

## SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE: PETER QUINN: SENATE COMMITTEE 3 February 2004

1. The juvenile correction system in New South Wales, from its inception in 1866 was essentially punitive in nature. It was characterised by
  - ~ the use of isolated detention as a punishment
  - ~ after 1939, the use of illegal isolated detention, well beyond the allowable maximum time, under the guise of 'segregation'
  - ~ after 1939, the illegal punishment of absconders. Under the 1939 Act, abscondings were to be dealt with by courts alone, the purpose being to allow some independent assessment of the reasons for the absconding.
  - ~ inhumane and illegal punishment of boys at Gosford, Yanco and Mittagong
    - 'bag room court martials'
    - excessive fatigue duties
  
2. Priority for politicians and officials was not the well being of children, but cost cutting, essentially because it was believed there was a 'delinquent class' which was criminal, self-perpetuating, beyond redemption, and therefore not worth spending money on.
  - ~ institutional forms of care persisted because they were cheaper, although known to be damaging to children.
  - ~ the 'family system', although stated to be the preferred option, was not used, because it was more expensive.
  - ~ delinquents and non-delinquents were accommodated together in the same institutions:
    - Gosford
    - Yanco
    - Parramatta
    - Vernon & Sobraon
  
3. Girls were treated far worse than boys, because of entrenched Victorian attitudes to 'fallen women' and the view that girls were inherently more difficult to reform than boys. Their treatment was characterised by
  - ~ poor accommodation in buildings repeatedly condemned
  - ~ walled institutions for girls, open for boys
  - ~ discriminatory sentencing practice
  - ~ greater regimentation
  - ~ more extensive use of isolated detention and 'segregation'
  - ~ toleration of unlawful assaults on girls
  - ~ greater resort to imprisonment as punishment for rebellious behaviour
  - ~ application of male management systems, derived from Gosford, to girls institutions
  - ~ use of tough male executive staff who came from Tamworth
  
4. Unconscionably harsh treatment for both boys and girls at Tamworth and Hay:
  - ~ no visitors
  - ~ talking only one hour per day
  - ~ everything done at the double
  - ~ cellular confinement in former adult gaols
  - ~ continual surveillance
  - ~ punishment of the slightest infringement of rules, usually by 24 hours isolated detention.
  - ~ doubt about whether Tamworth was properly constituted by proclamation in 1947

## PETER QUINN: BACKGROUND DETAILS

- \* Officer of the Child Welfare Department and its successors from 1951 to 1992
- \* district officer from 1959 to 1970, including nine years as resident district officer at Grafton
- \* Executive Assistant to Director of Aboriginal Welfare 1970-1973
- \* Executive Officer, Adoptions, 1973-75
- \* Administrative Officer(Legal) 1975
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\* from 1975 held executive rank, including the following positions
  - ~ Director, Special Services
  - ~ Acting Director of Policy Development
  - ~ Assistant Director, Audit and Review
  - ~ Director, Legislative and Executive Support
  - ~ Director, Management Services
  - ~ Regional Director, Metropolitan East
- \* Qualifications: BA and MA, Sydney University. Diploma of Adult Education (UTS) . for the past five years engaged in postgraduate research in school of history at Sydney University. PhD Thesis on the Juvenile Correction system in NSW 1905 - 1988 submitted in January 2004. Also attended the Australian Administrative Staff College, MtEliza

Completed as part of Master of Arts degree requirements  
Sydney University, 1985

*'We ask for bread and are given stone'+*

*A History of the Girls' Industrial School, Parramatta, 1941-1961*

Peter Quinn

+ Tenison Woods M, letter to the editor, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 February 1944