

Submission to the Senate Enquiry into forced adoption.

I do not require the Committee to quash my name.

I have read through many of the heart wrenching stories submitted so far. It has been extraordinarily difficult for me to weigh through them all and when I have managed to read them, I carry the stories with me throughout my days.

I would like to keep my submission brief because I think I have some valid points to make for the future. Though I shan't spell out my own case here for brevity, do not underestimate that my experience is not as horrendous as the next poor girls.

Forced adoption under all circumstances is unnatural and inhumane.

Having been through a forced adoption I relate to each and every mother who, for whatever reason, was forced into a life of secrecy, guilt, lies, embarrassment and shame.

My struggle has been enormous, all but completely overwhelming. Often the load has been too much to bear. I do firmly believe many of my social problems, self-esteem and lack of confidence directly relates to the forced adoption of my child.

With all due respect, and I mean that sincerely to all the well-meaning people out there, apologies from governments and various organisation will never wipe out the grief I carry with me. To be honest it does not even start to heal the trauma. I have acknowledged my own guilt and shame. I have realised now after a long struggle of 35 years that I will carry guilt with me for the remainder of my life. Surprisingly, having accepted the fact that guilt and shame will always be with me, has lifted some of the burden I bear. Trying to get rid of guilt and shame will not work.

I look at many of the young girls who keep their babies and I think good for you and good for the governments for supporting them. I am glad for them and grateful that they will not have to go through what I endured and continue to endure. BUT their situation is not satisfactory either.

There needs to be a radical transformation in the education of young men in this country. It may take a whole generation to change but I believe firmly that this can be achieved with the Committee listening to people like me and putting in place the framework to address this problem.

Young men from a very early age must, I repeat must, be educated to care much more deeply for women. Starting with their mothers, aunts and sisters, they must learn to respect women, have some sort of sense of responsibility about themselves and towards others. Rather than seeing endless money go into supporting young women and their unwanted-by-their-father's bubs more funds should be established to educate young boys on:

- Respect
- Sexual behaviour towards girls including their sisters
- Their own sense of worthiness

- Taking responsibility for their actions

Obviously some parents are also in need of education too.

If the Government and implement a massive re-education program for young boys and men I believe many of the problems they face now can be dramatically reduced. I know there is not one answer to this issue, and I see no point in flogging a dead horse. Yes, help and show support for women who have been through what I have, help young girls with father-less bubs but for goodness sake educate the wretched boys and young men of this country or at least attempt to try to.

I would be happy to speak further with the Senate Enquiry at any time.

Gemma Black
of Sydney, Canberra & now Tasmania
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