

18 May 2009

The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Secretary

It is now nearly five years since the Senate Inquiry, *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians, who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*, was tabled in Parliament. Yet we are still waiting for a real commitment – and action – from the Government to justice, redress and services dedicated to the particular needs and issues as recommended in the Report.

The Australian Government, along with State Governments, churches and charities, had a duty of care to protect and nurture these vulnerable children – and they failed. Sadly, when children were placed in children's institutions or in foster care many of them suffered terrible abuse and neglect. That had a detrimental impact that remains well into their adult lives. Many are now middle-aged or older and still carry the burden of unresolved issues and trauma from this past.

We have suffered and we ask for justice and redress for the terrible wrongs that were done to us as children. We call upon you and your Government to show leadership in setting right what was a sad period in Australia's history.

The most urgent of the 39 Recommendations of the Forgotten Australians Report are:

- Acknowledgement and a national apology (Recommendation 1)
- A national reparation or redress fund (Recommendation 6)
- Provision of services including counselling, health care, housing, aged care and educational programs and a whole of government approach to service delivery (Recommendations 21-33)
- On-going funding to CLAN and other advocacy and support groups to ensure that access to the above is maximized (Recommendation 20).

We do not want to remain Forgotten Australians any longer. It is time for action. We appeal to your compassion and ask for your support and your mark in history.

Yours faithfully

Robert House
(Once at Scarba House as a child)