

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

Preamble to Submission

I, SUZANNE KIER HIMMELREICH, am a citizen of the Commonwealth  
of Australia resident in VICTORIA

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



Department of the Senate,  
P.O. Box 6100  
Parliament House,  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

(...)  
(...)  
(...)  
11<sup>th</sup> June 2011

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.

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I gave birth to my only child in 1967, at the age of twenty.

I had no support from my then boyfriend, and little from my family.

Four months of my pregnancy was spent in a Salvation Army Home, and my son was born there.

While the care provided was basic, the staff was very kind.

When I was asked what I wanted to do, I said my child was to be adopted *because I did not know there were any other options.*

No one discussed any options, so I believed there were none. The only alternative as I saw it meant leaving the Home with a new born baby, no money, and nowhere to live.

I was not told of any possible support available, either from Government or a private agency. In fact I remember being told the 'Sickness Benefit' would end and I would then have to go back to work.

I signed the paperwork, believing my son would be placed with a childless family who could care for him in a way that I was unable to.

I left the Home and tried to continue on with my life as though nothing had happened, which seemed to be what was expected.

My attempt was so successful that I managed to completely suppress any maternal instinct, and did not have any other children.

When the access to adoption information became available, I registered my details with Community Services Victoria so that my son could find me if he wished to.

As a result I met him when he was 21; he registered 6 weeks after I had.

Over 20 years later, he is still struggling to find himself. He was adopted by a couple who already had a natural child, and who were advised after several miscarriages to adopt. My son was then second in a natural family of three, with 2 younger siblings.

His adoptive mother was also adopted, but had never met her parents, although she spoke to her mother by phone.

These original parents divorced when he was in his early teens, his mother marrying twice more. Her second husband physically abused the three boys, and sexually abused their sister. He was treated as a 'special child', and is now estranged from his siblings.

So much for the loving childless couple!

My son desperately needed a father figure, but could not meet his natural father because he had committed suicide shortly after his child was born.

I believe he is so psychologically damaged that he will never recover. He has problems with multiple addictions, and at the age of 44 is unemployed and living on a disability pension.

It would be an understatement to say that this was not the life I had hoped for him.

Adoption was not the answer to being pregnant and unmarried, and for my son I believe it was very damaging.

Every woman has the right to be given a chance to raise her child if that is what she chooses.

At the age of 20 I had no rights, no choices, no confidence, no advocate, no self esteem, very few friends; unfortunately no husband, and tragically, no baby.

My family pretended nothing had happened, but eventually years later reluctantly accepted that my son was their oldest grandchild. However, he was not, and never has been acknowledged to be equal with my brothers' children, who were of course welcomed into the family.

I have suffered from depression all my life, and only now have been able to address these issues and be properly treated.

Why was so much pain and suffering inflicted on so many young women and their innocent children?

Yours faithfully,

Suzanne Himmelreich