

## Minister for Human Services

GPO Box 125, HOBART TAS 7001, Australia

Ph: (03) 6233 8309 Fax: (03) 6233 4980

Web: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au



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29 OCT 2008

Senator Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
**CANBERRA ACT 2600**



Dear Ms Moore

Thank you for your letter of 23 September 2008 and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the two reports, *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record* and *Forgotten Australians*.

### ***Lost Innocents: Righting the Record***

The Tasmanian Government has shown its commitment to Child Migrants by fully including them in the reparation processes carried out in Tasmania between 2003 and 2008.

Child Migrants placed in Tasmania remained under the guardianship of the Australian Government Minister of Immigration, in practice the Tasmanian Department exercised supervision of child migrants until they attained the age of 18 years. Although legal guardianship had not been transferred to the Director/Secretary of the Department, the Tasmanian Government agreed that Child Migrants would be eligible to take part in the reparation process.

In October 2005, two statues commemorating Child Migrants were dedicated, one in Hobart and one in Launceston. This followed an extensive consultation process with Child Migrants and their support groups.

Staff of my Department continue to assist Child Migrants and their descendants, who apply to have access to their files, or who want to trace family members. My staff liaise closely with specialist Child Migrant groups both interstate and overseas. It would appear that the numbers of Child Migrants contacting my Department have dwindled significantly in recent years, significant numbers contacted between 2003 and 2005.

## ***Forgotten Australians***

During 2003 - 2005, the Tasmanian Government was the first state government to conduct a Review process which accepted claims of abuse from adults who had been in State care as children. The Review process was designed in a way which gave victims of abuse the opportunity to tell their story, to view their files, to receive counselling and to be assessed for an ex gratia payment.

Claimants in the Review were also assisted in tracing family members and every effort was made to locate significant documents and photographs for claimants.

In December 2004, in State Parliament, the Premier of Tasmania issued a formal apology to those people who had been abused in State care.

In recognition of the fact that a number of care leavers missed out on making a claim in the Review, the Tasmanian Government re-opened the process between March and July 2008.

During the course of the Review my staff have liaised closely with religious and charitable organisations to ensure that care leavers have access to as much information as possible about their time in care.

A memorial to Forgotten Australians has been constructed in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and will be formally dedicated on 26 November 2008. Tasmanian Care Leavers were involved in the planning for the memorial and a public meeting was held at the memorial site on 28 June 2008.

My Department continues to support care leavers, (regardless of when they were in care) who contact the Department seeking information and/or access to their files. No Departmental files relating to children in the care of the State of Tasmania have been destroyed.

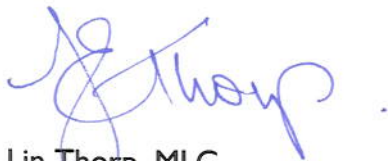
The Tasmanian Government has shown its ongoing commitment to supporting care leavers by providing an increased level of recurrent funding to the CREATE Foundation.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to providing ongoing support to care leavers, but urges caution over explicitly recognising care leavers as a sub-group across a range of social policy areas, including health and aged care and social welfare services. The number of care leavers in Australia does not warrant the creation of specialised services and to create a sub group in these circumstances would run the risk of care leavers facing further discrimination.

Services offered to care leavers need to be responsive, non-discriminatory and prioritised in terms of those in the highest need, it is felt that in Tasmania appropriate and effective support can be provided to a care leavers from within existing services.

Thank you once again for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L Thorp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lin Thorp, MLC  
**Minister for Human Services**