

Submission to the Senate Inquiry Committee Into Pregnancy Counselling

On behalf of Origins NSW Inc. Supporting Persons Separated by Adoption I would like to submit the following comments and attachments to the Senate Inquiry Committee. Into Pregnancy Counselling

Origins Inc is a national and international support organisation and has in it's membership persons affected by adoption separation, this includes natural parents and their families and adopted persons. We are also a political lobby group focusing on legislative change for the best interests of persons who are, and have been affected by past and current adoption issues

Our services include post adoption support, counselling, search information, mediation and information on adoption issues. We have a large research library on adoption information and have focussed on the legal issues of adoption and the extensive mental health problems associated with adoption.

We have a large Australian website and a number of smaller websites devoted to state issues. We also offer a quarterly newsletter to our members

Origins has organised two national conference into the mental health aspect of persons affected by adoption and family separation with a third being organised in Melbourne in October this year. These conferences not only address the mental health of persons affected by adoption but also the issues of person separated by removal, state wardship, etc.

It is on the foundation of the above that we seek to tender this submission.

Origins Inc neither promotes nor condones adoption unless a child is totally devoid of it's own family who can care for it, and only if it is in the "best interest of the child" not the interests of others including adopters.

This stance is based on the extensive research into the mental health aspects of birth families, adoptees and potential adopters. In light of our mental health research adoption is fraught with serious problems.

Little or no account for the mental health implications of relinquishment so far is paid to the consequences of adoption in respect of the interest of the parties involved or by persons or departments/agencies facilitating adoption as an alternative to abortion.

Our experience in adoption research and as an organisation who supports people who have been separated by past adoption experiences we as an organisation would be negligent if we did not warn the Senate that counselling agencies who promote adoption as an alternative to abortion, risk litigation unless the known mental health aspects of adoption are not made evident to women who are considering other alternatives to pregnancy.

As part of the consent taking procedure of the NSW Adoption of Children Act 2000 the mother considering adoption must be given mandatory information on the nature of the consequences of an adoption consent and in addition under go psychological assessment.

I attach to this submission, 2 papers given the first from Dr Geoffrey Rickarby to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Adoption Practices and a paper from Ms Wendy Jacobs mental health researcher Origins inc

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