

Mr PENDAL: Let me repeat a few things about the people entrusted to their care: These were kids no one else in the world wanted. The British Government kicked them out and were glad to see the back of them. They were a mixture of genuine orphans; that is, without living parents -

Dr Watson: Or their mothers were very poor.

Mr PENDAL: I am coming to that. They were children from broken homes whom people placed in institutions or, as the member has said, the children of mothers or fathers who were very poor and who, in some cases, had no option but to place them in the care of the authorities in Britain.

Dr Watson: And Malta.

Mr PENDAL: Yes, but my point continues to be that not only did Britain not want their children and Malta not want theirs, but also they ended up in Western Australia and not even the State here wanted them. Therefore, one of the principal places they could end up in was Catholic institutions and, of course, there were other churches and non-church bodies who took those children in. I, for one, have heard from dozens upon dozens of people who have no complaint. I heard from a Labor member of Parliament only today the case of one of those children, now an adult man in the north of the State. He made it clear he had no love for or affectionate memories of his mother. The only affection he could recall being given was the proper affection that came from many of these brothers when these children were discarded. That is a point to remember when people want to pontificate and be judgmental, and they are entitled to do that on behalf of the children who have been genuinely abused: Those children were discarded as though they were not human beings at all and dumped half a world away from places like Malta and England and other parts of the globe into Western Australia, where literally no-one wanted them and was prepared to care for them, except the Christian Brothers themselves.

Barry H Goldrey 1993

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