

Addendum to previous submission #14\_V2 - Barbara Maison.

My closing paragraph in my first submission read, "Adoption, in theory, was regarded as the answer to a social problem; infertile couples and children who for some reason or another were unable to remain with their family of origin, but due to the secrets and lies adoption has engendered in the past, sadly for many it has not provided the solution, but a lifetime of regret and grief."

I should have continued then, but remaining detached - not letting depression overwhelm me by further writing - I completed my submission. Now I would like to add additional comments:

It's my belief from internet research of archived newspapers, past verifiable research papers, past Hansard reports that were illuminating in their recording of the parliamentary speakers crude disregard of the mental health and welfare of pregnant unmarried women and subsequent removal of their children, together with recent, well-researched books on the subject that Eugenics practitioners influenced greatly and the Commonwealth Treasury budget, played a large part in the forced removal of our children.

I believe that the State Health and Welfare Departments were controlled by the Commonwealth Health Commission that laid the ground rules in the intensification of the politicians' enthusiasm for Australia's 'White Australia Policy' by assisting respectable, white Anglo-Saxon married, but infertile, couples to acquire by other means, babies to complete their perfect Australian families; increase Australia's population and also reduce the financial burden of funding orphanages and foster homes.

Because unmarried mothers were considered unintelligent, feeble-minded and socially unacceptable and were extremely vulnerable under those circumstances, they and their children were supposedly better served by separation at birth; therefore the child would benefit by nurturing by reputable married parents; then (in the eyes of the law) the mother of the child would no longer be that child's mother; find employment to support herself, and have a baby of her own, if and when, she married.

All State and Federal Governments by conspiring in their infinite wisdom had neatly solved an unsavoury problem: no budgetary outlays for orphanages, foster homes, supporting illegitimate children and their carers, but also completing the ideal of that typical Australian family to populate Australia, supposedly to ward off the threatening yellow peril from the north.

The facts were that a mother - who expressed a desire to keep the child she had given birth to - was considered irrelevant, most were coerced into signing consents, and in many cases consents were forged when a mother proved 'difficult', or left the hospital before the consent was signed within the five days. Very few were told that the consent could be revoked, and even if they returned within the 30 days to retrieve their child, often after arranging accommodation etc., they were told their babies had already 'gone to a good home' and they were too late! Pleading and begging was futile, so powerless and ill-informed most accepted the lies and cruelty and went on to live without their children in their lives, but always in their hearts and minds.

This master plan was readily backed and executed by the educated upper-classes of doctors, lawyers and the nursing fraternity who had no qualms in separating mothers, fathers and their children, all for the advantage of Australia and the children's welfare of course!

These benevolent works were also carried out with a strong sense of punitive reprisal, mainly by the Matrons, nurses and doctors who believed that these low-class morally deprived girls who "got themselves pregnant" (?) deserved no better!

This attitude was encouraged, as it made the removal of the babies much easier reducing the possibility of a supporting family, with less resistance by suffering scorn and condemnation by society, should they want to support their wayward daughter.

Social workers, who deliberately concealed the special benefit and other advantages which may have assisted mothers and parents to financially keep their child, were fully trained in indoctrinating families and mothers with this attitude which served their purpose; making many babies available, so that some adopters when there was a glut of babies during in the 1970s, did not suffer the scrutiny they should have undergone, and consequently many babies went to homes that were totally unsuitable - marriages that were barely held together; the baby being the bonding mechanism. Needless to say this often did not succeed, some parents divorced and the child was then brought up by a single mother, albeit married and respectable, or as respectable as a single Mrs could be.

Some of the married partners did not want an adopted child, and made their feelings known to that child by ill-treatment or other means. Some were molesters and paedophiles - both male and female.

But the bottom line was that the Government had kept within the budgetary restraints and the figures for Family Welfare were looking good.

Of course there were babies that for some reason or another weren't adopted out straight away due to ill-health or some if disabled, were regarded as unadoptable, and some were returned as 'unsuitable'.

Apparently if babies had not gone to their new home within a certain period of time they became institutionalized and could not bond with their new 'parents', so were returned, some never to be adopted spending their lives in orphanages and foster homes until they were old enough to be put out onto the streets with a suitcase and a small amount of money to 'get on with their lives', courtesy of Australian Government Policy.

The irony of course is that some of these homeless fourteen year olds making their own way in the world with no family, but the orphanage background, had mothers out there often wondering how their baby was living the life that they were told they could not give them because they were single, unmarried and immoral! Strangely (?) many of these 'immoral and feeble-minded' mothers had been in loving relationships and later married the fathers of their first child, and had subsequent brothers and sisters, to the one who was making a life by themselves.

The anger and hurt when that first child discovers the family to which he or she belongs - but doesn't - because they were ripped from their mother's arms at birth - can create the most painful, horrific trauma seeing their brothers, sisters, parents belonging together knowing that they can never be; that wound never heals. Many ended up taking their own lives or living drugged and in and out of gaol.

Many others after benefits were publicly revealed, unsupported, had children of their own simply to have a family: someone of their own to love and be loved by.

All this has been common knowledge to those who have worked with and seen the effects of forced separation, and has been accepted by Adoption Separation Support Groups, Forgotten Australians and the Stolen Generations and it beggars belief that the governments over the years were not aware of these crimes against humanity.

Many letters have been published in all states of Australia in the newspapers, television documentaries from as far back as the 1970s (*I have copies if authorities are interested*) many newspaper articles and also in magazines. Social workers have known and received many

complaints about their handling of adoption matters, all this has been ignored by those who were elected to support ALL the citizens of Australia.

Governments in N.S.W and Tasmania were pressured to, and held inquiries into past adoption practices; their committees - supposedly educated persons - read and made decisions on the information received!

What action has been taken by the Federal and State Governments following these recommendations? (or if there was, very little publicity to enable participation by mothers who needed help ... THEN!)

Many mothers (together with Care Leavers and others) affected by adoption placed submissions (over 600 in total) to the Senate Select Committee on Mental Health in 2006 and I believe that a recommendation was made that counselling be made available without charge to those who needed it ... yet to hear anything further.

Federal Community Services Minister Jenny Macklin called for a review, but much doubt was cast because it was reported that there was no *empirical* evidence:

***" ...But it says there is no reliable data on the number of women coerced into adopting out babies, or how many report continuing negative effects."***

MELBOURNE AGE - April 22, 2010

Following the Higgins report, the initial official response seemed to be dismissive and negative.

What empirical data was presented AND acknowledged to support the claims of both Stolen Generations and the Forgotten Australians, when the government had over the years denied any wrong-doing or moral obligation?

To date the only state in Australia is Western Australia, whose government on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010 with bi-partisan support in parliament apologised to those mothers and children and families separated by forced adoption.

Two hospitals have also admitted their practices were unethical: the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in May 2009, The Sisters of Mercy, St. Anne's Hospital in Perth in March, 2010. Out of all the hospitals in Australia who participated in those immoral practices only two have had the integrity to acknowledge their actions. Crown Street in Sydney was renowned for its baby farming activities, known as the leader of the gang of thieves.

Many believe it is merely (*another*) wasted effort of time and emotional stress to be bothered to put their stories on paper again after spending hours, days, weeks sleepless nights, and many tears writing down the pain and hurt from the past - and not so past if reunions (a term very inaccurately used as many have never seen each other) have been unsuccessful, and bringing it all up again just to have another politician trivialise their trauma, is just not worth it.

It's a very sad, but completely understandable attitude, when you consider that in the past there were several hundred submissions for the N.S.W. state inquiry alone, and if you count those from the Tasmanian inquiry, that shows that they were keen to be heard, but as there has virtually been nothing done by the Government's: Federal or State following recommendations by the committees (or if there was, very little publicity to enable participation by mothers who needed help ... THEN!)

I believe the Federal Government of Australia has a duty of care to ensure that those who need help, counselling etc., by sensitive, humane and educated to the fullest extent of the knowledge of this historical blot on Australia's history - A fair go for all Australians?

But definitely **not counselling by the consent takers**; that is akin to attending a rapist for a pap smear - and having to attend these sessions in the very buildings that they were forced to sign away their children. Also reparation and mediation for those whose children are so damaged they refuse to accept that they were wanted, that they were given away without a care, also separation conflicts.

I have no doubt that past governments HAVE known, have been fully aware of these practices - the proof is in the documentation that mothers and researchers have located - they have wilfully disregarded, ignored all emerging stories and complaints, and disparagingly brushed aside all calls for the truth to be exposed as most of these occurred from the 1950s into the 1980s - some before and after - and we believe that the governments have probably hoped that before our voices gained power and strength to be heard, we would all die off and our stories with us and their liability for moral judgment would fade into the mists of time.

Mothers, fathers and children of those years are ageing - many are now in their 60s, 70s and older and dying, many suiciding\*, totally bereft at the cold callous attitude of a supposedly Christian government - opening parliament with prayer - by ignoring their pleas to be heard openly and honestly without bias.

*\* the catalyst for a West Australian mother to launch the campaign for an apology for her now deceased friend.*

Barbara Maison

March 17<sup>th</sup> 2011