

Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee Enquiry into the:

*Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices.*

My son was born in Scotland in 1970 and he was adopted soon after birth. We were reunited in Australia in 1991. I have lived in South Australia since 1982 and have been a social worker and educator since 1996. I have worked as a post-adoption counsellor and have been involved with post-adoption support organisations in many countries since 1986. I am currently a member of the National Inter Country Adoption Advisory Group. I am also the author of four books about adoption separation and reunion.

It is my view that the Federal Government was partly responsible for the fact that so many children of unmarried parents were adopted in Australia in the middle of the twentieth century, because they did not provide adequate financial support which would have allowed mothers to raise their children, when they were not supported by either their parents or the fathers of their children. When the Federal Government did introduce financial support in 1973, this not only allowed many more mothers to raise their children, but was also a powerful social acknowledgement of the fact that a mother and child constitute a family and should not be separated when there are no safety issues involved. After the introduction of the Sole Parent Pension in 1973, not only did the number of adoptions reduced markedly, but Australian society gradually accepted that unmarried mothers could raise children. Had the Australian Government provided this support and acknowledgement at an earlier date, much heartache and unnecessary family separation could have been avoided.

I believe that, because the Federal Government bears some responsibility for these separations and the long term emotional outcomes for those affected, then they have a responsibility now to ensure that adequate and appropriate services are provided for those citizens. It is my opinion that the Federal Government should ensure that such services are provided and funded by each state and territory.

Evelyn Robinson

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