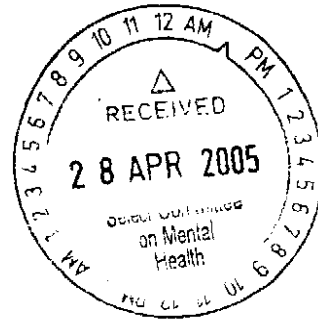
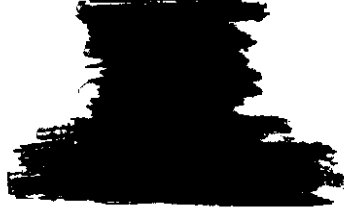


Lily Arthur J.P



26 April 2005

**For the Attention of Senate Select Committee on Mental Health**

Dear Committee

Please find enclosed my personal submission to the inquiry. In light of recent event i.e. the Cornelia Rau incident and the Tony Abbott debacle I have been seriously affected by the issues raised of forced detention and adoption issues.

I have submitted my personal story to give the committee an insight of my experience and also to relate to the committee that persons like myself, who have suffered psychiatric injury from human rights abuses have little recourse to validation, redress and accountability.

Please accept my submission

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Lily Arthur".

Lily Arthur

# **SUBMISSION INTO SENATE INQUIRY INTO MENTAL HEALTH**

**FROM**

**LILY ARTHUR**



Dear Committee Please find enclosed the following submission into the Senate Inquiry into Mental Health.

## **Background**

My name is Lily Josephine Arthur I was born 1950 in the United Kingdom and migrated to Australia in 1959.

I was one of 9 children and lived a relatively normal life in a large and happy family despite the fact that my father left us here in Australia two years after our arrival.

Up and until the following experience I was a 'normal' happy teenager with a job, boyfriend, and had enjoyed all the usual teenage events such as going dancing, movies, speedway etc.

I am happily married to my second husband of 10 years who has supported me financially and emotionally through the events of the past 10 years

I have certificates in welfare and have studied law at Macquarie University for 4 years, due to the mental health problems I am suffering presently I have put my studies on hold and will decide whether to continue with them in the future

## **My story begins**

16<sup>th</sup> February 1967. Whilst living with my boyfriend Steve in a house we were renting two member of the Queensland police entered our home without just cause to this date I still do not know why.

And at the age of 16 years and 11 months I was taken from my bed, questioned, arrested and imprisoned overnight at the South Brisbane Watch house, where I spent a traumatic night wondering what the hell had happened.

The next day I appeared before the Brisbane Children's Court was later incarcerated for an indefinite period at place called Holy Cross in Wooloowin Brisbane.

What was my "crime"?

I was 2 months pregnant and as a 16 year old was 'told' that I was under the age of consent to have sexual relations and was considered to be "exposed to moral danger" even though I had a home of my own and the father of my child was prepared to marry me.

Holy Cross Retreat was operated by the order of the Sisters of Mercy. The "retreat" is now what we know as an infamous "Magdalene Asylum"

On my arrival, the head nun, handed me two straight white shifts and a pair of thongs that I was to wear, and told me that from now on my name was to be Leanne.

After cutting my shoulder length hair, I was then taken down to the laundry where I was expected to work for the duration of the time I was to spend in the home.

A week or so later I was called into the office to sign papers to apply for my marriage to my son's father, he had gone to Sydney to get our parents permission to get married.

Hope and anticipation of being "rescued" by Steve finally led to complete despair, knowing that I was not going to be released from the home.

I then went into somewhat of a robotic state and "distanced" myself from the situation that was happening around me.

For the next seven months I did exactly what I was told. I cleaned, the home buildings and I worked 5 days a week in the laundry standing all day untangling and folding sheets, I went to school. and suffered being sent nearly every morning at 5am for mass.

I did this without defiance as I wanted to show everyone that I was going to make a good mother for my baby.

The only rest I got was when I was told to sit and fold pillow cases.

During the first seven months of my incarceration I saw no one representing my "guardian" the State of Queensland. No one came to inquire about my welfare. I found out later that my mother who was living in another state also did not know about my situation and was not told of what was happening to me

Throughout my pregnancy I was treated as if I wasn't even pregnant, and in the three months leading up to the birth there was no visitors, no letters.

I felt as though the world had forgotten me. I was to learn later that my sister was not allowed to visit me for nearly four months before and after the birth of my child.

There was never any thought of not being with my baby and as the months passed the little person growing inside of me was my only connection to my sanity.

My baby was the only thing in the place that was real, and right up until I gave birth I suffered severe heartburn and stomach upsets from the food we were given that I was unable to keep down.

There was no medication given to me to ease the constant pain. But somehow the pain became my friend and I manage to "put up" with the pain, looking back, I see that the pain was a reminder that my baby and I were still together.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1967 I had a “show” in mass that morning. I was promptly packed off by ambulance to the hospital where I was admitted to the labour ward of Royal Womens Hospital Brisbane

As a vulnerable 17 year old who was experiencing the birth of her first child the treatment I received before the birth was nothing short of neglect.

I went into to the labor ward totally un-prepared and with no idea of what the labor process was to involve.

The delivery of my baby was nothing less that torture. Because I was not having any labor pains I was induced into labor by having a long steel object pushed inside of me to break the waters. At no time was I informed about what was happening to me and why.

I gave birth to my son in a sideways running position with my leg held high in a strup a nurse leaning on my shoulder pushing my face into the mattress my face. My screams to be allowed to move were ignored and I was unable to move or to get a view of my baby as he was torn from my body.

I was torn inside and out and requiring sutures. I was then taken to a ward with only unmarried mothers residing.

I was given barbiturates during the and after the labour including Stilboestrol or DES to dry up my milk .

My baby was taken from me straight after the birth and was hidden in a locked nursery somewhere within the hospital.

All this was done without my consent

I spent the next 7 days in a drugged stupor and during that time somehow managed to contact my son’s father, who came to see me.

By the 8<sup>th</sup> day I still had not been shown my baby and was still out of my mind with trauma and drugged with barbiturates

I was approached on that morning by a woman from the Childrens Services department who came armed with adoption papers.

She threatened me with prolonged maximum security detention for contacting the father of my child and coerced me into signing the adoption papers for my son on the threat that the department would keep him in foster care for years using the threat and the fear of the damage that my baby would suffer if I did not provide him with a home.

Immediately on signing the papers she asked me if I would like to finally see my baby and she gave me a card to hold up at the nursery window. I was shown a baby but do not remember what he looked like and if he was mine.

The sign over the bassinette saying “ Baby Mc Donald, Not to be Shown” When I have flashbacks I just see myself standing at the window in a daze.

About an hour or so after the signing of the adoption consent I again was sitting back in the laundry folding pillow cases, no one ever mentioned my baby

Six weeks after the birth of my baby I was told by the nun that I was being sent back to my mother in Sydney.

All I can remember is feeling angry, used and betrayed. She whipped me with a stick when I refused go back to work.... my first act of defiance in nine months..

I had expected to be locked up until I turned 18, five months later. They had lied to me and they were throwing me out of the home.....I had become baby-less, institutionised, and fearful of the outside world.

I spent the next 30 years living in a dream. Although I knew that I had had this experience, my memory of it was very hazy as though it had happened to someone else and not to me.

I wandered around like a ghost in my life wondering where my first child had 'disappeared to', whether he was alive or dead and what the hell had happened to me, and what had I done to 'deserve' this experience.

I never spoke of it to anyone, nor did I tell my only daughter about it or the fact that she had a brother until she turned 19 some 23 years after the event.

When the laws changed 23 years later to enable me to find my lost son I was told by the department that he had placed a veto against information and that if I tried to look for him I would be jailed for 2 years or fined

## **The Awakening and the mental health damage**

In 1998 ....7 years later I finally found my son against all odds, it was then the realisation of what had happened to me hit me like the blow of an axe.

I went through a period of anger, happiness, depression, mood swings and flashbacks, trying to put together a picture in my mind of what had happened that so that I could understand.

When I recently found out that I was in fact over the age of consent and that I had been lied to and my arrest was unlawful I felt as though I was going to lose "the plot" entirely.

My mind was in a state of utter turmoil and I was told to see a psychiatrist.

I have been undergoing hypnotherapy and when "taken back" I see myself as Leanne pacing the verandah of Holy Cross. It is as though she is frozen in time.

My mind seeing her in the cell, seeing the arrest, the court, the labour ward, the smell of the gas still so vivid in my mind that I feel nauseous. I hear the words of the social worker, the images are flashing so fast my mind cannot grab onto what is happening.

The psychiatrist asks Leanne to leave the home but she is unable to get out of the place where she has had the last contact with her baby.

I 'see' her pacing in the dormitory and her head is exploding. After being isolated for days after her arrest she comes to terms with being locked up and looks forward to going down with the other girls she sees from the window playing netball after work.

During my "going back" hypnotherapy I am frozen stiff in the psychiatrist's chair, Leanne takes over and weeps incessantly and is hardly able to communicate.

My mind sees her standing still as though she is in a vortex and when the psychiatrist asks her to tell what is happening she is unable to speak. During these sessions she gets such intense pains in her head, and my head feels this as well and feels as though her head and my head is about to explode.

I come out of therapy unable to comprehend exactly what has gone on, unable to connect with my surroundings.

I have diagnosed by 3 psychiatrist including the States own psychiatrists with having (reports attached)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  
Dissociation  
Major Depression  
Mood Disorder  
Other diagnosis

## **The need for accountability**

On finding out that the 'usual' treatment given to me was unlawful and that my son's theft was premeditated. I took a 'landmark' action *Arthur v State of Qld* [2004] QSC 456 against my then guardian the State of Queensland and went to trial in November 2004 the judgement was handed down on 22 December 2004 The judgement is attached along with sections of the transcripts

As was expected the Supreme Court dismissed my claim. The judgment completely contradicted the judge's comments made throughout the trial. Byrne.J. went from saying that the actions of the States workers were illegal to being 'acceptable'.

He ignored the evidence not only of the state own witnesses confessing to their crimes but also the documented evidence presented at trial, He used the fact that I could not remember the day that my sons father visited me in hospital as me having an "unreliable memory", given that I was illegally drugged up to the eyeballs at the time it is hardly surprising that I did not know what day of the week it was.

On the second day of the trial I was offered a 'settlement' by the State to abandon the trial where we would each walk away bearing our own costs. Knowing full well that I was going to lose the action I decided that I would proceed and get the judgement.

I was warned by my QC that by doing so I would be giving the judge the permission to interpret the facts as he saw fit. Needless to say he did just that and completely re-wrote my story to fit his contemptible judgement.

His judgement not only was designed to punish me because I had the audacity to force him to make a judgement but also reflected the lengths the Courts, or should I say the State paid judge will go to protect it's employer the State from being accountable for the crimes it commits against it's citizens.

The judgement also sets a precedent in that the State can not only abuse the children and citizens in its care and get away with it.

It puts people like myself outside the parameters of the law because the law does not apply to us, leaving us as the only group of victims that the law will not grant some sort of redress.

It also puts into effect that the damage both mental health and physical that I suffered at the hands of the State has gone without any type of redress or accountability.

After the heinous "judgement" in my trial and on my return to Sydney I seriously contemplated suicide. The only thing that brought me back to a place where I had the strength to keep going, was the love of my husband and the thought that he deserved more than having me 'opt out'

My further action to try to regain my 'sanity' and to let the State know that they had not destroyed me was to send them a bill for the cost of my legal and medical expenses for which they have been responsible. (Enclosed is their replies) The Qld Minister for Child Safety ironically thinks the fact that I had to pay tens of thousands of dollars to try to get some accountability for the crimes committed against me, is compensation enough.

This attitude is compeptable give that he is responsible the saftey of the children of Queensland and condones the treatment that I received from the State

## **The human rights abuses I have endured**

Arbitrary arrest and imprisonment

Loss of identity

Isolation from my family and the denial of marriage to the man I loved

State sanctioned Slavery, torture and abuse and drugging

The theft of my only son

The trauma of a mother little older than a child who could not protect herself from the System

The only human rights abuse they have not committed against me was that they never murdered me .

But if you can call the destruction of the girl and woman I had the potential to be, murder..... then I have endured that as well.

I am not alone..... my story is not unique..... I am the voice of over 300 000 young women in this country who have stories like mine and who too have had their newborns 'harvested' for the adoption industry.

The governments and it's agents have knowingly ignored and broken it's own laws and the governments and it's agents have knowingly damaged the physical and mental health of our selves and our children for generations to come.

The State governments and those involved in the adoption industry refuse to accept accountability for it's past crimes and practices.

The Cornelia Rau incident has triggered memories for me, where was all this public indignation when I suffered an experience such as hers, coupled with the theft of my only son?..... I was no more that a child.

With over a hundred and thirty visits to my psychiatrist Dr John Pickering, and with the expectation that my condition will require indefinite treatment, I am still in a state of confusion and anger.

I am still trying to come to terms with my imprisonment and the premeditated theft of my only son, the indifference of the State, and the concealment of the crimes by the judiciary of Queensland.

The whole experience has left me feeling futile and worthless. It has not only affected me but also my family and friends who care for me. It has also affected my education and career. I have given up my studies in law as I have no faith in the legal system and have no desire to enjoy a 'normal' life, as I am constantly reminded of what has been done to me. I have socially distanced myself from people with whom I have little in common with.

In effect victims of human rights abuses such as myself are isolated from the rest of society as we do not feel 'safe' anymore.

## **In Conclusion**

**I am asking this committee not only to record the human rights abuses and damage committed by State governments in this country in respect of past adoption crimes, but to also ask this committee to call for a Royal Commission into past adoption practices**