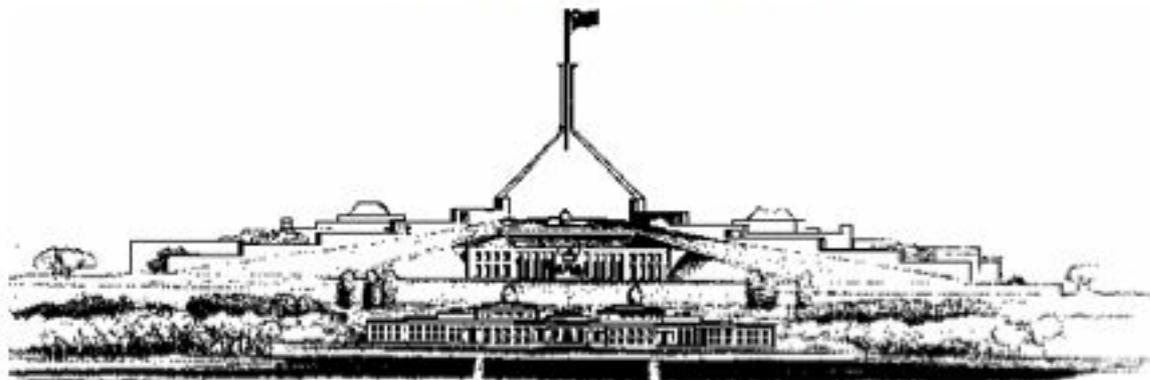




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

**Royal Commission into Institutional
Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

SPEECH

Wednesday, 14 May 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker Irons, Steve, MP	Question No.

Mr IRONS (Swan) (09:58): As members of this place would know, I have spoken many times about the Forgotten Australians and also about child and sex abuse in the community, and the royal commission that is currently investigating child sex abuse in institutions.

The hearings were held in Perth last week or the week before and, during that time, I visited the royal commission at the Industrial Relations Court and met with Leonie Sheedy, who is the head of the CLAN organisation, which is Care Leavers Australia Network. I would like to share some of the evidence that was given about a particular site, the Castledare Miniature Railway, which is in my electorate in Swan. One witness gave the following evidence to the royal commission:

As the other boys knew that I was Brother Dick's 'pet', they did not include me in their games. I always tried to isolate myself to reduce the risk of them finding out about the sexual abuse. I felt overwhelmingly ashamed and guilty about it. I tried to be as invisible as I could. There were friendship groups but I was not a part of them. At Castledare I never felt safe, as there was always the threat of Brother Dick.

... ..

We were required to undertake unpaid work at Castledare. I recall that the most arduous project I participated in was the construction of a railway which carried trains around Castledare on Open Day.

The irony of that was all the kids built this train and every Sunday, all the parents—not of the kids, but of Perth—would come out and enjoy this fantastic railway we had built. It was just basically kilometres of railway line and just all the rocks and everything that went with it, and sand. But none of them really realised who had built it. It was kids from 7 to 12, every day, day in, day out, whenever there was an opportunity, we built it, and it was just par for the course—we did what we had to do.

But if anyone knew how it got built, I'm sure they would never have used it. It was just ignorance by us, but ignorance by the whole of Perth. You know, we were stuck in the middle of this. They were having fetes and train rides and we were stuck in there. And that's the way life went on.

This account of the evidence that is being given at the royal commission was particularly disturbing, as it was to find out that this map that dates back to 1976 shows a particular part of the miniature railway platform called 'Dick's Dyke'. Leonie Sheedy from CLAN has called for a plaque of recognition to be installed at the Castledare miniature railway site that recognises how it was actually constructed by these young children in the institution. I support this call and would also suggest that they update the history section of their website to reflect these events surrounding the construction of the railway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.