



STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
References Committee

29 October 2013

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

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Dear Commissioners

Response to Issues Paper 4 – Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children in Out-of-Home Care

On 4 March 2003 the Senate Committee on Community Affairs References Committee commenced an inquiry into Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children. The committee tabled its first report (*Forgotten Australians*) with a series of recommendations in August 2004 and a second report under the same terms of reference in March 2005 (*Protecting vulnerable children*). The committee followed up its inquiry in 2009 by [reporting](#) on the implementation of the recommendations of the *Forgotten Australians* Report.

The *Forgotten Australians* report examined historical practices in out-of-home care settings and made recommendations that sought to redress some of the wrongs that were perpetrated in those settings. Issues such as the need for institutional, state and national apologies; reparation and redress schemes; an increased role for support groups and other bodies; and improved access to records were all discussed. While many of these issues are not strictly relevant to Issue Paper 4, the committee's work around record keeping and access to records in Chapter Nine of *Forgotten Australians* and Chapters Three and Six of the 2009 follow-up report may be pertinent.

The *Protecting Vulnerable Children* report focussed on the contemporary out-of-home care governance and legal framework for child welfare and protection, and specifically considers foster care, children and young people with disabilities and young people in the juvenile justice system. This report has direct relevance to the matters raised in Issues Paper 4 and the committee draws your attention to the discussion and conclusions contained therein.

The committee secretariat can provide further information and answer any questions about the inquiries and reports. The secretariat can be contacted on (02) 6277 3515.

Yours sincerely

Senator Rachel Siewert
Chair