
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2015 5:13 PM
To: redress
Subject: Compensation for victims; waiving the statute of limitations for child abuse victims.

The Commissioner, 11th February, 2015
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Dear Commissioner,

[REDACTED] My email of 26th November, 2012.

I write today in response to the Commission's recent invitation for victims of institutional sexual abuse, whilst children, to advise their thoughts about the two matters of:

1. Compensation; and
2. Waiving the protection of statute of limitations.

Briefly, my experiences of abuse were:

1. Whilst a [REDACTED] NSW; and
2. Whilst a pupil at a school for boys in Sydney.

Both experiences were broadly described in my initial contact to the Commission, in my email of 26th November, 2012.

I, with the thousands of other victims, have experienced unforgettable trauma caused by a sexual predator towards each of us victims. Whilst it may be difficult to quantify the precise amount of physical, emotional, mental, and social injury, together with loss of self-esteem lasting for the rest of our lives, I wish to add my voice to all other victims in petitioning the Commission to recommend that all relevant bodies, or institutions, be required to compensate each victim for all such 'injuries' committed upon their person whilst in their care.

Their duty to provide safety to each child whilst entrusted to their care was breached. They failed in their duty of care. Further, during the Commission's hearings, it appears most institutions have demonstrated, and acknowledged negligence, by not immediately seeking to demonstrate compassion, offer apologies, and/or volunteer negotiation towards restitution with victims, when victims sought to approach principals or responsible officers to report offences.

The hurt sustained takes many forms, and varies from victim to victim. To victims, such as I, a child of the mores of the 'forties and 'fifties, adults were to be respected, and usually of non-family members, 'don't speak to them unless you are spoken to' !

Hence when victimised by an older person or adult, especially if the perpetrator was looked up to and respected, this resulted in –

Utter shock, mental confusion, a feeling of isolation, incalculable burden of shame through violation;

In many cases victims bearing further burden of anguish by being requested by the perpetrator to "keep our little secret"; and

Not knowing how, or to whom, or afraid to share and describe the act/s of violation, et cetera.

With regard to the statute of limitations, this is one statute that definitely should not be applicable to victims of child sexual abuse, whether in institutional care or other circumstance.

As most victims were children when violated, most would not have received any "Sex Education", would not have reached puberty, and in the cases of many boys, would have no idea of the physical changes which occur to male genitalia during adolescence. Hence, when confronted by a perpetrator's erect, adult male genitalia, the trauma is that much more magnified to boy children; and one would imagine, for this illustration, to include pre-puberty girls.

'Stranger danger', or advisory warnings such as is abroad today for children to be aware to not allow their persons to be interfered in any way, was not even thought of, up until the sixties, perhaps.

Many and varied are the reasons that as a child, each victim would not know about the existence of this statute. Most would not learn of it, ever.

They might or might not choose to disclose or report their abuse experience for many years later, even or not even to the Police. For many, the opportunity to reveal their abuse to the Commission might be the very first time their victimisation could be lifted from their hearts, minds and souls. They have rejoiced that their opportunity had finally arrived.

An unending torrent of tears, first in the company of an empathetic loved one, and then in solitude, was this victim's experience when the announcement came that the Commission was to be established. Many tears have subsequently been shed when victims' experiences were recounted before the Royal Commission, in empathy.

The establishment of the Royal Commission by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard must rank as one of her most courageous, important and enduring acts of her tenure.

Every victim should have a very deep sense of gratitude towards the former Prime Minister. A female's protective, mother instinct alone was demonstrated by her in this decision. Perhaps the unrelenting vitriol of the present Prime Minister, whilst as the former Leader of the Opposition, was specifically directed to unseat PM Gillard before she could establish the Royal Commission. I could not envisage the incumbent PM agreeing to setup such an investigatory body for many reasons, not the least of which would be a covert desire to protect those many perpetrators pertaining to a common faith.

The 'safe and confidential environment' which the Commission would represent to many, gives them the confidence to unburden themselves at last of their lifelong mental torture which all have borne. The victims have the prospect that the institution behind their abuse will be brought to account, that notice has been served, WRIT in large letters, that society will not tolerate any further occurrences.

Penalties for future offences should be made very plain and unambiguous.

As a [REDACTED] the abuse I sustained turned me against any desire to progress to become a [REDACTED], and forever coloured my opinion of the [REDACTED] movement. Thereafter, when attaining adulthood, I cynically considered it to be only a sanctuary for paedophiles.

As a child pupil at a Sydney boys school, the abuse I sustained caused the "loss of a chance to go on to a more remunerative career" as an architect, automotive or industrial designer, or artist/painter.

The Commission, investigating the response by the Hutchins School in Hobart during last December, heard from one victim whose pitiful testimony resonated well with me, when he declared that the abuse he suffered at the hands of his music teacher nullified any desire or hope which he once had of going on to become a successful musician.

I shall shortly be forwarding full details with documents of my experiences.

I do trust the Commission will support suitable and favourable recommendations appropriate to the enormity of the problem of child sexual abuse in the Australian community which will redress all victims' hurt and damage, and contribute to ensure that all institutions charged with a duty of care towards minors will regard same with more concerted diligence and conscience.

Your sincerely,

[REDACTED]