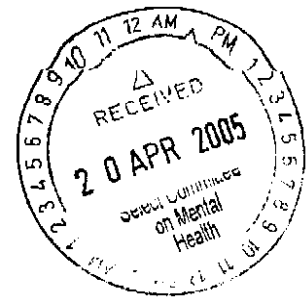


Australian Senate
Committee on Mental Health
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



14th April 05

Dear Committee,

As a member of CLASS (Care Leavers Advocacy and Support Service) I am writing to introduce our primary concerns to the Committee.

Many "Care Leavers", especially the generations outlined in the Forgotten Australians Senate report 2004 can not find adequate services that understand the nature of complex trauma effects in early childhood. This is due in part to the lack of research done with "Care Leavers " and the invisibility of post institutional abuse. This submission seeks to draw attention to the need for inclusion into policy and research in the Mental Health field.

As documented in the Report on Forgotten Australians, "Care Leavers" often end up in the Mental Health industry and other government services .
"Care Leavers" with mental health problems end up in our prison systems, they are amongst the homeless and most marginalised people in our society.
Amongst "Care Leavers", many of us have family histories with mental health issues and have come to see the link between Institutionalism and mental health outcomes. Ancestral lines also contain Institutional history, along with traumas of war and the depression era's..

Family genealogy search has found that many relatives have common themes throughout family lines.

The traumas of one generation pass on to the next, it is imperative that this link be made. The link between Institutionalism and Mental Health outcomes is one that is yet to be documented by professionals.
Many of the "Forgotten Australians" generation are ready to break the cycle and heal from the damage. We are ready to confront the past and advocate for a better future for our children and younger generations.
In order to do this we need research into our heritage.

Our heritage is made up of the family unit and also of the social class system that we co-exist in. Australia is still a young nation and we all stem from other parts of our world with it's own history that is also our heritage. Many "Care Leavers" are still trying to trace the siblings and family's they where separated from in childhood. The compounded effects of Institution life is documented in the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional care.

People who spent time in Institutions as Children have been damaged at crucial life development stages. Some common symptoms amongst "Care Leavers" include Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other Anxiety Disorders. Depression is a common complaint. Dual Diagnosis is often a barrier to accessing services.

(To bring to light all the factors that make up the individual is to liberate the individual from the burden of responsibility of generational compounded effects.)

We ask that this Committee on Mental Health make recommendations on the need for research on the effects of Institutionalism in Childhood and it's effects on Mental Health.

We ask that the Committee make recommendations for Psychotherapy schools and Education faculties to address the needs of people who have Complex Trauma and that more specialists are trained to address the needs of people who have been committed to Institutions in Childhood.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of M. Mandeno.

M Mandeno