



Infected Blood AUSTRALIA



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE CAMPAIGN FOR A ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE CSL AND AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS BLOOD SCANDAL.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Pg 1-2 Christmas Message from our founder Charles MacKenzie.
- Pg 3-4 Parrallel's in the UK and Australian Blood Scandal by Michael Imperato (UK Legal Representative).
- Pg 5-6. Message of support from Lynne Kelly (Chairperson of Haemophilia Wales).
- Pg 7-8. How you can help?:
 - Become a Volunteer
 - Support our call to action
 - Write a letter to your MP



If you are interested in making a contribution or would like to share your story in our next newsletter.

Please contact Charles MacKenzie: cjm@infectedbloodaustralia.com

2020, the year a virus called Covid-19 put the world on pause.

For large periods of this year, we Australians and especially long suffering Victorians have been restricted in what we could do or how many people we were allowed to meet. It has at times felt like something akin to wartime, with curfews and certain provisions in short supply. For many contaminated blood victims though, it has also felt like a bad case of Déjà vu, with isolation, fear and feelings of frustration being all too familiar.

In the 1970's a Chernobyl scale event of mass contamination broke out across blood supplies around the world and incredibly it was not brought under control for decades. Australia did not escape the disaster and thousands of Australians were infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and C, through tainted blood transfusions or through receiving blood products.



"I am delighted to be able to inform you this festive season and after many years of trying, that Infected Blood Australia's distress beacon has been heard". Charles MacKenzie

While other nations got crucial support for victims of their contaminated blood disasters, Australians were abandoned by local authorities who failed to respond. Those failures have had the most devastating consequences for victims and their affected families.

I have known for over thirty years that tainted blood was actively being covered-up by the authorities in Australia. As a result, my 'Modus Operandi' has been to expose the suppression and to send out smoke signals.

The situation was always clear to me, something truly terrible has happened down here. If the Australian government weren't going to respond, we would still need help for our victims and affected families, so we had to try for assistance outside of Australia.

I am delighted to be able to inform you this festive season and after many years of trying that Infected Blood Australia's distress beacon has been heard.

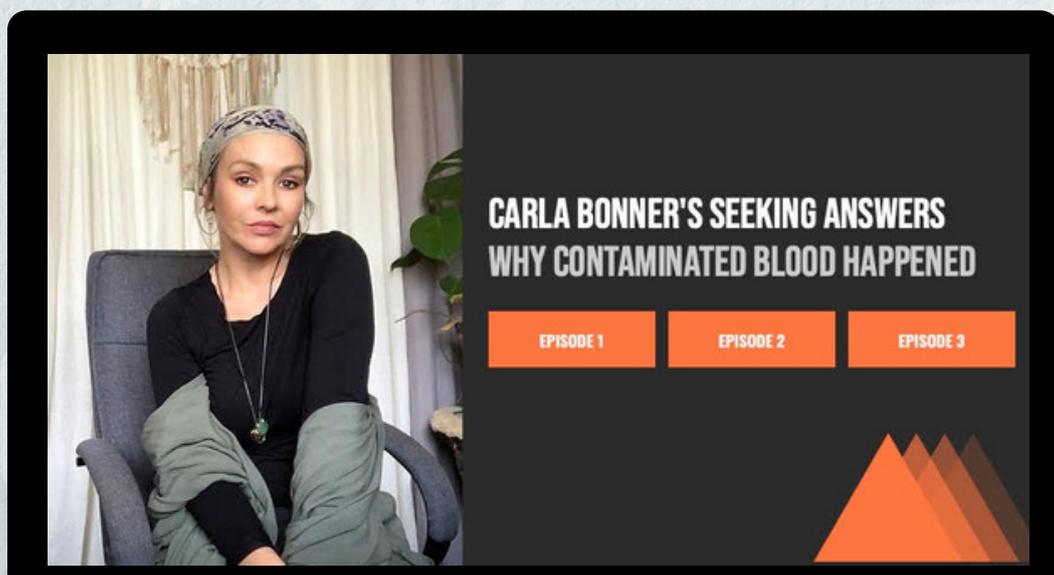
Despite 2020 being such a challenging year, the irony is, that in campaign terms, we are going into our most positive ever Christmas and New year.

Good people and organisations overseas know more of what has happened down here and they support our cause and that fact is reflected in the articles featured in this special Christmas edition of our newsletter.

Given our campaigns more encouraging position, I ask, that if possible, we put some of our worries aside and enjoy a really positive Christmas and Happy New Year, safe in the knowledge that we are no longer the unheard victims of the global contaminated blood scandal and that if we roll our sleeves up and keep writing to our elected representatives in parliament we might very well achieve justice in the future as well.

Wishing you and your families a safe and very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Charles MacKenzie



PARRALLEL'S IN THE UK AND AUSTRALIAN BLOOD SCANDAL BY MICHAEL IMPERATO.

(UK LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE)

I am a solicitor and I represent hundreds of victims in the UK Infected Blood Scandal. The Public Inquiry, which is ongoing, was announced in July 2017 and started in September 2018. It became clear to me, at a very early stage that this was an international scandal.

This was confirmed in the Summer of 2019. I was attending the Inquiry hearings in Edinburgh when a Scottish victim witness stated that he believed he had been infected by contaminated blood imported from Australia.

At the same time, I became aware of the campaigning efforts for infected blood victims in Australia by Charles MacKenzie. Charles and I made contact and it soon became apparent to me that he could greatly assist the UK Inquiry. Thankfully, the solicitor in charge of the running of the Inquiry thought the same. I was asked by the UK Inquiry to liaise with Charles and collate evidence as to the history of the infected blood scandal in Australia.

As I began to work with Charles, the links and parallels between Australia and the UK became even more apparent. There was evidence of a significant amount of contact and liaison between the Authorities in Australia and the UK at the height of the scandal. Key clinicians and decision makers in both countries would often correspond with each other, attend conferences together and generally share information.

Could some of this information effectively “fill in the blanks” in some of the evidence in the UK? What more can be found out about the supply of Australian blood to the UK as described by the witness in the Edinburgh hearings?

There also seemed to be parallels in the way that Court cases brought by victims had possibly been closed down by the Authorities in both countries.

Having looked at these issues for the Inquiry and reported back to them, we were then asked to assist Charles in preparing a detailed witness statement for the inquiry. This covers in some detail the full story of Charles' fight for justice. It is one of the most detailed and important statements we have helped provide to the UK Inquiry.



"As I began to work with Charles, the links and the parrallel's between Australia and the UK became even more apparent". Michael Imperato

It has recently been announced that the Inquiry will continue to hear evidence throughout most of 2021. At the moment it is working its way through the evidence of clinicians across the UK. We will also hear evidence from Associations and Trusts which were established by the Government to assist victims, but some cases came to be seen as part of the problem themselves. Crucially it will in the summer, hear evidence from key decision makers. Victims very much hope that high ranking politicians from the 1980's in the UK will give evidence and be cross examined as to their culpability. The Inquiry may also hear evidence from campaigners and it is hoped that Charles will be able to give his story in person as well as through his detailed witness statement.

The UK Blood Inquiry has taken up much of my working time over the last 2 - 3 years and it looks like that will continue through 2021. It is one of the biggest Public Inquiries ever held in the UK. It's easy to think, as I sit surrounded by Inquiry files and papers, that such a Public Inquiry in the UK was inevitable. However, that is far from the case. For 30 years the UK Government vehemently resisted calls for such an Inquiry. Now it is here, nobody is questioning its importance and relevance. There have been similar such Inquiries in Canada and Southern Ireland. This of course begs the question, why has there been no such Inquiry in Australia? It's devastating effect on people knows no international boundaries. It looks as though victims in the UK will have answers and justice sometime in 2022. How long is it going to take for that to be the case in Australia? We must be pressing for this now and I am committed to using all the experience I have gained over the last few years to aiding Charles and Australian victims in that fight.

Michael Imperato is a solicitor, acting for numerous victims, their families and victim charities in the UK Infected Blood Inquiry.



WORDS OF SUPPORT FROM LYNNE KELLY OF HAEMOPHILIA WALES

(CHAIRPERSON OF HAEMOPHILIA WALES)



When I first spoke to Charles MacKenzie it was clear our campaigns had striking similarities with calls for a Public Inquiry making little impact on successive Governments, who continued to insist that nothing could have been done differently and a Public Inquiry was not in the best interests of the victims or patients seeking ongoing care.

Government also felt the infected population would naturally die out and the problem would go away, they perceived the campaigners were not organised and did not speak with one voice, or simply seen as chasing money.

I have four cousins and three sons with Haemophilia and have been involved in campaigning for justice for contaminated blood victims and families from the early 1980s. I'm chair of Haemophilia Wales an independent charity run by volunteers and we represent around 200 people in the Public inquiry and have over 500 members across the country who we support providing advocacy and information.

By 2015 there had been 2 Inquiries in the UK: the Archer Inquiry's recommendations had been ignored by the Government and the Penrose Inquiry was a whitewash. Victims continued to die in poverty and families were left to fend for themselves with Governments offering as little support as they could get away with.

We had tried to mount legal challenges against various Governments but could not afford the legal costs and Infected blood victims were excluded from getting Legal Aid. We met Michael Imperato at Watkins and Gunn, as I had enquired at a Cardiff Barristers Chambers if they knew of any 'kind' lawyers who would agree to offer us some direction free of charge. Michael agreed to take on our cause when others would not and with his expertise in Public Law he navigated us through the obstacles we had previously encountered by various Governments.

We had an inactive Haemophilia Society in the UK but the Haemophilia Society in Southern Ireland was led by Brian O'Mahony an infected Haemophiliac who lost a family member and had secured the Lindsay Tribunal in 1999 which led to compensation and priority access to health care with the Irish Health Amendment card.

" I wanted to send this message to you by way of encouragement as the UK wide Public Inquiry continues to hear evidence, there will be a global impact with its recommendations". Lynne Kelly.



We used the Irish scheme as an example of what was needed in terms of care and support when talking to Government. It was critically important to maintain pressure on politicians and we asked members to contact their local politicians at every level and provide them with their personal stories of how they had been physically, psychologically and financially impacted by contaminated blood.

We asked supportive politicians to relay these personal stories in debates in the House of Commons and at any other political grouping, All-Party meetings, Back Bench debates, members questions Contaminated Blood Debates, questions to Health Ministers, First Ministers and Prime Ministers, to ensure that contaminated blood remained on the agenda regardless of how often politicians and administrations changed.

As a result of our efforts in Wales Welsh Government voted unanimously in support of a UK wide Public Inquiry in January 2017 and a UK wide Public Inquiry was announced by the Prime Minister in July 2017.

I wanted to send this message to you by way of encouragement as the UK wide Public Inquiry continues to hear evidence there will be a global impact with its recommendations.

We in Wales are here to offer any guidance and support we can to you in your continued fight for justice and believe the following mantra has helped achieve our goal :

Campaign for all - whether affected or infected transfusion, Haemophiliac, widow, etc

Campaign for Truth - the disclosure of the information from whatever source.

Campaign for Justice - not compensation, compensation will follow if justice is served.

We did not think any of us would live to see this happen and we would urge you to continue to fight on behalf of your fellow victims to ensure they get the Justice and support they deserve.

Seasons Greetings to our fellow campaigners in Australian Infected Blood Community and all the very Best for 2021.

Lynne Kelly Chair of Haemophilia Wales





TAKE ACTION!

1

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Fancy being a pioneer with a movement that is going to defend Australia from the kind of secrecy and lies that caused the contaminated blood scandal?

We are quite literally the little guys up against the Goliaths in the size of the Commonwealth government and the \$140 billion dollar blood products and vaccine giant CSL. We also desperately need help for those infected & affected by the devastating consequences of tainted blood.

We are looking for creative and compassionate people with the following skills:

Wikipedia content writer, Website designer, Graphic artist, Podcast producer and Social media consultant and Health Care Professionals: such as Counsellors, Naturopaths, Medical doctors and Dentists.

CAN YOU HELP VICTIMS OF AUSTRALIA'S DEADLIEST MEDICAL SCANDAL??

Contact Charles MacKenzie via cjm@infectedbloodaustralia.com

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.

– *Elie Wiesel*

2

SUPPORT OUR CALL TO ACTION

Do you support a call for a Royal Commission of inquiry and compensation?

Please complete our confidential form on our website.

www.infectedbloodaustralia.com

WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR MP

Date

Name and Title of Parliamentarian

(Check correct title in Member/Senate list at www.aph.gov.au)

Address

(Use electorate or Parliament House address listed at www.aph.gov.au)

Dear Senator/Mr/Ms/Mrs/Minister _____,

Royal commission into the contaminated blood supply and compensation for all those infected and affected by Australia's worst public health scandal.

Personal introduction to yourself

Thank them for any action they have taken or you have read about.

Body of letter – use the EPIC format – Engage reader, state the Problem, Inform about solutions, and give a Call to action.

- Using bullet points can help highlight the issues

Ask for a response or copies of any replies they receive on your behalf

Thank them for their attention to your letter.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Your Name

Address

Contact phone number



FOLLOW US:



www.infectedbloodaustralia.com