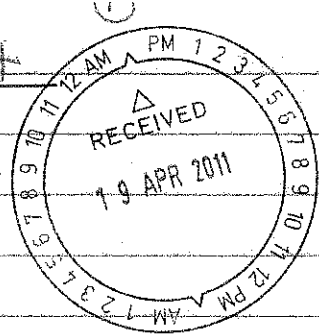


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16-04-11

Irene Kahu COPY

To Whom It Concerns

I have only just found out about the senate enquiry into forced adoptions. I was 14 when I was made a ward of state and my baby boy was stolen from me.

In Winton where I was held until over 8 months pregnant, I don't remember any pre-natal care, no special diet or vitamins. I did the same work daily scrubbing floors as the other girls.

I had only come to Australia 4 yrs previously so I was petrified, I had never even heard of lesbians or seen any of the kind of violence I saw there. I was then sent to the Methodist home for pregnant girls in Fairfield.

Whilst in both homes I remember the social workers all telling me how I was not capable of looking after my baby and everyone telling me the baby is

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better off without me and I was no good. To this day I have no ego it was abused out of me. I've never felt attractive or done myself up as I see other women do. I have no trust in any authority including the medical which makes life hard as I have a lot of physical problems.

The matron in the home in Fairfield made me scrub a dormitory floor while in early labour. She then proceeded to have tea. I knew nothing what was going to happen during or after the birth and was petrified sitting there waiting for her. I demanded to see my baby and they finally relented. I made sure he had 10 toes and fingers and told him I loved him but he's better off without me. Next day I was moved to an after care hospital but my baby didn't come. We were put in a normal ward and every feed time I cried as all the other women got their babies. I'd bury myself under the blanket. Within 6 months I started looking for him.

I went to my parole officer and social worker and was told he had been adapted straight away, which was a lie. I cried for 22 years daily. I got married at 17 after gaining off the rails totally and spending the next 3 yrs in Winton. When I had my 1st child a girl, I cried so hard they had to remove her, as it was like reliving the first birth. I was lucky to have a son next, but nothing could stop the heartache. I wanted my son and enquired again with my husband but was told there was nothing that could be done. After my marriage break up, I was a single Mum and never married again. We would make a cake on my sons birthday and I would tell his sister and brother about him.

When he was 22 the law changed in Victoria and I had been registered everywhere looking for him, I found him. The social workers rang and said he had written to me, but being Easter there was no mail for 5 days.

I was so happy but scared he wouldn't forgive me or like me. I drank a lot that Easter and on the final night before post delivery I couldn't sleep and decided to drive to my daughters. Needless to say I was pulled up for a licence check and ended up losing my licence for 4 yrs for a .05. When I met my son next day as the letter had a phone number and my friend rang him. He came straight down as he lived not far from me all his life - we shook that much we could hardly stand. It was

wonderful my prayers were answered.

He lived with me on and off but couldn't understand how I could bring up 2 kids on my own but not him. He refused to forgive me, I felt it in our relationship.

He disappeared out of my life again for many years and next time we met was a single father with two sons, one his baby had just recovered from cancer Hodgkin's lymphoma. Then after a few years he married again.

and now I don't see him again. I am
grateful I've met him and know he is ok
but he will never forgive me for giving
him away, even though he knows I was
forced to. I have now found out
there was funds available to keep my
baby. I was not told. Now I find
out the injections and medication I
was given may affect my children
with cancer, cysts and god knows
what else! I was given to dry my
milk and banned in 1971. It broke
my heart when they took my first born
from me. I never recovered from the
heartache. I've had bad nerves all
my life and now finally am getting
some much needed counselling. I
cannot cry at all, not even at a
funeral or from severe pain. I was given
no assistance after my sons birth.
How can a 14 year old girls signature
in 1963 be legal? With now this
added fear for my children of cancer
what happened then has affected my
whole life. The abuse, lies, and lack
of care, haunt me forever. The government
failed badly in their duty of care. Yours sincerely
Janet Somers

(5)
Also the people who adopted him were
over 50 yrs old, older than my mother.
He had all his needs met but no
cuddles or loving he told me. Being a
touchy person he couldn't get over
how we say hello with a kiss and
always hug each other, with "I
love you," said every phone call or when
we see each other. He had never
had that. When they passed away
his other family disowned him.
They were his uncles, cousins etc.
How cruel is that. I don't cry now as I
can't but he is punishing me for
giving him away, by withholding
my grandkids from me. We needed
counselling when we met and Sue
needed it all my life. Sorry about
my writing but my hand is numb
and I blame a lot of my physical
problems on the girls home, and my
mental problems including the kidnapping
of my son and the ruining of my
whole life and health. We needed
help, we were only kids, but instead
we got abuse and lies. And now

the fear goes on I've only just
found out about DES and what it
can do to my children, what about the
grandkids a great grandkids no one
knows. DES is the medication to
suppress lactation. There were trials
of medications on the babies in the
Methodist home as well and I fear
my son may have been involved as
his baby had hodkins lymphoma and
I have no cancer in my heritage.

They haven't just ruined my life
now I find out maybe also my
childrens health along with mine.

It is scary, how can the govt get away
with all this.

Yours Sincerely
Gene Welch