



Senator Jan McLucas
 Chair
 Senate Committee: The Forgotten Australians
 1/9/04



Dear Senator McLucas,
 Australia's adult goods and services industry did not place a submission before your committee as we believed that we had already addressed these issues via our 2000 publication, *Hypocrites* attached). We distributed 30,000 copies of this booklet to all MPs, all churches and all libraries in Australia.

We congratulate you on the work of your committee and without pre-empting the final report later this year, make one observation that we believe is essential in stopping future outbreaks of institutionalised abuse.

It seems that sex, sexuality and attitudes to sexuality are the root cause of much of the misery and torture that many of these people have been subjected to but ways of changing stereotyped and outdated sexual attitudes have not been specifically included in your recommendations.

This is especially true in the case of single mothers who had 'illegitimate' children. They were put into 'care' because they flouted the norms on sexuality – ie outside of a traditional marriage, and not because they were single mothers who could not cope. These people were being punished for their sexual behaviour that did not accord with the views of the government of the day nor with that of the people who ultimately ran the institutions they were consigned to.

It also seems likely that the many priests and other religious carers mentioned in the hearings as having sadistic and sexually abusive natures were made that way by their inability to express their sexuality in normal ways. This inability was actually 'taught' to them through proscriptive codes of behaviour, created and endorsed by the churches. One of the clearest indications of the veracity of this view is that between the years 1990 – 2000 there were 450 cases of child sexual abuse by church clergy that were dealt with by Australian courts. In that same period there were **no** cases of child sex assault in the courts by members of Australia's sex industry. In fact, there has never been a case of child sex assault recorded by someone from the sexual 'expression' industry.

Clearly the victims of this reprehensible behaviour need an apology and compensation, as you have suggested. But what of the wider causes? Will they be addressed by your Committee and will you make

The Eros Association

Ph 02 6285 2477

Fax 02 6282 1499

email eros@eros.org.au

website www.eros.org.au

PO Box 69

Deakin West

ACT 2600

ABN 35 903 598 652

recommendations to government that official programs be created within government to break down the sorts of outdated and straight-jacketed sexual attitudes that caused these problems in the first place?

The training of priests would seem to be an obvious area in need of some sort of regulation. Are they given any sex education at all? Are celibate men in their 20s given any information on how to deal with sexual urges and what happens if these urges are sublimated? The Mormon church's website currently lists the use of leather straps to tie young boys hand's to their bed rails at night as a way of controlling masturbation. Are these sorts of medieval techniques still being used to train priests and carers who will later go on to run major institutions? How do we find these things out?

All of these issues must be dealt with by government now as the church has shown that it is incapable of handling this for themselves. Without a strong series of recommendations from your committee on these issues, the compensation and apologies handed out to those who have been abused will help *them* in the short term but will do nothing to stop a new generation of young people from suffering a similar fate at the hands of another generation of sexually repressed tormentors.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robbie Swan', written in a cursive style.

Robbie Swan
Coordinator