

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I was a ward of the state. I continue to suffer the effects of this fact some 55 years later. I suffered from emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse whilst held in the 'care' of the Katherine Booth Girls home ' Home in Kew, Victoria. I live, even today, in an atmosphere of continual fear, guilt and shame. I somehow feel responsible. I am haunted by the betrayal and mistreatment shown by my caregivers, and I live in isolation. The impact of this early experience has meant I am forever trapped and haunted by my childhood memories.

I have recurrent and intrusive flashbacks of the many traumatic events that happened to me while I was at the home. I often feel as though I am back there, and the abuse is recurring, and, because of these emotional flashbacks, I self-medicate with large amounts of alcohol. I also take sleeping tablets to help me get through and manage my pain. I feel sad and lonely and have distanced myself from my loving family many years ago as my feelings of self loathing and doubt are always present.

One day my mother left my sister, my six-month old baby brother and me in the Girls' Home. The neglect I suffered the sexual abuse I thought could cope with, as I knew one day I would grow up and leave that place. What I didn't know is that the feelings of rage, self loathing, depression, anxiety and guilt would follow me forever.

Any abuse of children is not acceptable but even more horrific is when the abusers are from a government-funded organization, and that high-level people knew of the horrors occurring there. Being fostered out to child molesters, child abusers made my situation worse, and left my level of trust in humans at zero.

My family will never know the full horror of what I went endured, nor would I want them to. I have been down the legal road before; how traumatic and painful it was to relive these memories.\*\* Also, financially I am in no position to pursue this...I am currently on a pension and in a state of severe hardship.

I want the authorities to follow up in pursuing the abusers; I need to be compensated for the abuse/neglect/poor education/health care/dental care/emotional and psychological damage I suffered as a child;

I UNDERSTAND that the government has apologised, but I need them to accept responsibility and back up their fine words of apology with real money.

We are all children of Australia and so we should all be treated equally and not have to accept that our fate rested on mere luck as to what State we grew up in, what town we were abused in. We need the Australian government to show leadership and make all States contribute to a national scheme.

The churches and charities should also be required to contribute to a national scheme. They were part of the problem and should be a part of the solution.

My childhood has not ended with me. My family suffers, my children suffer anxiety, alcohol problems and panic disorder, and in turn their children are also at risk of this unfair legacy. It's a problem that needs fixing in this generation and the government needs to stand up show some guts and help those of us who had no voice; those who could not, as children, help themselves.

Thank you

