

1st -09-2004

The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs
References Committee
Suite S 159, Parliament House
Canberra Act 2600.

To Whom It May Concern: I am writing my story to you because it needs to be told to all.

I was born in 1964 at the age of 2 I was made Ward of State placed in the Alexander Toddles Home Ballarat Victoria in 1966 then transferred to the Ballarat Children's Home on the 19th September 1969 to 1979 spending my whole childhood in the state care.

While in the care of the Ballarat Children's Home in Victoria I was subjected to physical, sexual, emotional Abuse constantly walking a fine line of terror, fear, hate and shame.

From 1971 – 1978 my cares physical abused me such as:

- 1) I was made to have cold showers every morning, due to bed – wetting.
- 2) Had my face rubbed in my wet sheets of my bed?
- 3) I was belted with a cane, belts, bats anything that they could get their hands on.
- 4) Had my mouth washed out with hand soap?
- 5) Dragged along the hallway carpet by my hair.
- 6) Kick in the stomach and body while I was on the floor.
- 7) Made to stand in hallway in the cold at night.
- 8) Made to clean on hands and knees cleaning metal strips on carpet runners cleaning hours on end.
- 9) Had my ears pulled upwards that I was standing on my tippee toes.
- 10) Thrown up agents the hallway wall.

Emotional abuse I received was:

- 1) Call piss pot, due to wetting the bed, it was a sin to wet the bed they would say; I was nothing but a lazy bitch.
- 2) I lived here because I was a naughty girl, very bad little girl.
- 3) My parents didn't want me or loved me that's why they placed me in the home the first place.
- 4) Words I was called were bitch, tart, wild cat due to many girls with same name I was referred by my last name.
- 5) If I was crying I was not comfit by cares, never was given a hug or kind words. Crying out at night I was left to cry my tears out on my own.
- 6) Many times told that what I hard or saw within the cottage was to stay, never to tell anybody , cares would offing say that no one would ever be leave you.

- 7) I was subjected to watch other girls being belted by cares, to hear the girls beg crying out for them to stop belting them, watching I felt their pain I could do nothing but to watch.
- 8) It was forbidden to see my siblings without notices.

Early 1978 to late 1979, the Administration staff decided to place girls and boys in same cottage, heading into my teens it was here I was emotional and sexually abused such as:

- 1) Boys walked in shower times.
- 2) Boys walked in toilet times.
- 3) Boys jumped in and out of my bed after night rounds from cares in charge.

I was in my teens at the time where I was at puberty and periods, I felt violated I had my innocent taken away from me, felt sham of my body, felt eyes watching my every move, had no privatises.

The Administration staff and cares failed to place locks on shower, bathroom, toilet and girls bedroom doors. The collages were not design to care for teenagers for both females and male under the one roof. After all the years I had lived separated from my siblings.

My parents had fifteen children which ten younger siblings were made Ward of State placed through out Bendigo, Melbourne and Ballarat.

Growing up as a child all I every wanted was my family, or some one to take me as one of their own.

It's not just me who is hurting my children are now feeling the lost of knowing their family tree, my mother will go to her grave knowing what her children went through placed in State Care.

The pain doesn't stop their I have had on going counselling to dial with my past , but knowing our stories are now told and people are listening we can begin to heal from the past and learn from the past with young ones in care today. But we shouldn't forget were we came from Orphanages or Children's Homes, we should be every proud to have survived a horrible up bring while in the state care.

I would like to see more done to help home survives to heal from the past with;

- 1) Counselling free for those ex- wards of state.
- 2) Like to see the Orphanages and Children's Home to be part of our history and names of survives lets not forget Orphanage boys and girls also forte for this country many had died frighting.

- 3) Would like to see the National library of Australia to gather as many stories through out the country like they did for MANY VOICES with the indigenous children who were separated from their families.
- 4) An apology from the State and Federal Governments to all ex- wards of state that were abused while in State care.
- 5) Compensation given to victims of abuse from cares.
- 6) Administration Staff and cares made to answer for their actions of abuse and neglect to provide safe care.

My children need to know my story and others who lived in state care so they can understand why they are a little different from other families. When and how do you start telling your own children your childhood life stories?

Thank you,
Mrs Deborah Findlay