



Senate Inquiry into

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

Preamble to Submission.

I, Lois Hamilton am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia resident in Queensland

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.

This is my submission.

From: Lois Hamilton

Sent: Monday 20 February 2012

To: Senate Inquiry

Subject: Submission to the Senate Committee on forced adoptions

In 1954 I was pregnant and put in Saint Joseph's Foundling Home at Broadmeadows Victoria to await the birth of my child, all the time being told I could keep the baby.

I worked long hours at the home looking after orphans to the age of 5 years, in April 1954 I was admitted to Queen Victoria Hospital, I can't remember why, but some problem with the pregnancy. My stay at the hospital was approximately three (3) weeks prior to the birth.

The four (4) days in labour were horrific, this nurse, whose name I cannot remember, would come and give me this pink medicine, it tasted horrid and I promptly vomited it up each time she gave me a dose, this made her angry and she would slap me and tell me that was what I deserved for being such disgusting girl for getting pregnant, this went on for the four days. Eventually they gave me an anaesthetic for a high instrument birth.

My son was born on 1954, as I was supposed to be keeping him, I had him for the two weeks I was in hospital after his birth, when I was discharged, I was told he had to go to Saint Joseph's Foundling Home for a couple of weeks.

Then it started, A priest at a welfare office in Melbourne told me I was not allowed to keep my son and he had to be adopted out, I refused to sign the papers and was thoroughly lectured, told what a disgusting girl I was and was not fit to be a mother, I still wouldn't sign the papers. The next day I went to Saint Joseph's Foundling Home to pick my baby up, the mother superior interviewed me and tried to talk me into signing the papers, I still refused, the nun would not let me have my baby, I returned the next day to try and get him, but the nun said I had to do this test to see if I would be a fit mother. Because I could not spell leukaemia, I could not have my baby. I did not ever sign any papers for his adoption.

I was then taken to grandparents house in Culcairn N.S.W. and told to forget all about him and keep it a secret or people would look down on me and not want to mix with me, this was a secret I carried for 38 years.

Every year on my son's birthday I was extremely sad and depressed, the people around me could not understand what was the matter, I thought of my son every day for the 38 years, this has had a devastating effect on my life, at times not able to function and perform normal daily duties.

My son found me in 1992, our reunion was really wonderful, but it still saddens me all the years we missed, he was adopted into a good home and had a happy life. He never met his father as he died in 1975.

I did not search for my son as I always felt I didn't have the right to disrupt his life also there was the fear of rejection and the trauma of having to reveal my long held secret, when the

secret was revealed I had the pleasant surprise that everyone just thought it was wonderful we were reunited, no one avoided me or struck me out of their lives as I had been led to believe for all those years.

It is very wrong that the government, church and social workers of the day took the law into their own hands and played God with people's lives, the people involved in the adoption of my son are all probably long gone and cannot be punished or reprimanded in any way as it is far too late, although I think there should be a change in the way adoptions are handled.

New Zealand has much more humane laws on adoption.

Thank you for taking the time to try and change how the damage was done and not damaging anymore lives.