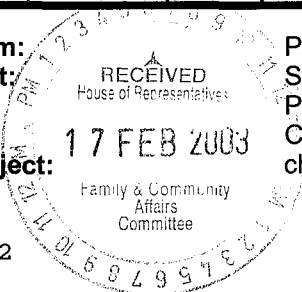


Irwin, Debbie (REPS)

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

From: Phillip Mendes [Philip.Mendes@med.monash.edu.au]
Sent: Sunday, 16 February 2003 9:54 AM
To: Philip.Mendes@med.monash.edu.au
Cc: Committee, FCA (REPS)
Subject: children's inquiry



Submission No: 08
Date Received: 17 FEBRUARY 2003
Secretary: B. Fisher

16/2

I understand that you are seeking public contributions to your Inquiry into improving children's health and well being.

An issue of high priority for this Inquiry should be the absence of leaving care services for young people leaving foster care and other care options following state custody and guardianship orders. At present, NSW is the only state to provide funded leaving care and after care supports. No other states do so. In contrast, the British Government now provides national benchmarks for leaving care that all local authorities are obliged to follow (see the British Department of Health website for extensive details).

Research has consistently found that young care leavers experience disproportionate homelessness, early pregnancy, unemployment etc. There is an urgent need for the Federal Government to establish national benchmarks for leaving care services as per the British example. I and many other child welfare researchers in Victoria and elsewhere would be pleased to elaborate if of interest.

Yours,

Dr Philip Mendes
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