

Matilda
Bawden-
Response
ID 749

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“ As a Social Worker I have witnessed dozens of cases in which Social Workers and their seniors have lied and lied and gotten away with it. Once I was even forced to resign and threatened with dismissal for exposing corrupt social work practices. All of these experiences are extensively documented and provable, on request.

Senate Inquiry
into Children in
Out of Home
Care - 2014

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your first name	Matilda
Your surname	Bawden
Your mobile phone number	██████████
Your home phone	
Email address	██
Address	████████████████████
Suburb	████████████████████
Postcode	████
State	████████████████████
Other	
Country	Australia
Are you a former "Child in Care"?	No
Do you have a disability?	No
Parents nationality	Australian
Nationality of children removed	Australian

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DETAILS OF THE CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE :

Child 1 ██████████

Child 2 ██████████████████

Child 3 ██████████████████

Do you want this Submission to the Senate Inquiry to be "In Confidence" ? **No**

Please select the role which best suits you, in relation to your statutory child protection dealings Extended family

PLEASE CLICK ANY STATEMENTS THAT RELATE TO YOUR DEALINGS WITH CHILD PROTECTION PRACTITIONERS :

- I have been improperly treated and generally abused by child protection workers. Yes
- I am stating that my case is a matter of public interest. Yes
- I can prove child protection workers have acted negligently giving rise to civil claim. Yes
- I state that child protection workers have acted in a manner that poses a serious threat to public mental health. Yes
- I state there has been a serious miscarriage of justice. Yes
- I state child protection workers have continued in blatant dishonest reporting. Yes
- I state that child protection workers have shown extreme bias. Yes
- I state there has been abuse of power by child protection workers. Yes
- I state child protection workers have perverted the course of justice. Yes
- I state the department have failed in their duty of care to the children. Yes
- I state there is a failure to notify parents of hospitalisation of child / children by child protection workers. Yes

I state that I am requesting an independent and thorough audit of the case I am providing details about. Yes

Other : I have an official Public Interest Disclosure detailing the events affecting my nieces and nephew

COMMUNITY INTERACTION WITH CASEWORKERS

What state / territory removed the child / children? South Australia [8]

Office location of the department concerned [REDACTED]

Did caseworkers investigate the case thoroughly prior to removing the child / children? No

Please explain how they failed to investigate the case properly prior to removing the child / children :

They did not check to see if any of the allegations were true before they took the child / children into care. Nor did they offer any intervention or support prior to removing the child / children. I can provide a documented Public Interest Disclosure on this case, which was ignored by everyone in the chain of command and received no response. I am a Social Worker and mandated notifier.

Did caseworkers investigate the case thoroughly after the removing the child / children into out of home care ? No

Please explain how they failed to investigate the case properly after the child / children had been removed :

Gross malpractice, covered up once they set themselves on a course of vengeance against my sister.

They were determined to carry out reprisals using the children as a weapon once their grievous error was pointed out and Minister was contacted by a member of Parliament who threatened to embarrass the minister publicly.

It was only the members intervention that help get the children back into the family's care.

Did caseworkers work with you for a better outcome for you and your family? No

Did caseworkers work against you? Yes

Did they provide any support services to prevent the child / children being taken into care ? No

Did child protection caseworkers keep you informed about what was happening with your children? No

Could you please explain what you mean by they didn't keep you informed about your children while they were/are in out of home care. Too many lies told to detail here. I can provide details in a separate attachment if required.

Did they listen to you and respond to your concerns? No

What concerns did they ignore or not respond to you about?	As above... can provide details
Did caseworkers provide the opportunity to have the child / children returned?	No
When child protection turned up and removed the child, was this the first time you were aware they were going to do this?	Yes
Do you believe that caseworkers broke any laws ?	Yes

WHICH LAWS DO YOU BELIEVE CASEWORKERS BROKE ?

Crimes Act - Perverting the course of justice.	Yes
Crimes Act - Providing false instruments by public official (Public authority giving false information to another public authority).	Yes
Misconduct under a Public Sector Employment and Management Act.	Yes
Dishonesty.	Yes
Recklessness.	Yes
Other	Whistleblower Protection Act

Use this section to explain exactly what was done or not done that constituted criminal offences by the child protection workers.

For example, did you feel at any time that you were blackmailed by child protection workers by having to sign paperwork that you did not want to? Or had to agree to something you did not want to? Or do you feel that they deliberately gave false information from one department to another (false instruments)? Etc. ---- YES to all the above...

Consider the personal circumstances of your case and describe how you believe your experience of forced removal could have been better managed.

Admissions of error in judgement and perhaps some responsibility taken by "fixing" the mistake rather than denying it was made. Egos to have been put aside rather than used to intimidate and punish an innocent family - not just parents and children, but also grandparents, uncles and aunties who wanted to help.

Have caseworkers persecuted or threatened you, or cut contact with removed children because you have expressed opinions that are contrary to their beliefs? Yes

What have caseworkers done when you have exercised your fundamental right because you expressed opinions contrary to their belief?

I was denied care of the children, despite that wish clearly being expressed in front of the Social Workers and police. Quote: "We did want to know if you would take the kids overnight, but now that you're being difficult, that wont happen!". I am the aunt and a qualified and experienced Social Worker, Court-approved Access Supervisor, Mandated Notifier and former employee of the department. I was also a Research officer for a Member of the Legislative Council at the time.

If you attended a protest or rally about issues surrounding child protection, was this ever used against you ? Yes

What happened when you attended a protest/rally about the issues surrounding child protection ?

I have NEVER been able to get work - even at base-grade level - with the department!

DO ANY OF THE BELOW STATEMENTS REFLECT THE WAYS YOU WERE TREATED BY CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS?

- They lied in affidavits. Yes
- They lied in reports. Yes
- They only provided what information suited them to court report writers (IE Family Relationships Australia). Yes
- They caused reports to be inaccurate due to only providing information that suited their agenda. Yes
- Vindictiveness. Yes
- Belittling parents. Yes
- Putting their own best interests first before those of your child/children/family. Yes
- Did they tolerate aspects of your life that were different to theirs? (eg. race, poverty, education level) Yes
- Continues to make judgements about you. Yes
- Displaying an inability or lack of willingness to accept the positive changes parents may have made. Yes
- Expect parents to work “with” them BUT they won’t work “with” parents. Yes
- Refusal to provide a change of child protection workers when personalities clash. Yes
- Discriminating against parents with mental illness. Yes
- Using “the best interests of the child” to justify whatever they do even when clearly it’s not. Yes
- Inflexible working hours – evenings and weekends would enable them to work “with” parents and their work commitments. Yes
- Where there has been no harm, you are treated in the same disrespectful ways as those who have actually harmed their children. Yes

-
- The child protection workers assumed you were a bad parent though you had done nothing wrong. Yes
 - The child protection workers chose not to accept the positive statements of family members even though they were true. Yes
 - The child protection workers chose to accept false statements of family members even though they were NOT true. No

CASEWORKERS INTERACTION WITH THE CHILD / CHILDREN

- Did caseworkers interview the child / children on their own? I don't know
- Were there two caseworkers interviewing the child / children? I don't know
- Were copies of the interview of the child / children made available to you? No
- Was the child / children asked if they would like to have a support person present with them at the time of interview I don't know

QUESTIONS REGARDING INTERVIEWING OF PARENTS BY CASEWORKERS

- Was the parent / parents interviewed without a support person being present? Yes
- Was your request to have a support person denied? Yes
- Did you want to record interviews? Yes
- Did you ask if you could record interviews? No
- Were you allowed to record interviews? No
- If the interview was recorded would that have helped you evidence lies told or written by the caseworkers in court? Yes
- Do you believe that recording all contact caseworkers have with families would make the system fair and more honest? Yes
- Do you believe that caseworkers are getting away with misconduct and other criminal activities because there is no way of proving what has been communicated by the caseworker? Yes

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CONDUCT OF THE CHILD PROTECTION CASEWORKER IN THE COURTS?

- Was the caseworkers evidence based on fact ? No
- Did the caseworker allow the child to be present at the court hearings? No

- Did they tell you the truth or write truthful Affidavits?

No

Please explain how the caseworkers did not tell the truth in affidavits, or were not truthful.

No information was ever revealed but lies had to have been told to produce such a corrupt outcome, as we later discovered during a case conference.

FAMILY IMPACT STATEMENT

Was the child adopted ?

No

WHAT WERE THE REASONS FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN?

Failure to thrive

Yes

Were the allegations false?

Yes

WERE YOU CHARGED WITH CHILD ABUSE?

Were you charged with child abuse?

No

DID THE CASEWORKERS CONTINUE TO RAISE THE BAR ON YOU?

- Were you ever given a single list of things you needed to do / not do in order to have the child / children returned ? No
- Did the caseworkers continually add to the list of requirements for you to do in order to have the child / children returned? Yes
- Was this because the list was never ending? Yes
- Did completing the caseworkers requirements of you enable the child / children to be returned? Yes
- Was it difficult to address the issues in court because they kept changing (raising the bar)? Yes
- Did you receive Affidavits and care plans in enough time to respond to the court? No

ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES :

- Did the department require you to complete any courses? No
- Did they improve your parenting skills? No
- Did the department assist you to do what they required of you? No
- Did they encourage and support you to do what was required of you? No

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- Were the parents prevented from having any support persons at any meetings / conferences or court proceedings related to the removal of the child / children? No

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT ON YOU SINCE THE CHILD WAS TAKEN AWAY AND PLACED INTO FOSTER CARE?

- Lack of Trust Yes
- Sadness Yes
- Depression Yes
- Low self-esteem Yes
- Anxiety Yes
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Yes

Other : Eldest son is deeply traumatised as her remembers all those events and can describe his feelings clearly.

Has there been short or long-term emotional impacts because of the care proceedings and forced removal you have experienced?

Yes

WHAT HAS BEEN THE SHORT OR LONG-TERM EMOTIONAL IMPACTS OF THE CARE PROCEEDINGS AND FORCED REMOVAL YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED?

- Grief Yes
- Loss Yes
- Pain Yes
- Anger Yes
- Fear Yes
- Frustration Yes
- Depression Yes
- Anxiety Yes
- Stress Yes
- Difficulties sleeping Yes
- Difficulties eating Yes
- Difficulties working Yes
- Post Traumatic Stress Yes
- Loss of enjoyment of life Yes
- Feels like life revolves around courts and caseworkers Yes
- Feelings of injustice Yes
- Feelings of inadequacy for being unable to protection your children Yes
- General suffering Yes

Other : The entire family was adversely affected - all 20 of us!

- Were you offered professional help such as grief counseling to deal with your loss? No
- Has there been a negative physical impact on you caused by the forced removal of the child? No
- Has there been a negative financial impact on your family due to care and protection proceedings? Yes

Financial short and long term impact of the care proceedings and forced removal:

The family (of 5) was uprooted from [REDACTED] and forced to live 400km away and move in with my brother and his family of 6. This was to protect my sister from any further allegations of abuse or neglect which the Social Workers c/would have manufactured to bolster their chances in court. It was to give her constant supervision and contact with all her children (to prevent their trauma and distress being exacerbated). This took place over 3 months and almost damaged the relationship between the two families as the whole situation was so over-the-top outrageous.

If you would like to write more here, please do so :

As a Social Worker I have witnessed dozens of cases in which Social Workers and their seniors have lied and lied and gotten away with it. Once I was even forced to resign and threatened with dismissal for exposing corrupt social work practices. All of these experiences are extensively documented and provable, on request.

- Has there been a negative impact on the relationship with your extended family and friends, caused by child protection's removal and court proceedings? Yes
- Have you had to move home or town because of child protection involvement? Yes
- Did child protection force you to move? Yes

Please explain why you had to move home or relocate to another town, and how this is related to your child being in out of home care:

My sister had to move for her own protection and to deny Social Workers any opportunity to fabricate further false allegations by being surrounded by her family and friends. In [REDACTED] she was isolated and that was a major reason why they were able to get away with their allegations of neglect.

- What would have been a better solution in your case then forced removal? Polite and frank discussion!
- Is there anything else you would like to say concerning the removal? All in my attachment! BUT YES! A MILLION THINGS!
- How many placements has the child / children had ? 1
- How many caseworkers has the child / children had ? Unknown
- How often does the caseworker see the child / client? Unknown
- Does the child / children know who their caseworker is?

HOW MUCH CONTACT IS THERE BETWEEN THE SIBLINGS (BROTHERS AND SISTERS) ?

Other A politician's intervention kept children together

KINSHIP CARE OPTIONS GIVEN TO FAMILY MEMBERS

Did you have a relationship with the child / children, prior to them being placed in foster care ? Yes

Did you apply for kinship care of the child / children ? Yes

Was there a formal assessment done for you to be assessed as a kinship carer for the Child/Children in Out of Home Care? No

Were you denied or rejected for kinship placement of the child / children ? Yes

WHAT WERE THE REASONS FOR NOT ALLOWING YOU TO BE THE KINSHIP CARER ?

Other I disagreed with their assessment

If they did not place the child / children with you, and they still used Kinship care, was the Kinship placement with a person whom does not get along with the mother, or parents? No

CONTACT WITH CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE

General questions about the removal of the child / children :

Was your child / children placed in care in the state you resided in? Yes

DOES THE CHILD / CHILDREN EVER ASK TO COME HOME?

Yes Yes

All the time Yes

Other : Children wanted other closer family options which were denied

What has happened if the child has asked to come home, or kicked and screamed or tried to stay with you at the end of contact?

Nothing Yes

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT ON THE CHILD / CHILDREN SINCE THEY WERE PLACED INTO FOSTER CARE?

• Lack of Trust	Yes
• Sadness	Yes
• Withdrawal	Yes
• Depression	Yes
• Low self-esteem	Yes
• Anxiety	Yes
• Suicidal tendencies	Yes
• Complex trauma	Yes
• Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	Yes
• Other	Disclosure on request

In your opinion has there been an emotional impact on the child / children as a result of being placed in foster care ?

Yes

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT HAS BEEN THE SHORT OR LONG-TERM EMOTIONAL IMPACTS ON THE REMOVED CHILDREN BECAUSE OF THE CARE PROCEEDINGS AND FORCED REMOVAL?

• Grief	Yes
• Loss	Yes
• Pain	Yes
• Anger	Yes
• Fear	Yes
• Frustration	Yes
• Depression	Yes
• Anxiety	Yes
• Stress	Yes
• Nightmares and bad dreams	Yes
• Lower school grades	Yes
• Difficulties sleeping	Yes
• Difficulties working	Yes
• Post Traumatic Stress	Yes
• Loss of enjoyment of life	Yes
• Little interest in anything	Yes
• Feelings of injustice	Yes
• Sometimes don't want to get out of bed	Yes

-
- General suffering Yes
 - Other Rage
-

HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD ANY OF THE BELOW RULES, OR SIMILAR, BY CHILD PROTECTION CASEWORKERS ?

- You cannot talk to the child about the past. Yes
- You cannot talk to the child about the case or why they were removed. Yes
- You are not aloud to change a child with out someone being present. Yes
- You must leave toilet door open. Yes
- You are not allowed to record the contact visit. Yes
- You are not allowed to whisper anything to your child. Yes
- You are not allowed to talk to each other outside of the contact room. Yes
- No cuddles or not too many. Yes
- You must talk loud enough for the supervisor to hear. Yes
- You are not allowed to tell child the truth about questions they ask. Yes
- You are not allowed to bring any other children or relatives into contact. Yes
- Any additional children or relatives visiting the child / children must be approved by the caseworker first. Yes

Where there any other rules you were told by the caseworker or contact supervisor?

The above was frequently the case in other child protection matters I had been involved in and contact was always at risk of termination.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Have you been subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment?	Yes
Could you provide more details about your torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment please.	Dealing with a corrupt public service
Have you been subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with respect to your privacy, family, home or correspondence? Or have you been subjected to unlawful attacks on your honour and reputation?	Yes
Please provide more details about the unlawful interference with your privacy, family, home or correspondence; or attacks on your honour and reputation.	See attached
Have you been denied your right to hold an opinion/s without interference?	Yes
Please provide more information on the violation of your right to hold opinions without interference	Reprisals were carried out when that opinion was expressed
Have you had your right to freedom of expression violated?	Yes
Please provide more information on how your right to freedom of expression has been violated?	See attached
Has your family been denied protection by society and the state	Yes
Please provide more information	As above
All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. Do you believe you have been discriminated against with respect to this statement?	Yes
Please provide more information on this answer	As above

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Has the state taken appropriate measures to protect your child from all forms of abuse, violence, negligence, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse?	Yes
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SUMMARY

Describe your thoughts and feelings toward child protection and the authorities in general now that you have experienced them ?

Did you initially seek assistance from child protection?	No
Would you ever ring child protection again for assistance?	No
Do you tell domestic violence victims to seek assistance from child protection?	No
Do you tell them not to ask for help because of mandatory reporting regulations?	Yes
Would you ever ring the police again to ask for assistance if in a domestic violence situation?	Uncertain
Would you ever trust healthcare professionals with information that may be used against you by child protection workers?	No
Would you ever seek help from any government authority again after having the department involved in your life previously?	No
What is the best thing/s about the current child protection system?	Still searching for that...
What is the worst thing about the current child protection system ?	UNACCOUNTABLE AND UNTOUCHABLE!
What changes would you make to the child protection system if you could ?	Reintroduce a Quality Assurance Unit into the Department and sack some serious deadwood and malignant practitioners
Would you like to have your case reviewed ?	Yes
Do you see any point in asking to have your case reviewed by another government department ?	Yes
Would you like to have your casefile auditted for compliance with state child protection laws, and policies and procedures by a professional organisation that is experienced with current child protection issues, that is independent of the department ?	Yes