

17 Jun 2008

On 17 June 2008, South Australia issued a formal apology to those who suffered or witnessed abuse or neglect in State care. The apology took the form of a motion moved by the Premier, the Hon. Mike Rann, in the State legislative assembly. The wording on the apology parchment was slightly different to the apology motion, which read:

That this parliament recognises the abuses of some of those who grew up in state care and the impact that this has had on their lives.

Only those who have been subject to this kind of abuse or neglect will ever be able to fully understand what it means to have experienced these abhorrent acts.

For many of these people, governments of any persuasion were not to be trusted. Yet many have overcome this mistrust.

You have been listened to and believed and this parliament now commits itself to righting the wrongs of the past.

We recognise that the majority of carers have been, and still are, decent honourable people who continue to open their hearts to care for vulnerable children.

We thank those South Australians for their compassion and care.

We also acknowledge that some have abused the trust placed in them as carers. They have preyed upon our children.

We acknowledge those courageous people who opened up their own wounds to ensure that we as a state could know the extent of these abuses.

We accept that some children who were placed in the care of government and church institutions suffered abuse.

We accept these children were hurt.

We accept they were hurt through no fault of their own.

We acknowledge this truth.

We acknowledge that in the past the state has not protected some of its most vulnerable.

By this apology, we express regret for the pain that has been suffered by so many.

To all those who experienced abuse in state care, we are sorry.

To those who witnessed these abuses, we are sorry.

To those who were not believed when trying to report these abuses, we are sorry.

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

We commit this parliament to be ever vigilant in its pursuit of those who abuse children.

And we commit this parliament to help people overcome this, until now, untold chapter in our States history.