

To the Senate Committee,

legcon.sen@aph.gov.au.

Hello my name is _____ as a child my name was _____

I was a ward of the state in NSW from age 13.5 yrs till 18 years of age.

I have a child protection file which starts around my birth which details physical, sexual , emotional abuse and neglect and maltreatment, however the state refused to acknowledge my horrific abuse and I was never given assistance until my mother eventually gave me to docs stating she didn't want me anymore.

I was initially made a temporary ward for 3mnths.

In this initial 3mnths I had 13 placements and was placed back with my abusive parents on multiple occasions (but still under the legal care of the minister). I would always return to docs care battered and bruised, sometimes bleeding, yet docs didn't seem to mind.

The state would either leave me there with my abusive parents or place me in another foster home. 9 out of 10 placements were just as abusive.

During my full time in foster care as a ward of the state (4 ½ years) I had over 44 official foster homes , was placed in 3 refuges, moved 144 times, was drugged and held against my will in a mental hospital (until the staff refused to hold me because I was not mentally ill).

I was forced against my will to spend a night and half a day in Yasmar juvenile detention centre for girls because there was no foster home available, I slept next to a girl who had stabbed her mother.

I had never committed a crime or even been arrested, yet I was processed and treated like an animal, I was bullied and attacked by inmates and was digitally penetrated but the guards and docs didn't care.

I was placed in 4 placements where I was constantly sexually assaulted yet docs never cared and as far as I can see never correctly documented the events either.

I was placed in a boarding school for almost 12 months to keep covering up the treatment I had been receiving by docs

I was raped in a refuge and fell pregnant as a ward.

Docs ignored me and just treated me like a tramp. I was offered no assistance and had to fend for myself, I had no idea what to do or how to care for myself let alone a baby I had to organise all my own prenatal care.

I lived on the streets numerous times, according to docs notes they figured I was old enough now and should just do what I want. I was surviving but definitely not doing what I wanted.

I lived with people who were in severe poverty who could not feed themselves and their children let alone me.

I was placed with a lesbian couple which was in the early 90's very difficult to understand.

I was placed with 2 families with severe alcoholics

I was denied an education for the first 12 months of my ward ship and made to do folk art with the elderly because Docs felt I was too stupid to attend a mainstream school.

I was placed on dexamphetamine even though I didn't need it and it made me ill.

I was placed with drug dealers and beaten when I did not want to participate in their activities and would get in trouble from docs because I ran away from the placement.

Every time a nice foster family wanted to keep me I would be moved and never allowed to see them again. Docs kept me isolated.

I was never given any medical treatment unless it was for the purpose of evidence for court.

My material needs were never provided for I was given one cheque for \$200 in 1997 to buy some clothes. This is the only assistance of this kind ever given to me in my entire ward ship.

Docs made my Austudy payment which should have been what I would live on go to the nuns at my boarding school to pay my fees.

I was supposed to be given \$60.00 to support myself a month I saw the money perhaps twice and that did not provide for much

I was placed in filthy homes, so filthy the dogs didn't even eat the food off the floor.

You wouldn't sit on the toilet for fear of what would touch your skin.

One home I was made to sleep on a lounge infested with flees and was sticky to the touch, it smelt and the room had no door. Their daughter was a hooker and I would be unable to shield my eyes from her activities as she was direct across from my room and also had no door.

I was placed to live in caravans around 4 times.

One family made me sleep in the attic and I could not even stand up I was never included in anything.

I was never included in normal family times such as birthdays Christmas or Easter. I have no memories of these times during my entire ward ship other than being alone having to move because it was inconvenient for the carers to have me there at that time of year.

I was denied the right to attend the funeral of the one and only person who really cared for me as a ward, a foster mother who had been told she couldn't keep me because she worked until 4.30 in the afternoon.

All my medical needs were ignored and never treated which now impacts on my quality of life , I have back (spinal) , eye, ear and bone issues.

The only counselling I ever received was from a counsellor who sexually abused me and was and still is best friends with my abusive parents.

Even though the state had my parents charged with abuse they kept putting me back with them.

I lived in over 15 different geographical locations and attended 9 different high schools.

When I turned 18 and I was already a young mother I was given no support.

I have begged and asked for support and assistance every day.

I left care with no attachments to anyone, no family, no foster family, I'm suffering from depression, and post traumatic stress disorder.

I was deserted and alone.

As a ward of the state of NSW I was subjected to sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse, neglect both physical and mental.

The department of community services directly failed in their duty of care to me, they neglected me, and they put me in harmful situations and allowed me to be falsely imprisoned twice.

I can go on and on with the abuse but I understand I have to try and keep it brief.

As an adult I suffer everyday with the pain from the abuse, the feelings of being abandoned over and over and over again, the

anger that the department allowed me to be abused and re abused over and over again.

The loss of a normal life.

Never having normality or a loving home.

The loss around losing the only foster carer who did want me but docs would not allow.

I suffer every day , I am still isolated , I have no family , I am a single mother with 4 children all who resulted from rape, the first of which happened whilst in care .

And because I was so scared and so alone and had nowhere to turn the only person to offer help was the man who had raped me in the refuge and he would entrap me in domestic violence until 2004. All the while docs did not care.

I had vision, I had plans, I had goals but because of the way I was treated I am just a single mother with 4 children struggling to breath because of the crushing weight of my life.

I finally started to grasp air last year, I had still survived.

I have never used drugs, never broken the law, never drank.

I could be pleased I had achieved at least that goal in my life.....but that was apparently not enough.

On August 19th last year because I continuously ask docs for the assistance I deserve they decided I was mentally unfit to care for my children because of my horrific past.

This was another knife in my chest. It is because of them that I have a tortured soul it is because of them that I suffer depression and post traumatic stress yet they use that to destroy my life further.

They were my only family if you can call them that.

Yet the damage they caused does not apparently matter.

They took my beautiful children away; they ignored all advice from professionals who clearly stated you could find no better mother than me.

Docs themselves admit I never abused my children.

But docs believed my past was too much for me to bear and the only way they could help was take the only family in this world I had away.

Doing this tortured me more, for I lived in fear for my children what would they be subjected to?

I was right my 4 children all have their own stories of abuse in care as well now, something I never wanted for them.

I did get my children home just before Christmas but docs have stripped me of my parental rights apparently for my own good so they can help my children.

Sorry I don't trust you, I trust no one and that's all thanks to you docs.

The only way I know of getting redress from docs is to drag them through court.

This is hard, costs money which victims like me just don't have and it is traumatising.

Finding a lawyer is near impossible and every time you produce evidence to back your claims docs destroy it anyway or they didn't keep it in the first place.

I have had no assistance or redress.

The department thinks saying "I'm so sorry it must be hard" is comforting, well it's not.

The prime minister thinks apologies to clusters of people helps well it doesn't.

I can't be classed as a forgotten Australian because I was born to late I was in care in the 90's apparently things were all hunky dory by then.

Well I'm sorry to say they weren't and they still aren't.

Ex wards deserve so much more than the pissy \$40,000 some states offer it does nothing, that's not even enough to cover one year's therapy bills.

NSW shows no compassion at all to the ex wards who lived under their care , nor do any of the organizations that worked for them ie Burnside, Anglicare and so on.

Redress/ compensation is very important to me because without it i have no hope of gaining anything remotely close to a normal life free of pain and suffering.

I need years of therapy all of which i cannot afford and cannot access without bundles of cash. 12 sessions on a Medicare scheme isn't even a drop of water in the ocean of damage caused to my life.

I have been told i would need weekly therapy for at least the next 16 years because there is just so much abuse in my past and so much pain to work through.

A formal written apology would be nice but honestly one day i may just use it as toilet paper because that's all the governments apologies seem to be good for at the moment.

Really i don't quite know what to say.

The damage is horrific, and deep seeded the government should be held accountable for what happens to those under their legal care .

Why is it that the government can punish someone they think is a bad parent, yet when the government fail as parents they are not held responsible? THIS IS NOT FAIR!!!!!!

We should not have to suffer or be traumatised more just to try and get compensation.

We should be treated with dignity and respect not low life scum.

Our past should not be an excuse for the government to destroy our lives further.

I believe:

- Their needs to be changes to supports offered whilst in care.
- There should be real long term after care available for all state wards, not just pathetic pamphlets that offer no follow through.
- There should be added assistance for those like myself who leave care with no one, no connection, no one to turn to.
- Children of ex wards should also be entitled to programs to help them understand, to help them to grow and to offer intervention were needed to stop cycles from continuing. But

this must all happen without degrading the ex ward as it is not their fault that they had a terrible life which impairs thier life as an adult.

- Ex wards should have special entry in to work programs.
- Ex wards should have priority to housing and education programs.
- Ex wards should have special access to long term mental health care by professionals not just telephone lines maned by uni students or worse.
- Ex wards should be entitled to free or reduced dental and eye care.
- Ex wards should be entitled to financial compensation and maybe even higher rates of pension payments so we can meet all the costs of dealing with our traumatised pasts.
- We are victims yet does anybody care?
- Help those who are abused properly !!
- The abuse i suffered and still suffer at the department's hands needs to be acknowledged officially.
- Policies , practices and legislation needs to be changed.

Thank you for taking in to account my opinion .

This is as short as i could get my life for you so if you want further details i will be happy to answer any questions.

Yes i will be fighting to be compensated and yes I will fight till the day i die.

I cannot forgive the government for what it has done to me and now also my children. I may only be 29 but the pain and suffering was real, is real and holds me down every day of my life.

7/06/2010

