

# \$1m for 'dad' rape

SHANNON DEERY

A STATE ward sexually tortured by her foster dad for a decade has reached a record \$1 million settlement with the Victorian Government.

Lawyers say the compensation payout could open the floodgates for hundreds of claims against the government by abused wards of the state.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was routinely raped by her foster dad from the age of nine.

She first fell pregnant to him aged 13 and gave birth to two children, despite the man's

attempts to perform backyard abortions on her. A third pregnancy was terminated.

The woman, known in court as XYZ, said that through the 1970s and 1980s she was raped almost daily by her foster dad.

Sometimes he would come home from work to abuse her in the middle of the day.

"The more sex (he) got the happier the household was," XYZ later told police. "He was so cruel and nasty. It was easier for everyone concerned that I kept having sex with (him)."

## Evil foster dad's decades of abuse

XYZ said her foster dad performed one backyard abortion and drove her to an abortion clinic on other occasions.

He continued to assault her when pregnant and demanded she lie to her foster mum and authorities about the abuse.

"(He) was a hurtful and hateful man who I was too frightened to upset because if I did he would beat me and my brothers and sisters."

Shortly after the long-running abuse was exposed in the late 1980s, the man returned to

Britain. He was later extradited to face justice here.

But in a slap in the face to his victim, who turned to prostitution after her life spiralled out of control, he was jailed for a minimum of just two years and six months.

He was found guilty of six charges of indecent assault and gross indecency but could not be prosecuted for the most serious offending.

"I will not dwell on the reasons why your conduct of regular sexual penetration of a

child under 16 could not be prosecuted," the sentencing judge said. "The reasons do not show the law in a good light."

XYZ took the state government to court alleging it had failed in its duty of care to her.

Her lawyer, Joseph Ridley of Arnold Thomas & Becker, said he was not aware of a higher settlement in a state ward sexual abuse claim against the State.

"My client hopes that her tragic story can give others like her the confidence to overcome heinous sexual and emotional abuse," he said.

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