



**Senate inquiry into
'Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies
and practices.'**

**I Annette B Wilson am a citizen of the Commonwealth
of Australia resident in New South Wales.**

**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.**

ANNETTE BERYL WILSON

(...)

Having just been made aware of the Senate inquiry into the 'Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices,' I would like to lodge a submission detailing my own experience.

In 1963 I was an eighteen-year-old girl. I had been going steady with a young man for twelve months. We dreamed of becoming engaged and one day marrying.

Then I discovered I was pregnant!

This shocked my parents for as a minor not only was I seeking their permission to marry but I was intending to marry a person from another religion. I had been raised in the Anglican faith, my parents being Church of England. The family I intended to marry into were Catholics.

After informing my parents that the courts would grant us permission consent for the marriage of a minor application was signed on the condition we were married in the Church of England Church.

My young man's family however, were not at ease with this. They insisted we be married in the Catholic Church. We finally agreed to marry in both churches, holding two different ceremonies to satisfy both sets of parents.

In the meantime the owner of the hairdressing salon where I had been indentured as an apprentice hairdresser, offered to pay all costs if I would agree to an abortion. I blankly refused, choosing motherhood over my hairdressing career.

My fiancé and I found a flat and we moved our things into it and made arrangements for our wedding. I bought a wedding dress, ordered flowers, had a cake made and iced, sent out invitations and my parents organised the reception. All was in readiness.

Then surprisingly the day before the wedding itself my fiancé informed me due to family pressure, he could not go through with the marriage. The wedding was off!

My parents, initially very upset because I was getting married were now twice as upset because I wasn't getting married. Not knowing how to handle this they sought counsel from their church. They were advised by Reverend (...) of St Luke's Church of England, Liverpool to place me in a home. The home chosen was Carramar, this being situated in Boomerang Street, Turrumurra.

It was a Church of England run hostel for unmarried mothers to be! I have since referred to it as a 'Baby-Factory.'

We now know institutions such as Carramar took advantage of girls in that same vulnerable state I was in, single and expecting. Under the pretext of helping and providing a safe cover of decency, they plotted and brainwashed all into believing adoption was the their only alternative. The girl's wishes were not heard, their pleas went unheard and their off-spring were stolen, often as in my case stripped away from us the minute they were born. No papers having been signed, not even a verbal agreement having been reached, but these people considered this to be their right and we, as the unmarried young mothers had no rights.

We were fair game and vulnerable having just given birth and our babies were stolen!

During my stay in Carramar it was impressed on all of us that it was an even greater sin to keep and raise our children. With no government support and the social stigma involved we felt we had no choice and were bullied into relinquishing our babies for adoption.

To say we were brainwashed is being polite, stood over and threatened is much nearer the truth.

We were told to adopt the baby from birth so as not to risk losing him later. Being young and unmarried made us unfit as parents and not entitled to keep and raise our own children.

We were told a child needs two parents and what right did we have to deny the child a father. Guilt was a powerful tool these people used to their advantage. We were told the child of these circumstances became the object of people's pity, the mother the object of people's scorn. The social stigma was generated for their advantage and we all believed in it. Indeed, another powerful tool.

We were told by our own parent's not to come home if we kept the child. In my case my parents were brainwashed into believing adoption was the best thing for both my baby and myself.

We were told as teenagers we were too young to keep and raise a child and indeed, it was selfish of us if we did because we were denying this child a proper start in life. We were told we had to put the child first, think of his future, we would soon forget. Forty- seven- years later I still find this impossible to forget but I would always have put my child first.

We were homeless, without income and pregnant. That made us vulnerable and our babies fair game.

Brainwashed, threatened and terrified most of us succumb to the demands placed upon us to relinquish and signed the papers placed before us.

I spent a week in Hornsby Hospital after giving birth to a boy. The child was taken from me, whisked out of the room the minute he was delivered and despite my constant demands and pleas I was not allowed to see him again.

I was deposited in a corner of the hospital out the way for the most part and virtually ignored. Suffering badly

with swollen, milk-filled breasts I was given no further consideration. I actually had to return to Hornsby Hospital as an outpatient a few days after I was discharged to receive further treatment for this condition. Not having these medical records I now believe I may have been administered the drug Sebesterol. This could account for my breast cancer and more recently, ovarian cancer.

Being delivered of my child I had been striped of all rights as a mother and a person. Having given no form of consent, verbal or written I believe these people stole my newborn son!

On the morning of the eighth day after my child's birth, having being beaten mentally into submission by Matron (...) and Sister (...) both of Carramar and the staff at Hornsby Hospital, in the presence of Matron (...) I signed the adoption papers placed before me.

That afternoon when my father came to collect me from Carramar he was told by Matron (...) that there was six weeks before the adoption became legal and binding. I overheard.

Approximately three weeks later, Monday the 23rd of November, 1963 I decided to get my son back. The adoption had been Carramar's idea not mine, and I felt I could not live without him. I contacted Matron (...) and was put in touch with a Church of England social worker by the name of (...)

To see this person, to speak to her in person, I travelled from Liverpool to St Vincent's Hospital at Kings Cross where I was told unfortunately, the adoptive family had taken the baby interstate. I found out later it was illegal to do this until the adoption had been finalised but I believe the family actually took my son, then just three weeks old, to Melbourne. I also believe they may have

been advised to do this as I had been so reluctant to forfeit my child, I was seen as a threat to this adoption.

The adopting parents were unable to be contacted. By the time they were contactable my six weeks was up and I believed I no longer had a claim on my child.

Again I was forced to give up!

I have since found out that the adoption was not legal and binding until it had been passed by the courts, the court hearing in my son's case was not held until April, 1964. That meant up until that date I was still legally my child's guardian and as such had every right to him. They stole my baby by denying me those rights!

During the course of that first meeting with (...) (...) at Kings Cross Hospital she accidentally called the adoptive parents by their surname.

This was not lost on me.

The lies and deceit continued over the years. I maintained a relationship with (...) for a period in excess of twenty years. At one stage when my son would have been about eight years of age (...) rang me at work to inform me she had just visited the adoptive family. My son was well, they had adopted a little girl as a sister for him and they had called him (...).

I now had my son's full name.

Despite any temptation I may have felt I never tried to find my child, believing now that he would be a definite part of his new adoptive family. I had to content myself with the couple of phone calls (...) and I made each year to each other and the two times I actually visited her in her office.

When my son turned eighteen years of age this thinking change and I did try to find him. I registered with 'Jig-Saw' and contacted the 'Adoption Triangle' all to no avail. Further investigations showed no such person held a drivers licence or was enrolled to vote, the two things he

was now old enough to do. After years of heartache and frustration I had no alternate but to accept the fact that my son was not to be found.

In desperation in late 1989 I rang (...) s number only to be advised that (...) no longer worked there. To my surprise the person I had been in contact with for more than twenty years had retired without telling me. To my even greater surprise the person I was now speaking to was very interested in my case history and was actually very helpful. She immediately looked my file up only to find out that the christian name I had been given all those years ago by (...) herself, was in fact the name of my son's adoptive parent's natural son, a child who had died six years before my son was born. (...) had given me a dead child's name.

My son and I found each other over twenty years ago as a result of this information and these enquiries. He was twenty-six at the time, he is now forty-seven-years old and I am sixty-six.

All these years later I still find it ridiculous to think that people really believed you could take a person's child from them...and they would forget!

An experience such as this has on-going and ever-lasting repercussions. This has been referred to as the 'rippling' effect.' It reaches out and affects all aspects of your life every day and it touches the lives of everyone you hold dear.

You are denied the right of watching this child, your child grow up. You watch as others around you become parents, then grandparents and eventually you come to realise you are not only missing your child but your grandchildren as well, for in my case they stole my only child.

It is time these horrific crimes and their ever-lasting effects be aired. It is also time the lies, deceit and underhand and illegal tactics used to strip young mothers

of their children, condemning them to a life of heartache and irreversible damage be brought to light and apologised for.

YOURS SINCERELY
ANNETTE B WILSON, (...)

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

(...)