



Alliance for Forgotten Australians

Patrons: Andrew Murray and Jack Thompson

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian survivors welcome release of Irish abuse report

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians welcomes the report of the ten-year inquiry into child abuse in Irish institutions and hopes for a solid response that will contribute to healing for the victims. The major investigation into child abuse at Catholic orphanages, reformatories and schools in Ireland found that beatings, sexual abuse and humiliation were endemic and that the state of Ireland "colluded with religious authorities to hide child abuse". Although the Christian Brothers sued successfully to remove all names of its members from the final report, the details of the brutality, neglect, sexual abuse and humiliation of thousands of Irish children are finally being heard.

Now it must be Australia's turn to listen to the many thousands of adults here who were abused in the same way and who are still suffering the consequences.

It is now almost five years since the Australian Senate released its report, *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*. Senators wept as they told of the cruel and brutal treatment and criminal neglect of young children in institutions that were supposed to care for them. They spoke of the long term outcomes for survivors of that childhood abuse, including isolation, an inability to trust others, difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships, trauma and depression, low education levels, widespread illiteracy and poor physical health.

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians, the national peak body representing people who were raised in orphanages, Homes or other forms of out-of-home care in the 20th Century, says the responses from governments have been tardy and inadequate. Chair, Ms Caroline Carroll, called today for an immediate, positive and comprehensive response to all 39 Inquiry recommendations: "As children, thousands of us experienced horrors in the places that were supposed to care for us. As adult survivors, we are looking for an acknowledgement of, and an apology for, the harm that was done to us. We have that apology from all States now and are hoping the Prime Minister will also acknowledge and apologise for the failure of the Federal Government to protect us.

"The Government was our guardian, but it was most commonly the people running the institutions who inflicted the brutal abuse. We call on all Churches and past providers who have not yet apologised and instituted consultative, respectful support programs to do so immediately. Forgotten Australians cannot afford to wait any longer."

For further information, Caroline Carroll may be contacted through the Secretariat at Families Australia on 02 6273 4885.