

Friday, December 12, 2008

Elton Humphery
Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Committee,

I note you have received a submission from the Chair of the Forde Foundation and the Queensland Government re: the above mentioned Inquiry. I am a member of a group of former residents of Queensland's Institutions who has suffered even further abuse at the hands of both the Queensland Government and the Forde Foundation. I recently sent an email outlining my concerns that the Queensland Government and Lotus Place which incorporates such agencies as Micah, The Esther Centre, The Historical Abuse Network and The Aftercare Resource Centre (ARC) did in truth not represent the beliefs of the majority of former residents. Indeed these organisations have done little but act as tools in disempowering the former residents.

The Chair of The Ford Foundation is little more than a manipulative individual who believes that only he knows what is good for former residents in relation to Ford. In fact it is alleged that his sole purpose in Forde is to close the Foundation. . At a reunion at St Vincents Home in early November the Chair was confronted by another former resident and the Chair is alleged to have admitted this to be the case. I too believe this to be the case. Why else would he have allowed over \$2 million of the Foundations money to be squandered?

Should you have the opportunity to get a copy of the questionnaire produced by the so called Forde Review you would find that no scientific measurement was used in its development, indeed it was worded in such a way that it would provide only the response the Board (especially the Chair) sought. I as a former member of the Board was at the meeting when planning for the review was being discussed and one key element I noted was that the survival of the Board was paramount and that the former residents were irrelevant. Should you seek a copy of the discussion you will see that what I am saying is indeed fact. There is no mention of former residents in the planning stage just those of other organisations.

The Queensland Government has been a government of all talk over the past few years and a lot of cost cutting. I believe after the 10th anniversary of The Ford Inquiry it is the governments intention to disband all services and promises to former residents of Queensland's Institutions. Furthermore I believe the reparation offered to former residents was no more than a showcase. It was designed purely to ensure that former residents in Queensland would be unable to claim significant reparation as that being offered by many of other States.

So to answer the question of the Committee as to whether the Queensland Government has responded positively to any of the recommendations of The Forgotten Australians Inquiry the answer is an emphatic no. Indeed this government under the leadership of our current Premier Anna Bligh has caused more harm to former residents than any previous government.

I believe we as former residents of Queensland should be given a fair hearing by your Committee and not the Chair of the Forde Foundation as he has requested. The man has no credibility what so ever in the eyes of the majority of former residents.

Respectfully Yours

Michael J Collins