

# Senate inquiry into the implementation of the recommendation of the Forgotten Australians: *A Report on Australians institutionalised as children.*

Senate Affairs Reference Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Submission  
Garry Harrison 23rd of May 2009

3<sup>rd</sup> Submission

This is my third submission to the Senate and still I will feel when this is finished, I still have not finalised what needs to be said.

Ireland's Population is a little over 4 million people, in this country children that were placed into institutional care were abused sexually, emotionally and physically. A report that was released which was nine years in the making has vindicated the many children (Now Adults) that were abused in Ireland.

The government has put aside funding to the tune of approximately 1 billion euros, it is estimated approximately 30,000 children were placed into institutional care roughly equating to 330,000 euros per person.

The Queensland Government has earmarked 100 million dollars towards the Forgotten Australian for redress, the approximate number institutionalized in that state is 40,000 which is approximately \$2500 each. Certain sections of the community thought this was fantastic, what they failed to do was equate this figure down to per head, I'm sure the people in the Senate will agree this is an insult to the Forgotten Australian. The massive number of level two claims is putting pressure on the Queensland Government's \$100 million reparations fund, with advocates warning that some abuse survivors hoping for the maximum \$40,000 payout face disappointment.

According to figures released by Communities Minister Karen Struthers yesterday, more than 10,200 former orphanage and detention centre residents have lodged claims for the basic \$7000 payment. I am sure the Senate is already aware of the disappointments already that have happened to many Forgotten Australians in Queensland, and that is not the only state where these disappointments are happening. All of the Forgotten Australians were cheated of life expectancies, life skills were never afforded them, learning how to cope was another, managing finances, rent, paying bills etc simple for some but an absolute mess to the Forgotten Australian.

In Victoria the State Government has earmarked \$7.1 million dollars for services for the forgotten Australians, it is believed approximately some 100,000 were in institutional care, this works out to

\$7.00 each we should be so grateful, the State Government can afford to waste \$30 million dollars on the Grand prix and not blink an eye.

### **More insults**

From the Legal Services Handbook South Australia for claims regarding sexual, emotional and physical abuse: *"Claims for offences since 1 September 1990 are limited to a maximum payment of \$50 000. For offences between 1 August, 1987 and 1 September, 1990, the maximum is \$20 000 and for offences between 1978 and 1 August, 1987, the maximum is \$10 000. For offences committed in the period 1975 to 1977, the maximum is \$2000 and for offences between 1969 and 1974, \$1000. Thus, the point in your email quote about \$1,000 is correct for those cases where the sexual abuse (proven to be an offence) happened between 1969 and 1974."* <http://www.lawhandbook.sa.gov.au/ch37s01s03.php> 22/05/2009

How much longer does this cover-up and dirty tricks need to be played on the Forgotten Australians in 2004 we were asked to tear out our hearts and reach within us the shame and degradation we have had to live with our entire lives. Yes we saw the tears and the remorse the various Senators had felt for us. Many Forgotten Australians were also there when the Brack's Government gave its mediocre apology, only they were to be put out the back of Parliament House and once again they were to go through their traumas again.

If Ireland with its population can put aside 1 billion dollars to look after their damaged adults through abuse and neglect it would be fair to say the minimum figure that Forgotten Australians should be pursuing is \$17 billion and that is just the minimum, if you convert 1 billion Euros in to dollars one will see the figure I have come up with is still well short of the mark, however it is a starting point where we can sit down and talk, rather than be insulted by the paltry figures that have been bandied around.

The Federal Government has clearly shown its position on the plight of the children placed into institutions, and has like many of us agreed there are different groups within the Institutionalised children.

Within the first 12 months of being elected to office the Prime Minister had given an Apology to the Institutionalised indigenous (stolen generation), recognizing there are various groups within. The three reports have also shown the different groups *"Bringing Them Home"* the Stolen Generation, the Child Migrants report or *"Good White Stock"*, and the non-indigenous *"The Forgotten Australians"*.

After the many years of torment and shame it is time for the respective Governments to step up to the plate and admit the wrong that was done to the Forgotten Australian, compensation from the various Governments and the institutions is long overdue,

The Forgotten Australians are asked to tell their stories as proof that they were institutionalized; is it not enough with the many witnesses that have told their stories to have convinced the Governments these acts of brutality and rape did take place? As children times and dates they were not smart enough to know, but the perpetrators faces they do know.

Many of our brothers and sisters through no fault of their own, more due to the lack of life skills, had got themselves into trouble with the law. Many today still have these records on file. Almost 50 years or more, others 40,30, 20 and 10 years, have had these convictions hanging over their heads. Their crimes are petty, stealing milk, bread, fair evasion, jay walking , driving without a license etc., just to mention a few.

### **And Furthermore**

It is high time the various departments looked at the **spent convictions**, and maybe have it amended for our brothers and sisters who have had to carry these convictions for most of their adult lives and have stayed out of trouble since. This is just one of the many issues our brothers and sisters have had to carry, and all because they didn't know better, the system never gave them any social skills and for that they are severely punished for the majority of their adult lives.

No doubt there will be many other issues that need to be addressed another that comes to mind; many Forgotten Australians were placed into mental institutions not because they were mental, more because they would not allow these perpetrators abuse them, and I would like to add many are still there today at the governments pleasure because the dared to defy the minders.