

APPENDIX 2

APOLOGIES



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

December 14, 2004

Statement on Senate Report into Children in Institutional Care

The Australian Catholic Bishops and the Leaders of Religious Institutes welcome the Report of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care.

We have been moved by the courage of those who have laid bare their experiences before the Committee. An apology was first made in the 1996 document "Towards Healing", and we formally renew our apology to those whose abuse was perpetrated by Catholic Church personnel.

The revelations contained in the report are the very opposite of all that we would wish to stand for.

We are also deeply regretful for the hurt caused whenever the Church's response has denied or minimised the pain that victims have experienced. And we regret the hurt and distress caused to the many good people who have worked in this area.

We announce the formation of a "Senate Inquiry Action Group". The members of this group will be:

Dr Kristin Johnston, Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.
Fr Brian Lucas, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.
Br Kevin Ryan, Christian Brothers.
Mr Paul Linossier, Catholic Welfare Australia.
Ms Myolene Carrick, Catholic Welfare Australia.

The mandate we have given this Action Group is:

"The Senate Inquiry Action Group shall make an analysis of the recommendations of the Senate Inquiry, with particular reference to how they apply to the structures, institutions and personnel of the Catholic Church, and provide the bishops and religious leaders with advice concerning the implementation of the recommendations.

"The Action Group shall present a preliminary report to the May 2005 meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the June meeting of the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, together with a report on the work still to be done and an estimate of the time needed to present a final report."

Contact: Debra Way at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on 02 6201 9859 or 0414 880 475.



The Anglican Church of Australia

GENERAL SYNOD

6 October 2004

Church apologises to victims of institutions

The Anglican Church's General Synod has issued an apology to people who experienced hurt, or abuse or distress in institutional and out-of-home care provided by the Anglican Church.

At its meeting at the University of Notre Dame in Fremantle, the church addressed the experiences of children covered in the recent senate inquiry into Children in Institutional Care Report, *Forgotten Australians*.

The apology said "With deep sadness and regret, this Church acknowledges that many of these children suffered abuse and neglect, and a lack of appropriate care and nurture while in institutional care; and a significant number also suffered physical and sexual assault."

"The Church deeply regrets that its institutions and personnel did not always provide environments in which these children were protected and nurtured."

Brisbane's Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, supporting the apology, said the church was specifically addressing those who had been harmed in institutions. He said the stories of people hurt in institutions were horrific and heartbreaking.

"It is important that this church acknowledges that it happened, that we express our deep sorrow and regret, and that we get our dioceses to look carefully at the report to check again how well we care for people."

Following the reading of the apology, the Primate, Archbishop Peter Carnley, read the apology on behalf of the church, then called for a minute's silence.

Archbishop Carnley prayed "we seek your forgiveness for the wrongs the church has committed in the past. Give us grace that we may be transformed, and that the church may be a safe and caring place for children."

For more information, contact Robyn Douglass on 0411 075 598

 51/04 THE FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

That this General Synod:

- 1 Notes that a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children – the *Forgotten Australians* report – has been prepared by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee and was tabled in Federal Parliament on 30 August 2004.
- 2 Notes that the report calls on governments, churches and agencies to issue formal statements acknowledging their roles in past institutional care policies and practices and the impact these have had on the lives of many care leavers.
- 3 Acknowledges that many children who were placed in institutional care during the last century experienced neglect, harm and distress; and in particular cases, experienced serious physical and sexual abuse and assault – the effects of which are life-long.
- 4 Extends the following apology to these children:
The Anglican Church of Australia sincerely apologises to the children whose experiences in institutional and out-of-home care provided by the Anglican Church caused them hurt, distress, and harm.

The recent Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care Report has reflected the stories of many care leavers who demonstrated great courage in describing their experiences in institutional care. A number of these people had been placed in institutions conducted by the Anglican Church and its agencies.

With deep sadness and regret, this Church acknowledges that many of these children suffered abuse and neglect, and a lack of appropriate care and nurture while in institutional care; and a significant number also suffered physical and sexual assault.

The Church deeply regrets that its institutions and personnel did not always provide environments in which these children were protected and nurtured.

The Anglican Church is committed to ensuring that all children in any of its institutions and all those who come into contact with the Church will be protected. Actions are being taken in this General Synod and in the dioceses to put into place new strategies reflecting this commitment.

The Inquiry Report – Forgotten Australians – has brought into community awareness the serious and long-term effects of such abuse and assault; and the Anglican Church is committed to providing appropriate services, assistance and support to those persons who suffered harm.

- 5 Requests each diocese involved in the provision of institutional care to children to extend an apology in similar terms.
- 6 Acknowledges that the Church is called to assist and support in whatever way it can those persons who have been harmed by and in its institutions; and requests each diocese to consider appropriate strategies – which recognise the personal significance of the harm done to individual persons and their likely distrust of the Church – to encourage those who have been harmed to come forward.
- 7 Commends the report to the dioceses, institutions and agencies of this Church and requests them prayerfully and objectively to consider the report and its implications for current policies and practices which affect all children and young people in contact with the Church to ensure that the past abuse and assault will never again occur.

Phillip Aspinall - 5 Oct 04

The Benevolent Society supports the Senate's Forgotten Australians report

15 October 2004

The Benevolent Society today responded to the Senate Committee's Report, *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*.

The Benevolent Society has been providing services to children and families since 1813. Part of our role was to provide residential care for children at Scarba House in Bondi from 1917 until 1986.

The Benevolent Society has a strong commitment to working with children and their families in need of support. It is because of this commitment that we wish to make a public statement of apology about past practices in our provision of residential care. The Board and staff feel strongly that we should acknowledge our history and the role that we played in providing any inadequate care for children placed with us.

The Benevolent Society apologises unreservedly for any abuse, mistreatment or harm experienced by children in our care.

The report of the Senate Committee, *Forgotten Australians*, gives us a clear, highly distressing picture of what life was like for tens of thousands of children who spent all or part of their childhoods in an orphanage or children's home. We believe that it is crucial that such histories are known, heard and acknowledged; and that such practices are never again experienced by any Australian child.

It is now recognised that out-of-home care for children needs to include frequent and meaningful family contact, placement with siblings, consistent care givers, opportunities for children to emotionally process what they have experienced and freedom to express their views and wishes for their future care. The Benevolent Society feels deep sadness and regret for the children in our care who did not receive the consistent, loving care that they needed and deserved.

We welcome the Senate Inquiry into Institutional Care and its recommendations. It gives agencies such as our own the opportunity to acknowledge past wrongs and to try to address them appropriately. In particular, we are putting in place services to ensure that we will respond promptly, compassionately and respectfully to anyone who wishes to approach us to talk about their time in Scarba House as children.

For further information please contact:

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UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MEDIA RELEASE

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Embargoed until 1pm, Monday 27 September 2004

THE “FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS” REPORT

The Uniting Church today expressed regret and sorrow to the children who suffered neglect and abuse while in institutional care provided by the Uniting Church and its agencies during the last century.

“On behalf of the Uniting Church and our agencies, I apologise unreservedly for any physical, psychological or social harm that might have occurred,” National President, Rev. Dr Dean Drayton said.

“I deeply regret that some children were let down while in the care of the Uniting Church and former Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches.”

Rev. Drayton said the recent Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care highlighted a number of cases where children suffered at the hands of caregivers.

“The Inquiry painted a disturbing picture of life for many young people who lived in institutional care. The Uniting Church through its agencies managed a number of these facilities and sadly, some did not provide the love, nurturing and care that the children in them so rightly deserved.

“The Inquiry highlighted the flaws in institutional care models and the need to ensure they are never repeated,” Rev. Drayton said.

“The Uniting Church, through our family and community services networks, has developed new models for providing care and services to children. The Church is committed to ensuring that children and families receive the best facilities and care possible and we are constantly working to improve them.

“The Senate Inquiry reminds everybody involved in delivering services and care to children that we all need to work together so that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

“The Uniting Church welcomes the Inquiry and its recommendations – they provide a basis on which Governments at all levels and care providers may move forward together by acknowledging past wrongs and addressing them appropriately. We are committed to working with government to respond to the issues raised during the Inquiry,” Rev. Drayton said.

This statement was endorsed by the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia and the Moderators of the Synods of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Synod.

Rev. Allan Kuchler
Moderator of Queensland

Mr. Jim Mein
Moderator of NSW

Rev. George Woodward
Moderator of the Northern Synod

Rev. Dr Graham Humphris
Moderator of South Australia

Rev. Sue Gormann
Moderator of Victoria and Tasmania

Rev. Gemmel Sherwood
Moderator of Western Australia

ENDS

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