

## **Apology to those who may have been abused as children in residential care**

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until 1985, this organisation was responsible for providing residential care for children. The Methodist Children's Home (later known as Lentara) was established under our original name of Methodist Central Mission (later re-named Adelaide Central Mission, and now UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide). In the 1970s, Lentara was closed and a number of suburban cottages operated until 1985.

The Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care heard from many people around Australia who were residents in institutions, and its report, 'The Forgotten Australians', details many cases of severe abuse experienced by children. It also describes the trauma experienced by children who were cut off from their families, and grew up in harsh and unloving conditions.

The President of the Uniting Church in Australia has issued a public apology to any who were abused in Uniting Church institutions, and this has been supported by the Moderators in all Synods.

After considering the Senate report, at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004 the Board of UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide passed the following resolutions:

That UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide affirm the significance of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care and the findings documented in its report "Forgotten Australians", and, in consequence:

1. Acknowledge with sorrow that some children in our institutions may have experienced:
  - neglect of their social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs;
  - physical violence, sexual or emotional abuse perpetrated by staff who should have been trustworthy;
  - emotional and social trauma and on-going harm;and apologise unreservedly to these people.
2. Apologise unreservedly to the families of those who may have experienced abuse in our institutions for the trauma they experienced.
3. Acknowledge those faithful staff who strove to provide (within the context in which they worked) secure, safe and loving environments for children and young people in care.
4. Note that through the Children, Youth and Family Advisory Committee of UnitingCare Australia, UnitingCare is reviewing current practice for handling past abuse allegations and complaints within the agencies in order to advise on the development of a consistent and transparent process.
5. Request the Federal Government, in the light of the evidence presented within the "Forgotten Australians" report and the recommendations made:
  - a. To issue a national statement of acknowledgment and apology.

- b. To consult with State Governments, Churches and Agencies regarding the establishment and management of a national reparation fund.
  - c. To develop comprehensive and consistent national standards and accreditation processes for the provision of institutional or out-of-home care, which builds on existing State standards and regulations.
6. Request the Government of South Australia, in response to the “Forgotten Australians” report:
- a. To issue a statement of acknowledgment and apology.
  - b. To co-operate in the establishment of a national reparation fund.
  - c. To participate in the development of national standards for out-of-home care for children and young people.

We invite any person who was a resident in one of our homes for children to make contact with us, by writing to Chief Executive, 10 Pitt St, Adelaide 5001, or by ringing 8202 5886.