



Appendix C: Committee statement on the treatment of written evidence

Agreed to by the Committee on 7 June 2018

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs is inquiring into approaches to a nationally consistent framework for adoptions in Australia, and is welcoming views on its terms of reference.

Please note that personal details, private information, and unnecessary adverse reflections on individuals will not be published.

The Committee acknowledges the profound effects of past forced adoption and removal policies and practices, which were also formally acknowledged by the House of Representatives in its resolution of 3 December 2013. The Committee understands that, for many of those affected, adoption continues to be a deeply distressing issue. In responding to queries from members of the public, and in reviewing submissions received to date, it has become clear that some members of the community wish to share their experiences, including of past adoption practices.

The focus of this present inquiry is not those past practices and policies. The terms of reference require the Committee to consider how stability and permanency can be provided for children who are in out-of-home care, and for whom adoption is a viable option. The Committee is also required to consider the appropriate guiding principles for a national code or framework in Australia, as well the current legislative framework. The present inquiry is therefore intended to be forward-looking and solutions-focussed.

The Committee has been carefully considering each of the written contributions made by members of the community. The Committee takes very seriously its broader responsibilities in carrying out this inquiry. While the Committee welcomes submissions sharing personal experiences, it is very mindful of the potential issues in publishing submitters' details under these circumstances. Where there is potential for any parties to be identified (including people

connected with the author), the Committee may authorise publication with identifying information removed (possibly including the name of the submitter).

Based on its past experience managing inquiries which have received sensitive information and where publication of certain aspects has continued to cause distress, the Committee has decided to take a cautious approach to managing personal information at this time. The Committee will attempt to ensure that this approach is applied with consistency, sensitivity, and respect.

The Committee appreciates the considered written contributions it has received so far, and where it has determined that personal experiences will not be published, these will continue to inform the Committee's deliberations, and will be considered as the Committee prepares its report.

We thank all contributors for assisting the Committee with its inquiry.