

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee of Community Development on the Inquiry into the  
Principals and Objectives of the Disability Services Act.

(Leon) John Francis Free (born 19.1.1941).

My memory goes back to the day I collapsed with polio. I was about five or six years old. My father picked me up and carried me back to the house.

I don't recall anything until I was aware of being in Winfield Hospital and St John's Park. I can't remember all that much. I was there about a year when I left and started school.

My father got into trouble stealing petrol from the army. The consequence of stealing petrol in war time is a very serious crime, I don't know what the outcome was.

One of my uncles came to visit us. We were starving, he went up to the shop to get us food.

My parents' marriage finally ended. We were moved around a lot, staying with relatives.

The family split up, my brother went with my mother and I went with my father.

My mother got no support and my grandparents as well. My brother assisted my mother every day because she had diabetes.

My father wanted to put me into a home for boys but I refused I was belted and abused.

I was moved around a bit from my father and stepmother and also my grandparents. I got a job working on a farm for a year. I came back to my grandparents, met my wife, got married, had 4 children. I visited my mother as much as possible.

My mother became very ill she was admitted to the Royal Derwent Hospital because there weren't any beds available in any other hospitals. I went up to the hospital to see how she was going but she did not recognise me.

We got a phone call later on to tell us she had died. She was only forty-eight.

John Free  
98 Boxhill Road  
Claremont 7011  
(03) 6249 4335

30<sup>th</sup> April 2009