

Mr James Luthy,
Queensland.
20th May 2009.

Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Inquiry into the Implementation of the
Recommendations of the Lost Innocents and Forgotten
Australians Reports.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to provide a further statement in order to support, validate and extend the statement that I made to the Senate Inquiry in Brisbane on Monday 6th April 2009.

I will therefore be looking at two of the Recommendations that I referred to in my submission.

In particular I would like to refer to Section 9 – 11 which deal with the need for transparency honesty and integrity, as well as the need for churches and other organisations to provide, *“...any concealment of past criminal practices or of persons known, suspected or alleged to have committed crimes against children in their care...”* (Recommendation 11, 8.223)

The second Section that I shall refer to will be Section 20 which deals with the need for on – going funding for Care Leavers Australian Network (CLAN)

As I also stated in my submission to the Senate Inquiry, I will only be referring to the Salvation Army due to the fact that was incarcerated in The Gill Memorial Home for Boys at Goulburn in NSW.

I believe that there is the need for transparency by the Salvation Army and whilst I shall only talk about the Salvation Army there is the need to note that other religious organisations were just as culpable.

In its submission to the Senate Inquiry into the *“Forgotten Australians”* the Salvation Army stated that in regards to abuse, *“...such occurrences have been relatively rare and not endemic to our services.”* (7.47). However there was a different view taken by the Committee which in response to this quite ridiculous assertion, stated, *“The Committee believes that there has been a notable reluctance to acknowledge past practices, in particular the nature and extent of abuses in its institutions.”* (7.47).

In other words the Senate Committee could not believe the Salvation Army, and I believe that this further validates the necessity for organisations such as the Salvation Army to be open, honest and to show some moral integrity.

I would like to suggest that the failure to be totally transparent and open only endorses the perception that by their silence on this issue, and the seemingly unwillingness to admit that these events happened, some churches and some organisations may be perceived as endorsing paedophilic practices and sanctioning abusive occurrences.

The Salvation Army has known of officers who committed crimes against children but failed to pursue these people because they didn't want this information to become public knowledge.

In my statement to the Inquiry (Brisbane April 6th 2009) I made mention of Major Noel Hughes. This man has had various complaints made against him and although the Salvation Army will admit they believe him guilty of various abusive practices they also believe that they do not have the necessary evidence to pass on to the police.

. When I made a complaint about him I was asked if he had sexually abused me. To this I said no although I cannot be sure about what happened to others. My complaint to the Army dealt with Hughes being a thief, liar, physical, verbal and emotional abuser.

I had complained about him when I first was released from the Gill but my complaints were not taken seriously or acted upon at that time. This led me to believe that Hughes statement about home children being classed as proverbial liars was a strongly held community assumption. Two of his favourite sayings were, "Do you want a smack in the mouth?" and, "You're a proverbial liar." Both sayings were usually followed by some form of physical abuse.

Unbeknown to me others had also complained about him and receiving no satisfaction from the Salvation Army one person initiated his own complaint with the NSW Police.

This person was in the Gill with me and his name is Mr David Walshe and the following is written with his consent and knowledge.

David complained about the incredible violence that he suffered at the hands of this man to Detective Sergeant Denise Godden from Goulburn Police, who interviewed Noel Hughes at Caloundra on 19th December, 1998.

In his interview with police Hughes was specifically asked about physical abuse.

Question 62 (Tape no. 99/005) "*What about physical open handed hitting?*" Hughes response was, "*Not on.*"

Of course it was “not on,” but that didn’t mean it didn’t happen. In fact Hughes was the main perpetrator. I can categorically state that I was physically abused by Noel Hughes; David was abused by him and his younger brother Peter was also abused by him. I was a witness to these events and I was once bashed by Noel Hughes for standing up to him when he was hitting Peter Walshe who was four years of age at the time. Peter’s crime was to wet the bed and he had his face wrapped in his sheets and he was swung over the balustrade.

I am therefore prepared to state that Noel Hughes did not tell the truth to the police, that he lied to them and that the Salvation Army had known of his abusive practices and did nothing about him until they were forced to dismiss him for the way he acted towards others in the Army.

I am also concerned that there are others who are just as guilty but have escaped punishment due to the fact that organisations and churches have failed to take heed of Section 11 preferring to remain silent in order to keep their good name at the expense of human suffering.

I also want to further emphasise the need for on – going recurrent funding for CLAN. As an organisation CLAN has done the job that the churches and the various state governments have failed to do.

Whilst it may be possible to cite the Esther Centre in Queensland this organisation deals specifically with Queensland care leavers. The state government will not fund a 1800 number for those care leavers in Queensland to CLAN even though there is no help for those who have moved to Queensland from other parts of Australia.

CLAN is the only national body supporting all care leavers with links to Great Britain, Ireland and Scotland and thus also supports those care leavers who have come from these countries.

CLAN seeks to provide help and assistance crossing racial and religious barriers and as such should be funded totally and in each state by churches and governments.

This is a national issue and the issues should not be clouded by some states helping and others failing to do what is morally right.

I would also like to point out that the various churches profited by the use and exploitation of children and they need to also recognise their moral and religious obligations.

The money spent trying to avoid their responsibilities would be far greater than what would be spent on dealing with home leavers in a compassionate and caring manner.

Thank you for this opportunity to further validate my concerns.

