

## **Senator XENOPHON**

I would like to talk briefly about this important report. Whilst I was not part of the committee process, I am sad to say that this issue is something I know a great deal about because a significant amount of the abuse detailed in the report occurred in South Australia. In South Australia we had the Mullighan inquiry into this. The victims of wards of the state who were the subject of systematic abuse were dubbed 'takeaway kids', and their plight first came to light during a series of reports by the local version of the Seven network's *Today Tonight* program. I am pleased to say that Rohan Wenn, who works with me, was the reporter that broke those stories, and it is something that we still discuss on a regular basis because it made such a profound difference in triggering the Mullighan inquiry.

For many years there have been claims by former wards of the state that they have been the victims of systemic abuse and systematic abuse; that children have been taken from state care and abused and then simply returned to have their reports of abuse ignored. I would like to pay particular tribute to Ki Meekins, a survivor of state care and a shining example of the resilience of the human spirit. It is because of the strength of people like Ki that these shocking stories have finally been told and acknowledged. We now need to focus on making amends and helping survivors of state and religious institutions. This report is an important step in that process. It is a valuable report. It is a report that needs to be acted upon with a great degree of urgency because the hurt is still there. These victims are still suffering and we need to make amends.