

I, Jan Louise Stewart ( nee Hodgetts ) am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia, resident in NSW.

As a citizen of the commonwealth of Australia I have the inalienable right to protection under the Australian Constitution and the Common Law of this country.

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 those rights, within and without, the borders of Australia.

On the 25/01/1977 I was " arrested " and charged with being an uncontrollable child . I spent 4 days at Minda in Sydney, then a Mandate for a child or young person was made and I was .....quote " committed to the care of Matron, " Carramar " Church of England Maternity Hostel for single girls at 16/18 Boomerang Rd Turramurra".

I turned 16 on the 02/02/1977. My daughter was taken for adoption at birth on the /08/1977 by the Church of England Adoption Agency.

I was a quiet country kid who lived nearly six hours from Sydney, removed from my family, community, school and given on a silver platter to the adoption industry. I had no knowledge of adoption. It was fully my intent to keep my baby and continue with my life. I had no idea that my child could or would be taken from me. It was not illegal to be pregnant.

I was kept in isolation, with no contact with my family, no funds, no schooling, no support from anyone.

I applied for my Social notes from Anglicare in 2002. This was somewhat akin to applying to my torturer.

The first report I read states...

" wants to keep the baby!! "

well yes I did.....I assumed that as her mother that was how it worked. Silly me.

I am also assuming this report was written at the beginning of my stay at Carramar. There are 3 reports in all, written by social workers ( I will not include names here but of course I have them ).

The first states I want to keep my baby.

The second ( undated but signed ) says I have a similar outlook of other girls involved in the courts. In this report I was being threatened with an E.M.D charge. The threat was that if I didn't have my child adopted I would end up at Reiby and the child would be a ward of the state but obviously it didn't deter me. The last line states " there seems very little hope of encouraging her to make more viable plans. "

The 3rd report .....dated 17/06/1977..... I seem to have done a complete 360 degree turn. It states I have had a very positive pregnancy and am very determined to go through with the adoption.

Across the top of my medical records is written Carramar.....BFA

I was admitted to Hornsby Hospital on the 08/1977 to have my babe induced on the following day. I do not remember a lot of this. My daughter was delivered by cesarean section at 16:20 08/1977. I have no copy of my discharge notes. The last entry that I have is on the 5/09/1977. " may be discharged. script given for amoxicillin " .

I didn't see my baby. I never met her. I never held her or smelt her or touched or kissed her. I do remember standing on my tippy toes peering through an oval window into a nursery watching a nurse bottle feed a baby.....was it my baby ? I don't know. I was not allowed into the nursery. My hospital notes state I was taken by a social worker to see my baby once but I don't remember that happening. Why did I not have access to my child?

I have read the virtual shopping list of " attributes " written about me and my family by the Church of England Adoption Agency. Everything from a physical description ( height, weight, eye colour ) to some wildly inaccurate personal judgments. The general comments on my appearance include dark hair, small features, attractive, pretty smile.....and then it lists my religion as moslem. I do believe I was a member of the uniting church.....note that is past tense.

I was lied to from the very beginning of my stay at Carramar.

I had no money.....yet I signed for something called the U.B at social security.....it was payed into someones bank account.....not mine.... I didn't have a bank account. I was told there was no government money for " girls like you " and that I could not afford to look after a baby. I was constantly reminded that I had no where to live ( I had no idea that the department of housing existed ) and no support. I was totally isolated at Carramar ( as were the other inmates ). We did not attend school. We were not encouraged to speak with each other. There was another girl from my town.....but we were kept strictly apart. We did not once speak to each other.

I had no contact with my family or the outside world. There was a pay phone but without money you couldn't use it. I used the phone twice during my stay. On the 25/08/ and the 29/08 . I was charged \$2.00 and \$1.17 respectively.

In 1977 there was financial support for the single parent. There was access to housing and support. These things were denied to my daughter and I deliberately. I was discharged from Carramar on the 11/09/1977.

It was then my whole world fell apart. I was offered no counseling. No help. No work. No housing. I was 16 years old. My life spiraled out of control.

I understand now that I should have been given a copy of form 9 that I signed on the 05/09/1977. That I should have had copies of such an important form seems reasonable. That I had major surgery and a general anesthetic at 4pm on the 08/1977 doesn't seem to have much bearing on the matter. Or does it? Or the fact that I was just 16 years old. Was I old enough to sign such an important document ? Had I really been informed of the consequences of the decision ? Had I been informed of alternatives? Had I been informed that I was able to rescind the decision? Was I told how I could rescind the decision? Was I offered any help or support?

The answer to all these question is no..... I received no information. I received no help or support. I was lied to and deceived. I was pressured and bullied. I was discarded like a used tissue once my baby was born.

I was my daughters mother the entire time I was in Hornsby District Hospital. I was denied my rights as her mother. I was denied my rights as a patient in a public hospital. I was denied my rights as a human being.

As far as I am concerned the Commonwealth is complicit with Carramar and Anglicare.....I was referred by Youth and Community Affairs (Dept of Community Services of 1977 ) to Carramar. I was denied any and all rights I might have ever had when the Department of Youth and Community handed me over to Carramar knowing full well what was in store for me.

I was not protected from the unlawful and harmful actions that threatened my right to life, liberty and justice from those who would deny me those rights, within and without, the borders of Australia.

regards  
Jan Stewart