



*The faceless nameless vulnerable
Forgotten Australian.
Who has the key to
Remove our shackles and chains
Help us find the key for redress
And justice. Artist Shelley Greaves*

Dear Senators

We face insurmountable obstacles in Victoria in our legal system to take the State Government to court or even have our case heard. If the State Government believes it would win the case in court we have no legal avenues to have a compensation claim one would have to say that we are pursued very aggressively by the State Governments lawyers to avoid any compensation claims. One would have to say that we are pursued very aggressively by the State Governments lawyers to avoid any compensation claims.

Even if we have been successful in compensation claims with the Churches/organizations this seems to have little influence on the Government's determination not to pay compensation claims. That state Governments jargon is we look at each claim "case by case"

It would be interesting to know how many have In fact been successful in this case by case Government "rhetoric".

No doubt this would not be possible for us to find out as it would be shrouded in State Government "privileged information". One could only come to an obvious conclusion that not many cases would be successful in compensation claims.

There is another group of Forgotten Australians who were not wards of the state. They lived the same hell as we did but as their parents paid board for them many were not made wards of the state. Often many parents fell behind in payments. They were under enormous pressure with official letters from the institutions demanding payments. Parents were too embarrassed to see their children until they caught up with the payments. This further damaged already tenuous relationship with their children

These children were violated in exactly the same was as "Wards of the State. Some homes in Australia were funded by the particular dioceses/ church and did not have any funding by the Government.

These Forgotten Australians have been further marginalized by the rigid criteria of who is eligible for services/compensation. They are not entitled to access any of the services that are provided through Open Place.

We implore the State Government to rectify this situation. Do not leave them even more "Forgotten" Equal redress/services for all children in out of home care.

We harbor such anger, frustration and resentment towards the State Government and it further fuels the emotions' of worthlessness. We are left feeling degraded and second class citizens. If a pod of whales were stranded on our beaches our Government would rally to the cause. Compassion and recourses would be used to save them. Why can we not be shown the same compassion? We are also struggling to survive.

Many Forgotten Australians have committed suicide unable to live in torment for one more day. So many have been lost and nothing has ever been done to save them.

How many more Forgotten Australians have to die unable to live with the memories any longer?

It is ironic that if Forgotten Australians do not vote in an election we are fined and court action will follow if we fail to pay the fine. Yet in our eyes we are not equal to others in our democratic society.

Research shows a high percentage of Forgotten Australians were the children of returned service men and women. They fought laying down their lives to defend our country. Many never came home. Very little assistance was given by the State Government to returned service men and women. Their children are the victims of a war that has never ended.

We fight each day with mental illness, poverty many poorly educated thus not having opportunities to have gained much more than very low paid jobs. Our health has suffered and we face so many medical problems and much of this stems back to our childhood.

The State Government does know that many institutions/children's homes participated in drug trials on the children.

The Government had to have given consent for drug trials to be done. It does show how the Government had scant regard if we lived or died?

Universities and medical research facilities have in fact revealed that they were involved in drug trials on children/babies and teenagers in children's homes/institutions.

Despite the State Government knowing the vilest depraved predators' roamed unchecked, free to commit horrendous crimes to us, they still deny any responsibility.

With the State Government denying us redress do they condone in some way what happened to us? Where is the ethics and morality of our Government?

The State government spends copious amounts of money on sporting events, even the Australian flag on the west gate bridge costs thousands and thousands of dollars each year as they require constant replacement.

Surely the State Government could come up with a workable budget to include redress and further recourses for Forgotten Australians.

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Despite the Federal Government/opposition giving a profound national apology acknowledging the abuse of Forgotten Australians it has still falling on deaf ears with our Victorian State Government. They remain unmoved in their resolve not to have redress in Victoria.

Our Federal Government also must be held accountable for what has happened to Forgotten Australians.

The Federal Government governs our nation making decisions for and behalf of us. They have the power to bring all State and Territorial Governments together to negotiate redress and services to all Forgotten Australians.

It is noted that Federal Government was able to do this regarding our Public Health System (except for W.A) This demonstrates to us that it can certainly be done

The Federal Government should have been inclusive setting up redress schemes and each State/Territory in providing funding and consistent equal redress schemes to all Forgotten Australians.

The abuse of Forgotten Australians did not differ from the borders of one State to another. It was rife throughout Australia. Yet where redress has been granted each State had different monetary amounts and criteria for eligibility.

Redress in some States have been closed consequently many who did not know about redress have also been excluded. Redress should not have a time frame it should remain open. Many Forgotten

Australians found it too difficult at the time to proceed with claims. Their wellbeing should always be the foremost consideration of Governments.

The Federal and State/Territorial Governments should have been active in pursuing churches/organizations into putting funds into redress and resources for Forgotten Australians. This can still be done it is never too late.

The Federal Government also needs to put serious consideration into the legal minefield that we face in regard to the "Statutory Limitation Laws". There could be a new type of Legal process that could be specifically for Forgotten Australians.

Many perpetrators of crimes committed on Forgotten Australians have not been brought to justice. The churches do say that they will assist in bringing perpetrators of crimes to justice. This may well be true but for some churches this is not in any way true.

The Catholic Church continues to protect pedophiles. We do understand that they will not change the confessional code.

The legal system should include any knowledge or protection of pedophiles by the church they also face criminal charges.

Still today we hear of children being victims of pedophiles within the ranks of the Church. Children have the right to be protected and everything should be done by our Government to ensure they are safe.

BRIEF HISTORY ANDREW

I am 38 years of age so perhaps I am a younger Forgotten Australian. I was removed from my family home at the age of 12 and taken to [redacted] I was deeply traumatized and petrified in this home. One staff in particular was extremely violent and we endured criminal assaults and sexual abuse. He thrived in the power of his position over us and the emotion abuse was torturous. The violence in this home also extended to the older boys and we were constantly bashed and even had knives used in these assaults. We were not protected in any way from the staff assaults or the older boys. We were extremely neglected. My room had a door leading outside which did not have a lock so I could leave at night and return in the morning. We had pedophiles in this home and sexual abuse was rife.

Cigarettes were doled out to us despite the legal age being 16. I was only 12 when cigarettes were given to me by the staff. I am a heavy smoker remaining addicted and suffer serious health problems due to cigarettes.

I could not endure anymore so I absconded from the home and made my way to my parents which was 30kms away. On my arrival my parents did not want to listen to me about what has happened to me and contacted [redacted] and by 8.30pm that night I was in [redacted] in a section called [redacted]. There were no doors on the toilets or showers.

I and another boy absconded from [redacted] through a window in bathroom. It was not locked and we easily opened it from the inside. The window was on the second story and I just jumped landed and really hurt my back I thought I had broken my legs. I went with the other boy to his father's house and he raped me in the front room. I ran from there ending up in St Kilda and was gang raped by five men.

Somehow I ended up in Richmond and got caught shoplifting a bag of smarty's which cost \$1.36. I was taken to the Richmond police station and finger printed and they found out I had absconded from [redacted]. I told the police about being gang raped and they told me it was not true. I would be dead or in the gutter. They were only interested in the shoplifting they did not take a report of the rapes.

One policeman was pushing me and I asked him to stop he picked me up by the loops in the back of my jeans and just slammed me on my face into the floor.

I was charged and given a 12 month good behavior bond. I was sent back to [redacted] and was put in [redacted] which was the jail section. The education was pretty much nonexistent in [redacted].

One staff was a massive man he really hurt me with the assaults and torture techniques. He sexually abused many of the boys there. The emotional abuse and being told over and over were dirty and feral no-one wanted us we should be dead.

After 7 months I was sent to [redacted] home in [redacted] the same man was a cottage parent from [redacted]. Life was hell. I went to school but really struggled. I was just so far behind kids my age. By the time I was 14 I was told by staff to pack my bags I was leaving. I was escorted to the front gate and told never to set foot on the grounds of Southerland home.

I made my way back to my parents but could not function in a normal household. I left and became a street kid. I was a drug addict and drank heavily.

I suffer debilitation pain with my back. I have arthritis and am a diabetic. I stopped taking drugs quite a few years ago and I no longer drink. I did that on my own.

A few years ago I was assaulted by a drug addict and he broke my arm. I went through crimes compensation within 18 months and the whole process was uncomplicated.

When I look in the mirror I cannot ever see myself just the inner torment. I do not see myself as a human being just a tormented being. People see me as a funny outgoing man but it is a façade. I learnt to cover up the tormented man that I am.

Redress would have a significant impact on my life. Have I not suffered enough?

BRIEF HISTORY ANNETTE

I was badly burnt at the age of 2 months and went to [redacted] When I was 6 I was sexually abused by a priest from the home. I told one of the nuns about it and she assured me it would never happen to me again and she would make sure he was no longer there. The nun must have done this as he was no longer there. I wonder where he went and what he did to other children. I know of other girls he sexually abused. He only did it once to each girl.

I was the youngest child there when _____ closed and I went to the _____. On the very first day on arriving at the _____ I was showered by male and female staff and my long hair was cut off so that I would not get nits. I was 11 years old and so embarrassed at being showered and distressed at having my long hair cut off.

One incident that I remember clearly was one of the older kids gave me two black eyes over a pair of socks. Violence was part of my life in that home from staff and older kids and my older sibling. Sexual abuse was rife. I was sexually abuse there from age of 11

I excelled at sport and I would out of the class room training or competing. I spent so much time out of the classroom I did not get an education at all. My literacy was very poor. Sport took precedence over education.

I ran away from the children's home and this was due to the pressure of being made to only do sport. They could not understand this at all. I got into a lot of trouble over this and was forced back into doing sport.

At the age of 14 I was brutally raped. He was not a staff member. I crawled back to the cottage clothes ripped and bleeding and told them what had happened. I was told that I must have asked for it and been behaving in a sleazy manner. I saw the nurse and she did not take any notes which I found strange. They always wrote things about us. I told her I had physical evidence to prove I was raped. They then begged me not to report the incident to the police. I was so distressed and angry that I had been prevented from telling the police what had happened to me. The emotional abuse at the house still lives with me today.

At the age of 15 I went to live in a self contained house away from the home with other kids that the thought could cope in the wider community. Funding ended after a year and I was sent to .

I was in shock and thought what in the hell is this place. Sexual abuse of boys and girls was quite open and the violence was horrendous. I slept with a knife under my pillow. Staff did try to sexually abuse me but being 16 I was able to protect myself by kicking them.

The assaults to the younger children were quite open and brutal. I stepped in on several occasions and had my hair pulled out by the roots. Because I was older I often tried to intervene.

This place was truly evil.

Young babies came to this home and I could not understand why they were not in the nursery as I thought it was beautiful. One day the staff's door was not closed properly and I looked in and saw a male staff member sexually abusing a baby. I was so shocked this was a baby. I saw another incident where a female staff was sexually abusing a baby as well. I just felt so sick.

I often feigned illness so that I could keep an eye on the babies. To this day I cannot get these images out of my head. They were babies.

I have been left feeling useless and dumb due to my lack of education. At the age of 23 I went back to school so that I could read a book to my children.

I gave up sport. I suffer from depression. I had an obsessive/compulsive cleaning disorder and my house could never have any dust or anything out of place. I have tried counseling but I have found that do not understand me as a Forgotten Australian or the concept of how this has left me emotionally.

I have always felt that I was a number and not a human being.

At the apology I do not think the government realized the impact of the some of the photos. The children scrubbing with a toothbrush brought back so many memories.

Why is redress so hard? You know our stories and the truth yet you cannot dignify us without me having to fight every inch of the way. We get meager crumbs of services and that is meant to keep us quiet? Are we meant to go away and be grateful to this small gesture?

I will never give up and I will continue to fight for redress.

I have never been able to pull down my blinds they are always open. I was scared of the not being able to see out. My windows cannot be shut they must be open regardless of the weather so that I know I can get out. It has taken me all of my adult life to be able to shut my bedroom door as I was locked into rooms so much at the children's home. I have never had self confidence and constantly put myself down.

With a fall from a tree at the I fell onto my back and was in excruciating pain and I did not receive any medical treatment.

When I had my first child the doctor noticed an injury to my back. They found that due to the back injury not being treated I could not have a natural childbirth and had to have a caesarian for both of my children.

I REMEMBER the abuse. I live with daily and it has affected so much of my life. I personally do not know any Forgotten Australian mothers who have not stated that their children have been affected in some way due to what happened to us in the homes/institutions.

Have I suffered enough?

BRIEF HISTORY MICHELE

My twin brother and I were inseparable therefore we went from the baby's home to for Boys and Girls. Our elder sisters went to a different home and we did not go to this home as they did not take boys. We were 5 years old.

I was very shy, rarely speaking as my brother would always be the one to speak for me. I watched in silence

To the severe physical beatings and emotional abuse to my brother and the older kids from the age of 5

My brother the elder twin always took care of me when we were young helping me dress, brush my hair and feed me.

The next cottage parents arrived when we were 10. The husband worked at

My brother and another boy were constantly and savagely beaten with torture techniques used. A day never seemed to go by without this occurring. The other boy was so terrified I remember he wet his pants. They were also had severe emotional abuse.

I was rarely beaten and can only remember some incidents that were extreme. I had a lot of sexual abuse inside and outside the home.

We have both been successful with conciliation compensation with the church.

I did know that my brother had been sexually abused and his records did indicate that he was. He only has a slight memory so he could not say if he had been sexually abused in regard to the compensation claim.

My compensation payment was many thousands higher than my twin.

Sexual abuse is the higher compensation and I find that appalling. It diminishes the category of violence and torture. How can anyone determine which twin suffered more harm?

I can never remove the haunted look in his eyes the fear and pain it distress me so much. The beatings were so extreme I thought sometimes he was going to be killed.

I became quite ill mentally when I was quite a young woman. I became so ill that I tried to committed suicide and ended up on life support. I still suffer from depression and take medication. I had a doctor who specialized in institutional effects of children so I was able to get really good psychiatric care.

Have we not suffered enough? We will never give up the fight for redress.

We sincerely thank the many hundreds of individual Forgotten Australians who for many years have fought for justice redress and services. Without you our stories would never have been heard You have such courage and are indeed our heroes.

To the Senators involved in all of the enquires regarding Forgotten Australian we can never thank you enough for now we are Remembered Forgotten Australians. You have never wavered in seeking justice for us and a national apology and for your continued unwavering support for Forgotten Australians. You also will never be forgotten.

