

Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, Northern Ireland

19 January 2013 – 2017

URL: <http://www.hiainquiry.org/>

Details

The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry was established by the Northern Ireland Executive on 19 January 2013. It was created to investigate abuse suffered by children under the age of 18 years in institutions in Northern Ireland. As part of its work, the Inquiry examined the treatment of children in institutions in Northern Ireland who were brought to Australia under British Child Migration schemes.

There were two elements to the Inquiry: an Acknowledgement Forum where people could confidentially relate their experiences to a Panel, and a Statutory Inquiry. The Inquiry received a number of applications from people in Australia, and hearings were held in Australia to facilitate participation.

The Final Report was published in January 2017. A module of the Final Report was devoted to child migration programs to Australia. The Inquiry attempted to determine how many children from Northern Ireland were sent to Australia and what the conditions were in the Northern Ireland institutions prior to being sent to Australia. While the Inquiry did not have the powers to investigate the experiences of the children once they were placed in Australian institutions, it was able to refer submissions to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which was carrying out its investigations at the same time.

The Inquiry focussed on the sending agencies in Northern Ireland (Sisters of Nazareth, the local County Welfare Committees, and Irish Church Missions), and the attitude of the Northern Ireland Ministry of Home Affairs towards sending children to Australia.

The Inquiry noted that children who were sent from Northern Ireland were primarily sent to institutions in Western Australia – those run by the Christian Brothers for boys, and by the Sisters of Nazareth for girls. Other children were sent to Dhurringile and Nazareth House, both in Victoria. The Inquiry found that very little information was sent with the children, and that access to records, both in Australia and in Northern Ireland, was an ongoing issue. The Final Report noted that “at least 144” children were sent from Northern Ireland to Australia.

The Inquiry’s final report provided a number of recommendations. However, at the time of the report publication, Northern Ireland did not have a functioning Executive (government) and did not have the political authority to consider or implement the recommendations of the Inquiry. Since that time, a number of actions have been taken in response, including the establishment of a redress scheme, an Apology on behalf of the Northern Ireland government, and the development of memorials to victims and survivors.

More info

Related Entries

Related Organisations

- [Nazareth House, Wynnum North \(1926 - 1982\)](#)
- [Dhurringile Rural Training Farm \(1951 - 1964\)](#)

Resources

- AM, [Northern Ireland abuse inquiry calls for Australian victims](#), ABC, 5 June 2013

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