

**Committee Secretary
Lewis**

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Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs

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Australia

Senate Inquiry into “Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices.”

Preamble to Submission

I, Wayne H.E. LEWIS am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia resident in Queensland.

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

Dear Senators,

Commonwealth of Australia Inquiry into Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices.

As a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia I had and still do have an inalienable right to protection under the Australian Constitution, rule of law and the Common Law of this nation.

As an Australian citizen, the Commonwealth should have afforded us all protection from the unlawful and harmful actions that threatened our right to life, liberty and justice from those who denied us all these rights, within and without, the borders of Australia.

We must live by the Australian Constitution, Rule of Law, and the Common Law of this country and Commonwealth politicians are elected to uphold Commonwealth Law meaning they will prevail over federal legislation, and by operation of section 109 of the Constitution, will override inconsistent state laws (whether past or future.)

I am a **Natural Australian Son, who was ILLEGALLY ADOPTED, WITHOUT my mother's CONSENT, and** who would like to register my interest in this Committee's inquiry and acknowledge that it is an important step in addressing the issues of forced adoptions in the 1950's to the 1970's.

As a direct consequence of the inhumane treatment I have received, I have suffered a lifetime of living grief and pain and as a result I am unable to prepare/write my personal story for presentation to the Inquiry.

I believe the evidence into the Commonwealth Government's involvement in forced adoptions will change not only your understanding of this dark period of this countries history but will increase your determination for the truth to be recorded so that the past is never repeated.

Having been “Illegally Adopted” - in short:-

Besides, never knowing that I ever had parents or family of my own, I never was told, that I can remember, that I was loved, I was never hugged, till I was about 46, 1990, “by my Adopted Dad” who was then 91 and only after I instigated the contact.

The beltings occurred regularly by my adopted father, the most severe, as stated below!

Beltings occurred by my adopted father with his belt, which was made from a horse saddle strap. I still remember a few, the first time was within a couple of weeks of **Trial Adoption Period** age 11, during school holidays from the Boarding School and I **was belted**, because I did not respond/run to his calling me, straight away.

A moment comes to mind when near on one year after I was adopted, having again spent most of that year in **institutional care**, at a Boarding School, where again the cane was a **regular weapon** of use, and the fact that I was a bit slow in theoretical ability, so the cane was common place for me and thinking of it now, would have caused me to always be in a state of fear and anxiety in particular in the many schools I attended!

Recalling August (1956) I was to travel to the USA knowing by now that my New Parents had moved back over there – where I was finally able to live with my “New Parents” as a family unit, I had just turned 12 years old. I was to travel basically by myself via taxi to Brisbane, then to Sydney by air where I stayed with “Family Friends”, passport stuff (as I worked out many years later) via overnight stop in San Francisco and New York, where I only “Peed” myself twice in my aircraft seat. With that fear in mind you can imagine how little water I drank all those hours in the air as even now I never remember being told they had toilets! Over a week later arriving and joyously meeting “My New Dad” in the Bahamas and a week later having waited for my Visa to get into the USA. We then flew to Miami in Florida and after driving an hour or so finally arriving at my New Family Home in Homestead.

The day of my arrival was the first and only time I had with my New Mother outside her bed room, where I spent as much time with her as I could. Approximately 6 or 7 months in the States my adopted Mum died, just before my 13th birthday and just before we were notified of my approval for American Citizenship within a year of arrival in the States.

A Father and Son holding hands - Within a few days of arrival to my new home my **New Dad** and I went shopping at the big K-Mart. We got out of the car and as I loved my New Dad, I walked over to him and put my hand into his as I had seen other kids do. He removed his hand from mine and said “big boys don’t do that”, I had just turned 12 and a few months. This was the start of my insecurities and inability and a fear to communicate with **My New Dad**. Shortly after arriving in the US, I soon had my first pushbike and after learning to ride it, I rode it to school, I was so happy.

Approximately six or seven months in the US with my new family I rode my bike over to family friends to spend the weekend with them when I found my Adopted Dad had arrived (most unusual) to take me home early, when on arrival home I was informed that Mum had passed away. I didn’t know how to feel – but felt lost! A short time later I remember being at our local church for my Mum’s funeral, me not understanding really what was going on and not knowing what a funeral was. All the kids were sent outside to play and I remember standing off to one side seeing the other kids playing and me looking towards the church and hearing singing (I was made to normally sing in the church choir) I was very confused! There was no more talk of Mum’s death! I loved Mum so much and saw the beauty of her strength and the pride within her. The times I called on Mum’s strength, inspiration/s and pride to keep going and keep trying in times of despair and loneliness. I always tried to give my best, and always tried not to disappoint Mum or Dad – I know I did disappoint Dad at times. I was taken to a university for testing of my reading ability, to find all though I was in grade seven my reading standard was the equivalent of a grade four. Even with that, I was never helped with the problem and felt intimidated to where I could never ask Dad with help nor did he ask me if I needed help with school homework! Up to

grade ten I think I had been to nine different schools which didn't help my schooling, due to the many differences between schools and countries! I was so intimidated I never asked for anything and was never able to talk with my Dad about anything, he was a good man, but not a **Father** I could talk my problems over with. "Little Children were to be seen and not heard" – so to speak! I was often so lonely and confused after my Adopted Mum's death.

Another very bad belting was just over eight months after being in the USA. I failed for a third **call** to "spring" out of bed to his calling. He would usually put his head into my bedroom and call "wakey, wakey, check that I stirred, then left for the kitchen. This time before I had a chance to tell him that I was feeling terribly ill. On the second call – the same occurred. On the third return to my bed room he literally dragged me out of bed, loudly reprimanding me for my disobedience and not giving me (as usual) a chance to explain that I felt ill and he laid into me with that dreaded belt. So without a word, I don't remember having breakfast but had to make my lunch, and went off to school. A short time during my first lesson my teacher noticed me looking unwell and sweating and shaking and suggested I go home. In fear I refused, so was sent to the Headmaster's Office. I again refused to go home and to my fears they rang **Dad!** On his arrival, I feared another reprimand and belting when I got home. But no, I was put to work to "sweat it out" digging and shovelling the rubbish hole bigger to take more rubbish. I didn't get to see a Doctor. It turned out I was suffering an acute bout of the Asiatic Flu. As fate would have it, he caught it worse from me! To me, that was karma as I know it now! I remember a time after returning to Australia at age 14. I was being belted so hard and so many times, I remember **the belt** wrapping around my neck once. During my adoption I still spent most of the time in boarding schools and church hostels homes.

At the age of 17, I joined the RAAF and could not answer questions relating to my family history, other than to say that I was adopted. Frustration, anger and depression was always in the back ground because, in my many attempts to find my natural parents/family, I kept hitting my head against bureaucratic brick walls. Never being able to access personal information to help me find my natural family/s. Now that I was working, and without the ability to talk to Dad about my needs (as usual) and not wanting to hurt his feelings though I loved him, I didn't know how to tell him. Yet I seemed to understand that he could not understand just how much I did love him. The adoption syndrome thing!

In the latter part of 1993 the adoption laws changed, and with that, I was to understand I could receive a "certified COPY of my original Birth entry (Certificate)". I didn't get an **original copy** of my berth certificate, instead I got one that didn't even have my mother as my mother on it as I did request, but was denied. It just had **no name registered**, which I know is untrue! I was also to understand that I could receive a copy of **all of** my government files. This has not been so as the government bought in the **Privacy Act** which has prevented the **FOI** department from releasing so much of my Personal Files even after three or four attempts, making the system so perverted, hypercritical and ridiculous. Even in my communications to the Children's Services over the years where I have given or supplied personal information, that even it was denied or blocked out. I believe that most names in my file would have probably died by now! I believe I have the inherent right to ALL information, even who my father may be, which is blocked out!

I have never had any anger towards my mother for deserting me, as I have always understood how difficult it was for women in those days. There was no help from the government for single mothers, quite the contrary, and the tricks that were played on single mothers to deprive them of their children! How could a mother in those days try to work and look after their child/ren and pay the government what it tried to get off them to Board **their** child, etc. Not like these days where they were getting so much that girls were getting pregnant to get the government handout to buy plasma TV's for example – will they ever get it right!

Even though, as stated in my Personal Files (only some that I was able to acquire under "FOI") dated 19 Oct 1946, when my Natural Mother refused again one of many attempts for her to sign adoption forms that she was confronted with, stating as quoted in a letter of response by Detective Sup. C.I.B. – Quote - "she wanted to have her child when she was in a position to look after it and

required it to be boarded out for the time being” – end Quote. I am not an IT. I therefore consider, I was “illegally adopted” thereby suffering much for many decades! As I have seen in my partial files that I have been able to acquire, it shows there was more concern about hounding my mother for the 12/- (12 shillings) a week they were requesting for my upkeep. Also hounding her to sign papers to allow me to be adopted. In the governments many endeavours to find my mother and failed and at the time of my successful adoption the Adoption Department had obviously not checked with the Immigration Department. It turns out I now know more about my Mother and related names than the government departments, as she became a war bride to a US Naval person and moved to the United States. SHE DID RETURN, but on her return with her husband, she searched for near on three years trying to find me with no success! She died from depression shortly after her return to the US, twenty years prior to me being able to find her! I had been illegally adopted by this time and was in the USA when my natural Mother searched for me. With what occurred with my natural mother on not being able to find me because of the **do gooders** and the ignorance and stupidity of the archaic Adoption Laws, which denied her also, access to me. I have never been able to find my half brother, my Mum’s second son!

Harm Suffered as a Consequence of Abuse and or Neglect:-

(Some of the long term impact into my adult life)

- . Will never be able to let some things come to mind.
- . I was very unstable, could never stay more than a few years in one place.
- . Spent most of my life trying to hide my insecurities.
- . Have trouble keeping relationships.
- . Have sexual problems.
- . Hurting, and feelings of loneliness, most of my life - no one to talk to.
- . Always, the feelings of having to explain my-self and my actions.
- . Fear to communicate.
- . Anger, and depression, is always in the back ground.
- . I became suicidal and did attempt it several times.
- . Always had problems getting promotions.
- . Never being able to find my Mothers second son, my half brother.

Also being denied access to full personal information on themselves under "Freedom of Information". If Government and Military "Secrets" have, by law, a time limit for release then so should our personal information!

I feel that just because kids were adopted or fostered, that it was taken for granted or assumed they were happy and being lovingly cared for. But it was obvious that the appropriate departments never checked or followed up on adopted and fostered children’s well being, I never saw anyone asking as to my wellbeing! In my experience Fostered Children definitely were not monitored as they should have been!

Please accept my letter and signature as a submission by registering my name as a participant in this Inquiry.

I thank you for this opportunity and join my “Sisters **AND Brothers**” in standing as one, as we eagerly await our great Nation to hear and see the truth unfold. I would appreciate you adding my name and address to your mailing list that I can receive future correspondence and documents on the progress of this Inquiry.

- I would like this submission to be published on the internet. If you wish.

Yours faithfully,

Signed:

Dated: 13 Jan 2012