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Sent: Sunday, 15 August 2004 10:06 AM

To: Murray, Andrew (Senator)

Subject: My husband scarred as well

Dear Mr Murray,

I have just read your article in today's Melbourne "Age" newspaper. I can not express deeply enough that what you have said needs to be on the national agenda as a matter of urgency.

My husband, born in England, migrated over here with his family in the early 1960's as the mother country encouraged Britons to do. His father was terribly abusive and left the family as soon as they arrived and took off with another woman. His mother had no coping skills and abandoned her 4 children into the care of the state.

My husband, now in his early 50's, has never recovered from the systemic and relentless physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse he sustained as a ward of the State of Victoria from the age of 9 until they were of working age at 16 years.

My husband has had a failed marriage and adult children who are unemployed with problems of their own. This reinforces your statement that not just one generation is affected. My husband has never had a 'fair go'. He never had the opportunity to study or to pursue a career as when he turned 16, the homes kicked him out (and all 16 year olds), and he was to go and find any job that would take him. He moved from job to job and rented for many years as he was always in low paying occupations which simply reinforced that socio-economic status model. When he had an opportunity to buy a commission house through the government in the 1980's he gave everything to his ex-wife after the divorce so his children and ex-wife would not be homeless. Needless to say, my husband had nothing but the clothes on his back.

The scars from my husband's childhood have shaped the course of his life. He is an extremely intelligent man. Through my support he now has a university education, but has not had a chance to find employment due to the shocking age discrimination that permeates this country and again, nobody gives him a 'fair go'. He is working in a manual labouring job, something to 'bring in the money'. He has his pride, and takes from no one.

My husband's spirit inspires and deeply moves me. From nothing he has tried to the best of his abilities to live as a humble and compassionate human being, which he is. His childhood and innocence was cruelly stolen from him as a result of the mistakes of adults who were supposed to unconditionally love and protect him from the world. He has never known the love and security that I believe, is every child's right. He has never learnt what being in a loving, secure family has meant. He has never known that feeling of being able to talk to a grown man about 'man things' when one is an insecure teenager. He has never learnt to love and be able to love (hence the failed marriage). He has had terrible trouble showing any feelings to any one. He has never known how to relate in a healthy way to life. I could go on and on.

I have encouraged him to pursue compensation from the State of Victoria, but he refuses. I actually don't know if this is even possible. It happened so long ago, and there may be no processes in place for this type of thing. He is scared. I don't blame him. Is this what the current enquiry is about? Compensation? Recognition? A sorry?

Regards,  
Sonya Irving