



Senate Inquiry into
"Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices."

I, Marigold Laura Hayler, am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia, resident in the State of Victoria.

As a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia I have an 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 these rights, within and without, the borders of Australia.

My submission

My submission is on behalf of my sister, _____, who died at age 54. _____ was two years older than I am, and had a baby out of wedlock when she was 21 years old, on _____ 1960. _____ loved and very much wanted to keep her baby daughter, and our family could have well afforded to accommodate both (...) and her daughter. However, the relentless pressure on (...) , who was a shy and gentle young woman, by the medical and hospital staff at the _____ (...), _____, the hospital social worker, and our mother, centred around the injunction that "if she loved her baby she should give her up to a married couple who could give the baby everything.....". Shame played a big factor in the coercion of my sister. She was not informed of any help that she could get if she wanted to keep her daughter; the opposite was the case in all respects.

After _____ allowed her baby to be adopted, she never talked about it for many years. When she married, she had herself sterilized and never had another child. _____ lived a vibrant and productive life, working in responsible positions in pharmacies in Brighton and Prahran, and then owning and running a country post office.

After 31 years, _____ I made contact with her daughter. They became good friends and got on very well together. Then, about three years after reuniting with her daughter, for the first time in her life, my sister began to become emotionally unstable which eventually resulted in her being hospitalized in a psychotic state. She had delusions of fertility: she thought she was pregnant and was going to have hundreds of babies (despite having had a hysterectomy at age 45), and that the natural father of her daughter, and her daughter's adoptive father, were shooting her through the hospital window. After six months, she was found dead in her home from a brain haemorrhage (I have the coroner's full report).

_____s daughter married, and _____ I and I were invited to the wedding. Her daughter had had one child and was pregnant with her second, when _____ I died. That was about 15 years ago.

Since then, her daughter and husband have had a total of four children, and have a happy and busy and very productive household, with the older children now deciding on careers to pursue after they shortly leave school.

My sister has missed out on her daughter's married life, her fantastic son-in-law, and her four wonderful grand-children. I see them all regularly, and am always aware of who should be there – my sister, their mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother. Her daughter has just turned 50 and had a big party. The whole evening, I was aware of who should also have been there!

I am a psychologist in private practice, and come across variations on the stories of family separation from time to time in my work. It is true, that the story 'never ends'.

In this submission, I am asking that the Government grasp the nettle and do what is the right and proper thing to acknowledge past cruelties such as those surrounding family separation, in this particular case, adoption.

When Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised to the Aboriginal Stolen Generation, I went to Melbourne's Federation Square to watch it on the big screens with the crowds of people. I have never in my life experienced an emotion like I had that day. I came home and just lay on my bed for the rest of the day – not crying, but feeling exactly as if I was a giant sponge filled with tears.

In my view, there should be some compensation, also, as well as an apology. Apologies are excellent (think of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa). But, also, compensation is a tangible thing. I should like to think that in the case of someone like my sister, who died very young (she had always been extremely healthy), any compensation owing to her should go to her daughter. Her daughter has no idea whatever that I am writing a submission to you, and I will not mention it to her at this stage.

I respect the Government for holding this Senate Inquiry, and wish you well.

I am able to provide proof of everything I have claimed in this submission.

(...)

5th January, 2011.