

The secretary
Senate Community Affairs
Committee

RE: Senate Inquiry Review Forgotten Australians

As I sat in the back of the room listening to Joanna & Leonie speak, about the 2004 Senate Inquiry into The Forgotten Australians. I will try to put it into words what I felt however, I really think that unless you were a State Ward-Forgotten Australians I do not believe that anyone can understand the magnitude of the injustice, the horror, the daily detestation that was metered out to little children.

These children, babies were torn away from their families, most if not all had already experienced neglect, poverty, hunger, physical, sexual abuse. And these atrocities were inflicted by their own biological families.

In my case my Father had been imprisoned & my Mother had no funds to feed, clothe & keep us from the elements. She repeatedly ticked up food from the local shop until they ran out of charity.

My entire family were separated, I was sent with my sisters to Bidura Orphanage, imagine how we felt? I really believe that a child never recovers from being forcibly removed from their only family to be institutionalized & most never able to re-unite their family members again.

It is imperative to recognize & acknowledge the magnitude of contemporary social problems which are the long-term effects stemming from the past experiences of fear, intimidation humiliation & abuse endured by children taken into care by the government & churches of the day.

Most of the Forgotten Australians are left with the legacies of their abusive childhood. Every day they feel the impact of being a "State Ward"- low self-esteem, lack of confidence, social anxieties, phobias, recurring nightmares, tension, migraines & rejection.

Many who suffered in institutions could not cope with life in the "real" world & as a result have alcohol & drug problems or ended in the mental health or prison system. Many have difficulties forming & maintaining trust in relationships, or have remained loners & never married. Some Care Leavers with emotional problems have contemplated or taken the ultimate step of suicide. (I also attempted suicide but failed) And others like me have survived but not without our own demons

What about our rights? Australia needs to acknowledge these people's loss ...we've acknowledged the stolen generation, the child migrants but there's this much larger cohort of Australian citizens that have lived exactly the same life if not worsewho need to find their families access to good specialist services to good psychotherapy. Aware of their history and compensated for the loss of their childhood

.... They have a lot to be proud of to survive this sort of childhood where nobody wanted you ...told every day that you were unwanted...that we will never amount to anything....we were going to end up no hopers...that we would end our days in goal...be prostitutes....if you hear that every day of your life with nobody to provide the warmth and protection a child needs then you start to believe that all about yourself.

If the Government gave it some thought then maybe they could have assisted my mother to keep her children together & we could have had a place to call home. But they just rounded us up like cattle to be slaughtered without giving it a second thought & now there is over 500,000 people who are in one way or another are dysfunctional. How can they justify taking me & then putting me with a family that was riddled with domestic violence to be sexually abused & brutally raped at 14yrs old.

In the 04 Senate Enquiry that deliberated on the 39 recommendations I believe the responses were at best a pretence of interest but were actually uncommitted & like "Pontius Pilot" they washed their hands as each Gment Dept hid behind their individual shields Who will be the Courageous person to deliver us from our own demons?? I implore this Enquiry to listen to CLAN to acknowledge us, to have services that can relate to our plight. Maybe then & only then can we start to put back our fragile & broken spirits that were shamefully snatched away from us.

My 2 brothers died as a direct result of their childhoods, my Grandson is in care, I am another statistic who could not overcome my childhood. I am presently homeless. Just maybe if there had been a box to check on my priority housing I would not be in this situation. I have spent 10 years working within the Homeless /Mentally -Challenged arena it is however, ironic that I am unable to or not given the opportunity to have a home. It would appear that I have come full circle & am not entitled to have a home, & never to know peace in my lifetime

Regards
Diane Mancuso/Nee Kennedy/Nee/Sward/Nee Finlay

BILLY BILLY

Do not slip away
Please please
Stay with me another day
Where have you gone my brother?
You had not begun to live
It was before your time
He took you to live with our mother
9th April you were born
35 years later I would mourn
No! They did not see your pain
In your anguish and your sorrow
Drugs became your way of life
For you there will be no tomorrow
Billy Billy
I love you so
Please please do not go
One hit too many
They found you dead in a back street alley
The road was too long
It was too much to carry the load
Daddy Daddy loved us all
He was on the wrong side of the law
Mamma Mamma
Did her best
I pray you are now at rest
Billy Billy
Do not slip away
Please please
Stay with me another day
The children's court decided our fate
They took us all
You cried and cried when you were told
We were all sent to Juvenile Hall
As children and later as adults we are told not to hate
Torn apart and sent along different paths
Mamma's heart broken like shattered glass.
Suffer the little children who did no wrong
Ignorant are they!
Who say forgive them they know
Not what they do
Where were they when I held my brother's hand and
Wanted him to stay
In and out of foster care
We grew up with more than our share
Billy Billy
Do not slip away
Please please
Stay with me another day
They failed!
Yes! Suffer the little children
But if I can change it in some small way
Billy Billy
Never fear
"I remember and I am here
Your life was not in vain

For I will be here for that day
Billy Billy
My sweet brother we are separate
But never apart
For you are always
In my heart

Diane Mancuso