

Notes for Hearing 26th October 2011.

My father and three of his brothers were raised by the Christian Brothers after their mother died. They were starved, hard worked and abused, at least one of them sexually abused. They were part of The Forgotten Generation.

My mother was 24 when I was born. She suffered the hard work and rigorous regime into late pregnancy in the Home set up and run by Kate Cocks. She was labelled as one of 'the unfortunates' – a recipient of the harsh practices and policies of forced adoption.

I am from the Abundant Babies Era when adoption had to be publicised as an option for the many babies born at the end of WW11 in order to find homes for us all. We are The Invisible Australians. We were born in a time when it was expected that we would lose our identities, names, biological relatives and begin a new life as blank slates and become grateful adoptees, not speaking about our adoptions or the mothers we lost.

I am here to speak *about* adoptees, rather than for adoptees, other than myself and two of my fellow adoptees. One of them, her Submission at No 82 will never know her identity; a situation which is unimaginable to most citizens. She is not alone and has been deceived and denied by all who have put her in this situation. She has been left without biological connections, history or true identity or the means to discover those basic facts about herself.

Many adoptees have not been reached at all by this Inquiry, have been unable to speak out or have been discouraged from doing so. We have been criticised, ridiculed, harassed, judged and bullied by those who believe they know adoption better than we do, as adult adoptees. We have been told those who raised us were not our parents, that we were 'nothing without our mothers' and that in wishing to support each other we were 'wallowing in misery'. Some of us have refused to say our adopters were vampires who stole us, ripped us from our mothers' wombs and tore us from their breasts. Some of us undoubtedly were taken in a violent way, many were not, some were unloved and unwanted then and are still now. There are many popular beliefs about adoption and adoptees that are not born out by the experience of adoptees.

I have been involved during my working life with adoption reunion, I have spent a number of years researching adoption and am in touch with many hundreds of adult adoptees in various parts of the world, including here in Australia. I also write an adoption blog on adoption issues and have done so for two and a half years. That blog contains over 1,500 posts and has been read by almost 58,000 readers. I have been made aware of the views and feelings of many adoptees and of the losses and trauma suffered because of adoption. I continue to support adoptees when they request it and where I am able.

The Primal Wound, written by American author Nancy Verrier, the term invented by her to describe the suffering of babies in the loss of their mother. The suffering of mothers is they tell us extreme, but it occurs after the onset of the childbearing years and is not a primal wound. My own mother never recovered her shaming, harsh treatment and my loss. She suffered secondary infertility and was a broken woman for the rest of her life. We were reunited when I was fifty years of age. Her adoption loss endured throughout her adult life, mine so far has been for a whole lifetime.