



Response to Care Leavers

“The Church expresses its deep regret at the harm caused by the failure to provide appropriate care. In particular the Church 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. (i.e. Church of England Homes and Charlton Boys Home.)

The Church encourages such persons to make themselves known so that support, personal apology and appropriate assistance can be offered.”

**in the Anglican Church
Diocese of Sydney**

On 25th October 2004 the Synod¹ of the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney unanimously passed the motion set out below.

The homes under the auspices of the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney included Charlton Boys Home and Church of England Homes.

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

¹ Synod is the representative governing body of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney, which covers the Sydney metropolitan area from Broken Bay in the north, south to Ulladulla and west to Lithgow.

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 life-long 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 wrong-doing, 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.

(Moved: The Rev Chris Albany - 25.10.04)