

From: Shirley Moulds ·
Subject: Fw: 86 years of adoption practice - WA -1896 to 1982

Re Commonwealth Apology.

Dear Ms Walker,
Please find attached, copy of '86 years of adoption practice' - (WA - 1896 to 1982), originally delivered at the inaugural meeting of ARMS here in Western Australia on 25th October 1982.

In recent weeks, I have listened with interest to radio discussions on the background history of adoption law and practice in Australia, reaching back to the 1920s when the legislation was first introduced into the Eastern States of Australia.

Hopefully, this document will add to the understanding of the evolution of adoption law and practice as Western Australia was the first to introduce such legislation in July 1896.

At that time it was based on legislation already in practice in New Zealand. Then, there was no secrecy between the parties, no loss of identity by the child and even no loss of the inheritance rights of the child.

Back in the 1980's (before access to birth certificates was re-instated for both the child and the mother once the child reached 18 years) I spoke on behalf of the natural mothers at an Adoption Jigsaw meeting in Perth.

During the supper break, I was approached by an elderly lady who told me she was an adopted child living in Perth before the secrecy in Adoption Legislation was introduced in 1921.

I was stunned when she insisted on apologising to me for the actions of her own adoptive father!

Apparently, he was a golfing buddy of a number of politicians during her childhood and she said that it was at his insistence and lobbying that secrecy had been introduced into adoption in 1921.

She mentioned the names of her father's friends and sure enough, those names corresponded with the politicians names mentioned in Hansard who argued in parliament in favour of the introduction of secrecy ('falsified' birth certificates etc.).

It seems much skullduggery can occur on the golf course.

Many thanks for your assistance

Yours sincerely,
E. Shirley Moulds
RN, BSW