dad did

Only it wasn't imaginary. These are the things that are constantly on his mind Not to mention a breakfast of porridge with a side of weavles or bread with milk that he had to carry for all for miles.

Even though my dad wasn't sexually abused, he wasn't even treated as poorly as some,

but he has always thought he was taken illegally, that was until last week when I read an old newspaper article quoting a Child Advisory Council Chairman, He said "Again, boys merely charged with Truancy will live in the fine old Bruce Smith home, Anglewood at Burradoo, which will officially open soon". My dad was not. He also said "Neglect and failure are imprinted deeply upon the records of NSW child welfare" That was in 1946, it was still no different by the 1970's. My dad's beliefs, all but confirmed.

I personally am deeply saddened and Extremely angry & disappointed that Australia's children were neglected and forgotten in such a manner, because the truth is that if you merely smack a child today you face the consequences and not only did worse happen but no one has been held responsible and justice should be served.

I feel that NSW is no lesser state than others and should be treated equally and that what happened shouldn't be hidden, censored, taken lightly or forgotten.

Too much is hidden about these children, not even a photo can be found of St. Heliers, let alone any records, which is suspect in my eyes.

I hope the senate takes action and the government, catholic church and all other authorities involved take responsibility for the pain and suffer they have caused.

For my dad will never forget.

Yours sincerely,