

SUBMISSION:

The Victorian Ombudsman's Office recently tweeted that they "are in the business of human rights" and intend to make a submission. They are high-profile people who "help" others. No doubt their submission will be very righteous as they detail what "other" people should do to improve their performance in human rights. My experience with this Office is they do not look at their own situation to examine whether they have been accountable to the public in their performance by acting in an honourable way concerning human rights and/or compassion for others and treating them as they would want to be treated themselves.

The Ombudsman, Deborah Glass, has embarked on a series of self-promotional speaking engagements. At one of these public meetings in April I spoke as follows:

"I have a statement and then a question.

I was the first and probably the last, to achieve Freedom of Information against the Ombudsman before the loophole was closed with the Whistleblowers Act. I obtained a document saying that the then Ombudsman had instructed "Under no circumstances is Mrs Woodford to be asked what her complaint is".

Some years before I had gone to the Office of the Ombudsman and begged please tell me why my husband died. I was told to go away. You can't know the cruelty, the pain, of this rejection. I had failed my child, or perhaps I should say, your Office failed my child. It was 18 years before I could afford the legal fees to obtain the autopsy report.

For the past three months I have written to you, asking you just to say sorry, but you have mostly ignored me.

My question, Ms Glass, is:

Can you envisage a time in the foreseeable future when you will say a proper sorry for past mistakes by your Office. You were not even in this country when Kevin Rudd, as Prime Minister, said sorry in parliament to the Stolen Generation. Julia Gillard, as Prime Minister, and Ted Baillieu, as Victorian Premier, both said sorry in their respective parliaments to the unmarried mothers who had their babies forcibly taken from them for adoption in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Will you follow the example of our leaders and say a specific sorry too?"

The response from Ms Glass was that she could do nothing. End of matter as far as she was concerned.

How can those paid by taxpayer money who promote their support of human rights be, in reality, so unmoved and so uncaring? I expect that you will give some prominence to the submission from the Victorian Ombudsman and even offer her a

personal appearance before your Committee. I am sure you will not ask to speak to me or probably not even publish my submission.

I just ask that you see the hypocrisy of the Office of the Victorian Ombudsman and perhaps, as our elected representatives, actually take a stand for the public of Victoria hurt by the system that allows this hypocrisy to continue.

(Mrs) Gwen Woodford