

To The Senate Community Affairs Committee

I was born in 1974 my Mother was forced to sign away her rights to be my parent. She didn't want to and although I have been so far unable to find her it was clearly written by a government employed social worker quote "She was very upset and said she wanted to take the babe home", she was prevented from doing what she wanted to do she was 17 years old, old enough to make that decision.

We all know forced adoptions happened. And the government was a huge part of allowing them to happen. It was not only various religious groups that forced young women to be parted from their child. I was taken from my Mother by the government at birth the only reason was that she was 17 and unmarried. If she had been 17 and married we would be together now.

Not only was my Mother forced to sign adoption papers, my adoptive parents were pressured into adopting in total 5 children all taken by the government. The first 2 of those children were taken from young single mothers in the early 1970's because their mothers were not married, the other 3 were taken later in the 1980's when the numbers of available product were getting very low.

My adoptive parents were not ready to have children they had a fantasy created in their heads about how being a parent is. They were hugely disappointed. And we suffered as a result. Life has been really tough, at least for myself and my older adopted brother, we discussed at length numerous times how disconnected from the world we both felt and how we believed that being adopted was the main reason for that. He died as a result of suicide on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2004 aged 32; I know he suffered so very much because he was adopted it was the basis for all the other issues in both our lives.

As a result of this enquiry I hope that adoption is changed and viewed differently. Unfortunately it is unlikely that I would get my wish that adoption be illegal, but I so hope that it can be made illegal to hide any information from any party involved, especially the child who has absolutely no say. There should always always be full disclosure of all relevant information, a completely open adoption is the best way to ensure the adoptee has the best chance at a happier life. The hardest part is not knowing who you are and why you exist. And if we had known we could have been better able to cope with our lives that never seemed quite right. And if a prospective adoptive parent did not want an open adoption then they care nothing of the well being of the child, like it or not the only reason they would have that child would be because that child is a physical part of someone else, and that has to be acknowledged for the child.

And the most important thing for me now is help in locating my parents to answer my questions, I can not afford the costs involved in searching and so for a decade now I have been wanting to fill in the gaps of my life but am unable, I know that what ever happens after I find them and either have questioned answered or not I will have done all I could and be able to start living properly for my own children's sakes. I want to be able to access every single piece of information about me and my mother and father that is in that file it is wrong that I received documents with big black lines hiding things about my own life, it makes it much harder.

Every single person either a Mother who had her child taken, a child taken from their Mother, a Father who had absolutely no say at all, or an adoptive parent who was filled with lies about how much better their lives would be if they took stolen children and raised them as their own, needs for this to never happen again and for what can be done to help them heal even a little to be done, we need our government to step up and do right now and teach the citizens of this country what is not right to do to people. Teach Australia that it never was right and never will be right to take a child from someone for simply being unmarried or young.

Most of all I want for the Australian government to acknowledge the women who suffered horrific abuse in order to have their babies stolen, hear them and give them what they ask for they deserve to be treated with the dignity and respect that was denied them. And for their children to be told the truth.