

On the 27/8/1956, I was made a Ward of State at the Children's Court in Albany N.S.W. I was at this stage just about 9 y.o.

I was made a Ward of State for neglect, living in primitive conditions at Saddington N.S.W. with my father and mother and six brothers and sisters, my brother Bill and sisters Valda and Beverley were also made State Wards, Valda and Beverley were sent to Thurgosna Orphanage in Albany. Bill and myself was taken by train with a Welfare Officer to St John's Bays Orphanage Geelburn N.S.W. which was run by the Sisters of Mercy.

On arrival at Geelburn, I was in a complete new world, knew no one and wondering where I was, and why I was there, missing my parents and brothers and sisters, I can remember crying myself to sleep night upon night, I was struggling in a little world of my own, left to work out and understand what was going around me, I was at this god forsaken place broken hearted and feeling sick not being told nothing. It was only my brother that kept me going, hoping my parents would come and rescue me and take me home but this wasn't to happen.

The Superior of the home was a Mother Genevieve I found her to be a heartless, very strict, hard faced, no understanding old witch! but I certainly would not have told her so then but I would love to have a chat over a cup of tea now. I can assure you.

The meals or slops as us kids called them consisted of:

Breakfast: Bowl of Porridge (GHE)

lunch: 1 chop or sausage & little potato

Tea: 2 Slices of bread, Butter and jam with each meal a cup of tea (slops)

I was placed at several locations for school holidays some were good people and others wanted just to take their frustrations out on me but I will say the worst of them still treated me better than the home.

At the home we all had our jobs to do, scrub the toilets, mop the floors, sweep, help with the dishes and clothes washing.

I used to suffer with cold sores and chill blains when I was there, I could not talk, managed to eat as I was always hungry my lips were that sore every time I went to open my mouth my lips would bleed. This would go on for days then the nuns would give me a tube of Zinc Cream and had to share it with other kids, life wasn't getting any easier.

If we were lucky we would see a film once a month for some reason for being naughty I copped this a few times you never seen the picture you were made sit on the cold floor in front of the nuns with back to the screen and they would make ~~me~~ rub their feet then move to the next nun, they would be eating lollies but never drop one down to you.

I can remember quiet well it has never left me on one of my holidays I went to a farm at Yass, the people had a son who was a little strange and they would go to town every Friday sometimes twice a week and their son and I would have to stay at the farm, I was most probaly 11 to 12 years old, when they would leave he would turn very strange and he would try and grab me but I would run away and he would chase me, I would eventually out smart him and get in the bathroom and lock myself in and stay there all day till his parents come home, I would not say any thing to them because the way he used to look at me, I knew not to say anything he was around 20 y.o. I was glad for them holidays to finish

the people would then say would I like to come back I would politely say "I don't like farm holidays but thanks all the same."

I could go on for pages with complaints and shocking things that happened to me in that place called St John's. but the more I write the sicker

I feel and hatred bears upon me. so I have to try to put most of it behind me a lot that I never will.

I was made a ward of the State well I reckon a good term until I reached the age of sixteen.

When I was 13 or 14 y.o I was transferred to Boys Town, ENCADINE in Sydney which was run by Salesian Brothers. They were very hard on rules never use a strap or stick they would punch you with their bare fists and threaten us if they couldn't control us they would send us to Mittagang where we would be whipped. but to my knowledge no one ended up there. Food was a little better at Boys Town conditions were on a par.

Nearing the age of 16 thanks to a lady I was holidaying with found me a job on a farm in N.S.W.

When I turned 16 they released me. what a load from my shoulders that was I can assure you.

From the time I went to St Johns until the time I left Boys Town, I never received a letter a birthday card or parcel or any thing from my mother or father, reasons today I don't know. I used to ask the nuns for their address or my sisters address so I could write they would simply say "DON'T KNOW"

I am so glad in my mind to know there are no such places at Orphanages today because it has scared me for life. I am married now, with two married children a boy 38 and a girl 33 from their marriages I have six grandchildren who hopefully in time will want to know all about their Grandpeps upbringing and hopefully understand the up bringing I had. I have a very thoughtful wife who comes from a good life or family that, does her best to understand, where I am coming from. I am a fully depended Insulin Diabetic, 2 needles per day, I am on Depression tables and high blood pressure tables and I put all this down, to my young childhood, I am on a Disability Pension as my health and past experiences have I know contributed to this.

Communication with my brothers and sisters is very poor, after such a long while apart for everyone, I have one sister. I have not seen or heard from in 39 years, others 10 to 15 years

And they feel the same way with me, the only time we have actually been together was when my dad died and all weren't there for that day either.

I find it now-a-days very hard to communicate, as we are all distant brother and sisters

So I am writing letter to you to put away ~~but~~ things but but it won't help its always and always will be there things I will never ever forget they keep coming on me like a nightmare

Also from my life as a football, kicked, punched, and mentally abused, my mother to day does not want to acknowledge me as a son or my brother at that, she told my daughter when she (my daughter) was her I should have been smothered at birth I do think she does not want to answer me some of the questions I would like to ask her and why were we put in a orphanage at childhood, she will not talk to me on phone or answer anything in writing

So these are a few pages of things I want to write there are a lot more to follow if I liked writing, I hope. this letter could be shared with other people in my position as they would honestly say they had a bastard of a young life and would wish it on no one.

I

So I feel deep down, - people in this kind of situation and treated like second class citizens, by these so called goodie-goodie Ward of the State carers, should be compensated in some form or way or at least a apology from our Parliamentarians, I would class myself as a stolen generation from my family, which was one before I went away to a lost family member of now 9 brothers and sisters - 10 all together.

Thanks for reading this letter
and the support I have got from
CLAN

Hoping to keep in touch with
other people in the same situation
and up bring I have experienced

One again Bye for now
Regards

J. Hardy