

Peter Walsh, Letter to the Australian Financial Review, June 24 1997

Political bent of Charities

By Peter Walsh

Politicians receive many letters soliciting donations to what might be loosely described at charities. Most respond to them. They also assume that the same organization does not solicit more than once a year. When I realized Community Aid Abroad did so more frequently, I considered not responding.

When it was reported that CAA had supplied the tents which the perpetrators of Perth's Old Swan Brewery hoax were occupying, CAA was cut off the list. I had not, until then, known that money ostensibly collected to benefit the destitute in Third World countries, was in fact used to fund fashionable political campaigns within Australia.

CAA was at it again last week. *The Times* of London published a letter signed by CAA director Jeremy Hobbs; one Kevin Dance pretentiously described as president, Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, whose address is c/o Community Aid Abroad; ACTU president Jennie George and Perth's Archbishop Carnley. Leaving aside the precious archbishop, the sponsors would be more accurately described as a trendy and somewhat incestuous Fitzroy push than the representative group of Australians they purported to be.

The letter urged Tony Blair to admonish John Howard for his Government's intention to curtail Aboriginal land rights on pastoral leases – which Keating Government's Native Title Act, supported unanimously by the chattering classes, was supposed to have been abolished completely – and advocated "international pressure" to make Howard adopt their preferred policies. It claimed "Australians have recently been shocked by the revelation that our parents' generation perpetuated the systematic theft of Aboriginal children in the belief that it was for their own good".

What sheltered lives our do-gooders must have lived. It has been widely known for decades that some children – almost invariably at least half white – were taken away under the 'assimilation' policy. Other kids, white and black, were taken away by governments because they were neglected.

White and black kids are still taken away for that reason. Do Hobbs et al know this or not? Or does their only knowledge of the "real world" come from the Wilson report – a horror story based on uncorroborated assertions from unidentified assertors? Ronald Wilson

acknowledged that a court might require higher quality verification and proof, but asked how could you fail to believe stories told by people with tears running down their faces? Really!

Last week Hobbs also urged the Queen to reprimand John Howard and revealed a paid advertisement would appear in *The Independent*, urging the UK and its Queen to do everything in their power to make John Howard apologise for “the stolen generation” (hand over the money?) and amend his 10-point Wik plan. Does George, not to mention republicans in general also believe Elizabeth R. Should interfere in Australian politics?

Now it is not unusual for people who cannot get their own way in this democracy, to seek foreign intervention. Many of them would be delighted by economic sanctions against Australia. And *they* complain about Pauline Hanson.