

## General Synod Resolution 51/04 THE FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

That this General Synod:

1. Notes that a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children – the Forgotten Australians report – has been prepared by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee and was tabled in Federal Parliament on 30 August 2004.
2. Notes that the report calls on governments, churches and agencies to issue formal statements acknowledging their roles in past institutional care policies and practices and the impact these have had on the lives of many care leavers.
3. Acknowledges that many children who were placed in institutional care during the last century experienced neglect, harm and distress; and in particular cases, experienced serious physical and sexual abuse and assault – the effect of which are life-long.
4. Extends the following apology to these children:

“The Anglican Church of Australia sincerely apologises to the children whose experiences in institutional and out-of-home care provided by the Anglican Church caused them hurt, distress, and harm.

“The recent Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care Report has reflected the stories of many care leavers who demonstrated great courage in describing their experiences in institutional care. A number of these people had been placed in institutions conducted by the Anglican Church and its agencies.

“With deep sadness and regret, this Church acknowledges that many of these children suffered abuse and neglect, and a lack of appropriate care and nurture while in institutional care; and a significant number also suffered physical and sexual assault.

“The Church deeply regrets that its institutions and personnel did not always provide environments in which these children were protected and nurtured.

“The Anglican Church is committed to ensuring that all children in any of its institutions and all those who come into contact with the Church will be protected. Actions are being taken in this General Synod and in the dioceses to put into place new strategies reflecting this commitment.

“The Inquiry Report – Forgotten Australians – has brought into community awareness the serious and long-term effects of such abuse and assault; and the Anglican Church is committed to providing appropriate services, assistance and support to those persons who suffered harm. “

5. Requests each diocese involved in the provision of institutional care to children to extend an apology in similar terms.
6. Acknowledges that the Church is called to assist and support in whatever way it can those persons who have been harmed by and in its institutions; and requests each diocese to consider appropriate strategies – which recognise the personal significance of the harm done to individual persons and their likely distrust of the Church – to encourage those who have been harmed to come forward.
7. Commends the report to the dioceses, institutions and agencies of this Church and requests them prayerfully and objectively to consider the report and its implications for current policies and practices which affect all children and young people in contact with the Church to ensure that the past abuse and assault will never again occur.

Section 4 of this motion was read to the Synod by the President. Synod stood for a minute of silent reflection followed by a prayer by the President that the Church in the future will always provide safe places for children and young people.

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# Apology

To Those Harmed in Queensland Institutions  
during their Childhood

We the government and churches together welcome the report of the Forde Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions.

We acknowledge that there have been failures with respect to the children entrusted to our care, despite all the good the Institutions did in the light of their day. The result has been a system in which some children have suffered maltreatment, and their social, emotional, and physical needs have been neglected.

We sincerely apologise to all those people who suffered in any way while resident in our facilities, and express deep sorrow and regret at the hurt and distress suffered by those who were victims of abuse.

We accept the finding of the Forde Inquiry that government under-funding and consequent under-resourcing was a significant factor in the failure to provide adequate services to children in care.

We are committed to establishing and continuing dialogue with victims of abuse in institutions to discuss the basis for providing appropriate responses. We acknowledge that discussions are well advanced between some parties.

We are committed to working together with victims of abuse in institutions to ensure the provision of appropriately coordinated services through the establishment of a "one stop shop", as recommended by the Forde Inquiry. This initiative will be integrated with church and government run services and processes for bringing about reconciliation with victims of abuse in institutions. The focus will be on providing victims with the most effective path to healing. We are committed to continuing to provide such services as long as they are needed.

We recognise the value of formal reconciliation experiences in healing the hurt some have suffered, and undertake to plan these in consultation with former residents.

We are committed to doing all we reasonably can to ensure that children in our care are not subject to abuse and neglect. Further, we are committed to ongoing review and improvement of our services to children and families.



Peter Beattie MLA  
Premier of Queensland

The Most Reverend John Bathurst DD,  
Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane

Reverend Dr David Pilman, Moderator,  
Uniting Church in Australia (Old Synod)

Bill Gynther, President,  
Baptist Union of Queensland

Anna Bligh MLA  
Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care  
Minister for Disability Services

The Most Reverend Peter Hollingworth,  
Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane

Hilmon Buckingham, Commissioner,  
Territorial Commander, Australia Eastern Territory,  
The Salvation Army

Reverend Peter Overton, Conference President,  
Churches of Christ in Queensland

## **DIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN**

### **1018/04 Senate Committee Report 'Forgotten Australians'**

#### **MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Resolved** that this Synod

- welcomes the Senate Community Affairs Committee Report entitled 'Forgotten Australians' concerning the experiences of Australians who as children were placed in institutional or out-of-home care;
- recognises that approximately 500,000 Australian children at some time experienced care away from their families and that for many of them this was a very traumatic experience;
- acknowledges that the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn offered care through St Saviour's home in Goulburn and Bungarimbil at Tumbarumba;
- is confident that the care given in those two homes was offered out of genuine compassion for children and concern for their welfare but sadly recognises that some of the children in our care during that period will have suffered trauma;
- offers an unreserved apology to those who experienced care that was unloving or traumatic;
- expresses its deepest remorse for any who were abused or assaulted in any way;
- asks that the Diocese works with Government to ensure that reparation in terms of counselling or other suitable support is offered to those who still carry the disablement of this experience;
- requests the Professional Standards Reference Group to consider all recommendations in the Report and to report to Bishop-in-Council identifying any changes that need to be made to our present standards and procedures;
- reaffirms current Diocesan policy and practice in relation to children; and
- requests that this motion be sent to local, State and Federal Governments.

**Action: Referred to PSRG and Bishop.**

## DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

### 19/04 Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Synod 1.

Notes that the report of the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care by the Senate Standing Committee on

Community Affairs tabled in Federal Parliament on 30 August 2004 said in part

*The Committee received hundreds of graphic and disturbing accounts about the treatment and care experienced by children in out of home care. Many care leavers showed immense courage in putting intensely personal life stories on the public record. Their stories outlined a litany of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and often criminal physical and sexual assault. Their stories also told of neglect, humiliation and deprivation of food, education and healthcare. Such abuse and assault was widespread across institutions, across States and across the government, religious and other care providers.*

and

*But the overwhelming response as to treatment in care, even among those that made positive comments was the lack of love, affection and nurturing that was never provided to young children at critical times during their emotional development.*

And therefore recommended

*The Committee believes that governments, the Churches and agencies should issue formal statements acknowledging their role in past institutional care policies and practices and the impact this had on the lives of many care leavers. These statements should express sorrow and apologise for the physical, psychological and social harm caused as a result of the care leavers' experiences as children in institutional care. The Committee also considers that these acknowledgments must be accompanied by other positive measures as recommended in the report to ensure that they are not regarded as merely 'empty gestures' by the care leavers and the community generally.*

2. Commends the report to the parishes and institutions of the Diocese for study, prayerful reflection and appropriate response, especially to any care leavers they come into contact with.
3. Requests that Anglicare prepare a response to the Report, which addresses its key recommendations.
4. Asks that this response be presented to the Archbishop, Standing Committee and the Board of Anglicare for action and that a report of action taken be prepared for the 2005 session of Synod.
5. Welcomes the development by the Professional Standards Unit and Anglicare of the "Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme" and requests the parishes and organisations of the Diocese to familiarise themselves with this scheme and to advertise widely its availability.
6. Recognises the important role of Care Leavers Australia Network Inc (CLAN) in providing support and advocacy for those brought up in 'care', and encourages the Diocese, Anglicare, the parishes and organisations of the Diocese as well as individual members to support, including financially, CLAN and its work.
7. Acknowledges the role of the Anglican Church, Diocese of Sydney through its organisations including Anglican Home Mission Society (Anglicare) and the Church of England Homes, in the administration of institutional care arrangements. Further acknowledging that some of the children who were brought up in 'care' during the last

century have been left with the lifelong effects of emotional deprivation and neglect, (including the absence of frequent and meaningful family contact, placement with siblings, consistent care givers, opportunities for children to emotionally process what they have experienced and freedom to express their views and wishes for their future care) and in some cases even worse, physical, sexual and psychological abuse, Synod expresses its deep regret at the harm caused by the failure to provide appropriate care. In particular Synod apologises for the physical, psychological and social harm and suffering experienced by any care leavers as a result of their experiences in any institution run under the auspices of the Anglican Church, Diocese of Sydney. Synod encourages such persons to make themselves known so that support, personal apology and appropriate assistance can be offered.

8. Calls on those responsible for the neglect or abuse of children in their care to repent; and show their repentance by coming forward and confessing their wrongdoing, offering apology to affected care leavers and their families where appropriate and opening themselves to the due processes of the justice system; and to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all their sins.

9. Recognises with gratitude to God those devoted Christian carers who did a wonderful job in Christ's name to genuinely care for the children in their institutions.

(The Rev Chris Albany 25.10.04)

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## SOUTH AUSTRALIA Apology from: Shared Government and Church Apology

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Shared Government and Church Apology to those harmed in State Care in South Australia during their Childhood

We the Government of South Australia and the Churches recognize that some children and young people who were placed in our care suffered abuse that has impacted on their lives. This should never have happened.

We are sorry and we express deep regret for the pain and hurt that they experienced through no fault of their own.

We acknowledge that in the past some carers and others who have worked in the area have abused the trust what was placed in them.

We acknowledge that the policies and practices in the last century did have a detrimental effect on some who grew up in State care.

To all those who experienced abuse in State care, we are sorry.  
To those who witnessed these abuses, we say sorry.  
To those who were not believed, when trying to report these abuses, we say sorry.

We are sorry for the pain shared by loved ones, husbands and wives, partners, brothers and sisters, parents, and importantly, their children.

Our apology is given in a spirit of reconciliation and healing and with our commitment to contribute toward a child safe environment in our Government, our churches and the broader community.

We commit to do all that we reasonably can to ensure that children in our care are not subject to abuse and that those who have abused are brought to justice.

**Hon Mike Rann MP**  
Premier of South Australia

**Hon Jay Weatherill MP**  
Minister for Families and Communities

**The Most Rev'd Dr Jeffrey Driver**  
Archbishop of Adelaide

**Rev Robert L Voigt**  
President – Lutheran Church  
South Australia and Northern Territory

**Rev Rod Dyson**  
Moderator of Synod of South Australia  
Chairperson of Presbytery of South  
Australia  
Uniting Church in Australia

**The Most Reverend Gregory O'Kelly SJ**  
Auxiliary Bishop  
representing Archbishop Philip Wilson  
DD  
Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide

## **Statement of Acknowledgement**

*A statement on behalf of non-government past providers of institutional care, will be read by the Rt Rev Robert Forsyth, Bishop of South Sydney and senior Assistant Bishop of the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney, representing the following organisations:*

*Anglicare  
Baptist Union NSW & ACT  
Barnardos  
Benevolent Society  
CatholicCare  
Lutanda Children's Services  
MacKillop Family Services (Christian Brothers, Sisters of St Joseph, Sisters of Mercy)  
Salvation Army  
The Infants Home Child & Family Services  
Uniting Church in Australia – NSW Synod, representing Wesley Mission and UnitingCare NSW & ACT  
United Protestant Association of NSW*

### **Non-government apology**

On behalf of the non-government service providers represented here today, I acknowledge that many children placed in our care until 1990 did not receive the consistent and loving care that they needed and deserved.

It is now recognised that caring for children and young people who cannot live with their family must include regular and meaningful family contact, placement with siblings, consistent care givers and support for them to understand their experience of being in care. We acknowledge that for many children and young people, this was not the case.

For the children and young people who did not receive the consistent love and care that they needed and deserved, we are sorry.

For the children and young people who were neglected, mistreated and abused, we are sorry.

For the families who entrusted their children to us and whose expectations were not met, we are sorry.

To the Forgotten Australians, we stand committed to responding promptly, compassionately and respectfully to those who wish to approach us about their care experiences.

I, on behalf of the non-government service providers represented here am privileged to be part of this Healing Service and commemoration for the Forgotten Australians.