

Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House, Canberra ACT, 2600
Australia

Commonwealth contribution to forced adoption policies and practices: submission

Dear Senators,

I, _____, am a citizen of the commonwealth of Australia residing in Tasmania. As a citizen of the commonwealth of Australia I have an inalienable right to protection under the Australian constitution and the common law of this country. As an Australian citizen, the commonwealth affords me protection from the unlawful and harmful actions that threaten my right to life, liberty and justice from those who would deny me these rights within and without the borders of Australia.

My story is like so many others a story of unlawful and harmful actions that has stayed with me throughout my life. I was not

“one of those girls” as society targeted you. I was brought up in a middle class family with parents that did not take an interest in my teenage years. My mother communicated through verbal or physical abuse and I started to find affection elsewhere. With my parent’s approval I was allowed to date my boyfriend, I was _____ and he was _____. When I became pregnant my parents did not accept the pregnancy and threatened to have my boyfriend the father charged. They both forbid me to see him and went to great lengths so this would happen. They took me to a Doctor in _____ who was renowned for illegal abortions but when this did not happen he suggested adoption. My parents sent me away to _____ which I had never been to before and I remember being very frightened and scared at the prospect of going through this alone. I was sent to _____ home in _____ for unmarried mothers. The home was run by religious nuns but felt very unreligious by the way you were treated. You were made to clean and cook and were always treated like you were a lesser person as you have shamed your family. You were told you would not be able to be a good mother, could not possibly give the baby a good home, you were bad and now had to do as your parents wanted. I was lied to by Doctors, nurses, nuns and my Parents. I was objected to examinations during my check-up with all the student doctors standing around and even though I protested it would happen on several occasions. No-one attended with me for these checks. I had a complication during the pregnancy but received no support from any social worker, the home or my parents. My daughter was born on the _____. During the labour I was left alone most of the time and had no

support once again and had never been given any pre-natal advice. I was extremely frightened and do remember not coping and yelling out in pain. I remember being drugged and not having a clear memory of the actual birth. During my stay in hospital I made several attempts to see my baby but was turned away every time. In the nursery the nurses keep my baby in the very back and there was always a nurse at the door when I would go telling me to stay away. I never ever got to hold or even touch my baby but I did obtain a photograph even though I was not supposed to. This was the one thing that always keeps me going. During my stay in hospital I was put in a ward with all the married mothers and their babies it was like a form of torture. My mother came to pick me up on the last day in hospital and she totally refused to see my baby and said she was not allowed from authorities to let me either. I was also against my will given drugs to stop lactation. Later that day papers where signed my signature is not on any documents I have seen and I have no recollection of signing any papers. This was done at the _____ I then was flown home, my mother saying you will forget this ever happened. My family did not ever talk to me about what had happened and I suppressed every memory so I could cope. The father was also stripped of his rights and went off the rails for several years. I married four years later and went on to have _____ and _____ My husband was aware of my past but my children did not know until they were adults. This posed so many problems for them as they had already formed their own identity and needed to come to terms with this in their own time. My sons have adjusted and have contact but my daughter still is coming

to terms and does not have any contact at this stage. I decided to try to contact my daughter as I felt such an emptiness in my life and even though I Had my beautiful other children I still could not replace my daughter. At the time of my search my daughter was actually trying to find me.I never had any counselling offered throughout the pregnancy or after and was never told of any other options that might be available to me.I never saw a social worker or new any was available. I had to see a psychologist during the last two years to help me come to terms with the past memories but I know the hurt will never go. I always wished society had not been so judgemental and showed empathy as we do now so we could have lived our lives without so much pain but I always remember the words my beautiful daughter says to me when we are feeling down. "That's just the way it was".