

Senate Select Review

The State and Commonwealth Government were responsible for legislation that gave them the authority to remove children from their homes and place them in either institutional or foster care.

As early back as the 1920s enquiries were had by the

Department of Welfare, heads of their own department as to the extent of neglect and abuse suffered by children under the

guardianship of the Minister. Sadly not much has been done to rectify the situation and although the State Government has

acknowledged their responsibility, they are continuing to drag their feet with the recommendations made from the enquiry.

Implementation so far seems to address the needs of care leavers 25yrs and under with an emphasis on preventing future

mistakes. The more mature abused care leavers seem once

again to be waiting for anything of substance to be agreed upon.

On Wednesday the 15th October 2008 the Honourable A. M.

Bressington put forward a private members motion to the

legislative council that the Rann Government makes known to the council –

1. The services provided and the expenditure thus far for those people whom, as children, were abused while in the care of the state.
2. Exactly what recommendations made by the Hon. Justice Mulligan is the government going to implement/

3. Whether or not the government is going to take on recommendations made by the consumer reference group.
4. What steps the government has undertaken to give those victims of past abuse justice. Redress and closure.

It is now nearly the end of May 2009 and we are still none the wiser as to what the government is going to do about the recommendations.

I would also like to make a point of the fact that Minister Rankine has agreed to quarterly meetings with members of the consumer reference group through Families S.A. and yet seems to continually be unable to attend. The consumer reference group generally spends much time discussing an agenda for these meetings with an emphasis on highlighting the issues of importance to abused care leavers, it leaves us without any feedback on issues and a sense that we are right to feel as unimportant as we do.

Furthermore I ask that you make a special point of recommendation 39 which asks that the South Australian Government fund a free specialist service for the victims of abuse whilst in state care. That the service is provided by a people independent of church or government affiliations. It is my view that the government is taking the easy way out by giving even more money to Respond SA who have proven to be

ineffectual in the assistance they give. Why give more money to services that already don't work? We are a special group of victims who have special needs and we are important enough to receive help that is better thought out. We need a one-stop-shop type of Healing Centre. I would also like the Senate to acknowledge the efforts of Sconey and Ki, In having achieved the first Forgotten Australians South Australia Inc, for abused care leavers to make the journey from being a victim to a survivor all the more achievable.

In closing, I would like the senate enquiry to ask the Government to look into providing adequate redress, funding for education and a gold type members health card, much like the Vietnam Veterans have. Training for abused care leavers who are asked to help other abused care leavers, nobody understands the problems faced by the victims like other victims. A place for Forgotten Australians to be able to get together for support, even courses in basic life skills like budgeting, reading, writing and help in social relations to be able to connect with the wider community and manoeuvre their way through life. The problems faced by abused care leavers are the governments responsibility and they need help now.

Thank you for your time and I await the outcome of the Senate Review with much anticipation.

Cheryl Dodson