

Mary Brownlee nee Corry connecting to culture of origin

National reparation fund

Recommendation 6

8.125 That the Commonwealth Government establish and manage a national reparations fund for victims of institutional abuse in institutions and out-of-home care settings and that:

- the scheme be funded by contributions from the Commonwealth and State Governments and the Churches and agencies proportionately;
- the Commonwealth have regard to the schemes already in operation in Canada, Ireland and Tasmania in the design and implementation of the above scheme;
- a board be established to administer the scheme, consider claims and award monetary compensation;
- the board, in determining claims, be satisfied that there was a 'reasonable likelihood' that the abuse occurred;
- the board should have regard to whether legal redress has been pursued;
- the processes established in assessing claims be non-adversarial and informal; and
- compensation be provided for individuals who have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse while residing in these institutions or out-of-home care settings.

My family as a Forgotten Australian family travelled to Australia in 1960 under the migration scheme know as the "Ten Pound Immigrants Scheme". We were given the hope of having a better life for our parents and we as their children. This is why my parents brought us to this country. This did not happen because of the dreadful situation of abuse that traumatized our whole family system. We found ourselves isolated and disconnected from our Irish Family systems in Northern Ireland. Due to the trauma that our whole family suffered through the institutional care situation that we found ourselves involved in we did not have the opportunities to keep in contact with our extended family in Northern Ireland. Our whole potential to find our true purpose in life was severely narrowed in regard to education for life paths when we were young people and so we did not have the opportunities to the financial security that would have helped us to venture back to our family system and connect again. Education would have empowered us to move forward in our Australian culture and move back to connect with our culture of origin.

The great trauma that we all suffered to do with dreadful abuse carried through from childhood to adulthood. This impacted on our natural ability to connect back to our family and culture of origin. It is a natural thing to grow up and venture back to your family of origin when you were born in another country. Of 5 children none of us did the journey. I must always ask why! Then I must seek the answers, only always. I can relate our situation to do with family disconnection in a practical way with the Child Migrant disconnection that they also experienced.

I would like to see our Forgotten Australians who came to Australia as part of any of these immigration and citizenship schemes to have the same sort of opportunities given to them to be able to travel back and connect with their own extended family systems. This would be an avenue for great healing with a great connection taking place. This would truly benefit my own family as we

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need to be welcomed back into the culture we left behind and to be able to find our own family and reunite with them after the terrible trauma we experienced and carried with us for most of our lives. I am now 49 years old and I need to connect with my whole family system in this world. We are just now being able to reconnect and our reconnection happens to be in another country. In this case it is Northern Ireland. I know that my people, the Irish would certainly respond gladly to this connection to Forgotten Australians as I am very proud to say that Ireland was a leader in regard to National reparation in the area of institutional abuse in government and Church areas.

Personally I need both my Australian culture and my Irish culture to connect with at a level of understanding and compassion.

Contact details

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