

Supplementary Submission to Submission 129 Sue MacDonald.

I would like to provide the following information as I think it is relevant to some of the questions asked by the Senators at the Adelaide Hearing. The questions were raised during the testimony to the members of The National Council for Single Mothers and their Children.

In relation to the possible differentiation between the levels of drugs given to married women giving birth and single women, I would like to point out that in my case, my married sister gave birth to her daughter in July 1967 at Devonleigh Hospital Cottesloe, Western Australia. It was a difficult labour, as the baby was large and my sister is quite petit. My sister's labour was described to me by her in graphic detail, she remembered everything. Almost to the day, one year later, as an unmarried mother, I gave birth to my daughter at the same hospital under the same GP. He is on the medical records as my Doctor. Please refer to my submission regarding the circumstances of my labour. I remembered very little about the labour and have virtually no memory of my stay in hospital. Effectively I was unconscious during labour from early in the morning to being roused to push a couple of times just as she was born at 9pm that night then rendered unconscious again. I had two further children as a married woman (1975 and 79) and I was fully present and awake during those labours. Both babies were placed on my chest and put to my breast immediately they were born.

The other discrepancies in our treatment are as follows. We had the same GP and he delivered my sister's baby, however he did not deliver mine. I did not see him during my hospital stay. According to my records, I was a private patient under the Hospital Benefit Fund and he is noted as my Doctor, however when they roused me to push, a strange doctor and young intern were between my legs and the room was full of people observing.

My sister was given her baby at birth in 1967 and her baby was brought to her, throughout her stay in hospital. She had visitors all the time. In 1968, the same hospital told me my baby was gone and I had no visitors until I was collected from the hospital.

Outlined below, is a little history about Devonleigh Hospital . It was purchased by the State Government to house its School of Nursing and to increase obstetric services and training. The purchase was aided by the contribution of Commonwealth Government funds under the National Health Act, which was passed in 1948. It is well known, as evidenced both in State Hansard (Victoria and WA) and also evidenced in submissions that Maternity Hospitals were acting as adoption agents. King Edward Memorial hospital had lists of people waiting to adopt children (WA Hansard), transporting babies to their annex within a few days of their birth without their mother's permission. An ambulance driver of the day came forward around the WA apology and said as many as five babies a day were collected by him and taken to the hospitals annex. He left his profession as

an ambulance driver and became a fireman, as he could deal with cruelty of what was happening. Adopters picked these babies up at the annex. Through the National Health Act, these hospitals had received funding from the Commonwealth administered through the States. In relation to Ms. Edwards statement below at the Adelaide hearing - I believe that the above provides a formal link as to the contribution of the Commonwealth to forced adoption.

**Ms Edwards:** No. Apart from following up with the Attorney-General, it would be interesting to see what the funding relationships were between the federal government and some of the large services that were part of that forced adoption service system. Even though they may have operated in a state, many of them operated nationally and many of them received funding to actually keep them going from the federal government. That might form a formal link.

**CHAIR:** We received evidence this morning about the issues of the funding going to the state to then provide

***Prior to the 1940s small local hospitals like Cottesloe's Devonleigh were privately operated. Devonleigh was set up in the late 1920s in a roomy house in Anstey Street, a quiet street close to public transport. It was enlarged in the early 1930s to include a midwifery section, a bigger theatre and nurses quarters. Many local Cottesloe people can claim to be born at Devonleigh.***

***In 1948 the Federal Government passed the National Health Act which included provisions to assist state governments to run hospitals and medical facilities.***

***The state government bought Devonleigh in 1949 and further enlarged it to cater for the growing maternity rate in the post war era.***

[john.curtin.edu.au/1940s/healthy/index.html](http://john.curtin.edu.au/1940s/healthy/index.html)

SUE MACDONALD.