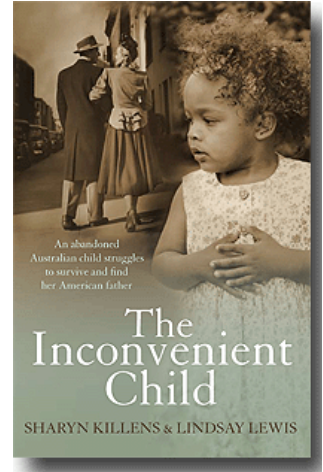


**A Shocking Secret, Kept Hidden by over Three Hundred Australian Women,  
is Revealed as One Woman Courageously Speaks Out and Tells the Shameful Truth**

The shocking truth about the systematic abuse of children under the guise of Government Child Welfare, is revealed in a new biography, *The Inconvenient Child*.

This book provides a no-holds-barred account of the degrading treatment endured by teenage girls during Australia's up-to-now hidden history of institutional 'care'.

More than 300 Australian women, most far too traumatised to talk about their experience within the walls of the notorious Hay Institution for Girls, have largely tried to block out their memories.



However, one courageous woman has broken the silence. Sharyn Killens, better known as singer and entertainer **Sharyn Crystal**, has relived the horror and its impact on her life in her just released biography. As the 'Inconvenient Child', Sharyn Crystal reveals her life wasn't always glamorous and her childhood was, at times, a living hell.

Hay Institution for Girls was a high-security place of cruel and extreme punishment for teenage girls in 1960s New South Wales. Typically, these young girls had committed no crime yet were subjected to a militaristic regime of extraordinary state-sanctioned discipline and hard labour. From 1961 to 1974, 366 girls were subjected to this brutal regime. It scarred them for life.

At just 16, Sharyn had committed no crime. She was a runaway – a disillusioned black kid who was begging her white Australian mother for love and for the identity of her African-American father. But the Courts deemed her 'uncontrollable' and in 1964, she was sentenced to Parramatta Girls Institution in Sydney. But Sharyn did not settle into Parramatta.

Consequently she was handcuffed and delivered by armed escort, 800 kilometres away to Hay Institution for Girls; a dilapidated colonial prison which since 1961, had been restored by the blood, sweat and tears of young girls.

Here, with up to eight other girls, for 150 days Sharyn was not allowed to speak, never allowed to look anywhere except the floor, marched everywhere in double-time high step, subjected to food deprivation, hard labour and debasing personal inspections, and was locked in a bare cell from 7pm till 6am every night with nothing but a can, 4 squares of toilet paper and a bible.

Sharyn's first hand, harrowing account of those five months of Hell in Hay and her seven month incarceration in Parramatta Girl's Home, make riveting yet disturbing reading and are just part of her extraordinary life. Sharyn is adamant the girls' ill-treatment be exposed, so it can never be repeated.

On November 16, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd will officially apologise to The Forgotten Australians; those nearly 500,000 adult survivors who as children, suffered often scandalous abuse under the guise of 'care', at the hands of cruel and callous staff in orphanages, children's homes and government institutions across Australia.

A Senate inquiry has also recommended the setting-up of whistleblower legislation to protect the defenceless in future and the establishment of a Commonwealth-controlled reparations fund for victims, among many other things.

It will be interesting to see what recommendations are implemented, particularly in NSW. The impact on the lives of the women who experienced this institutional 'care' must not go unheeded, for *The Inconvenient Child* is just one story among hundreds.

"But this book is not all heartbreak and misery," says author Lindsay Lewis. "It is in fact a triumph of the spirit over adversity: but the reality remains – its contents are a damning indictment of government-condoned maltreatment of young girls and represents a dark period in Australia's recent history. It cannot be ignored."

To arrange an interview with Sharyn Killens and Author Lindsay Lewis, or for more information, please contact: Lindsay Lewis at Miracle Publishing on: (02) 9460-8050 or 0429-998-885

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