

Senate Inquiry into “Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices.”

Preamble to Submission

I Laurie Marguerite Watkins am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia resident in Queensland.

As a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia I have an inalienable right to protection under the Australian Constitution and the Common Law of this country

As an Australian citizen, the Commonwealth affords me protection from the unlawful and harmful actions that threaten my right to life, liberty and justice from those who would deny me these rights, within and without, the borders of Australia

1. I was born July 1954 at Elim House (Salvation Home), 17 Lansdowne Crescent, West Hobart. My birth was registered on the 3 August, 1954.
2. On 20 August 1954 the date of my adoption the following documents were presented:
 - i. Extract of Search – Birth (hand written and dated 20 August 1954)
 - ii. Application – signed and dated 20 August 1954
 - iii. Order of Adoption dated 20 August 1954
 - iv. Consent to Order of Adoption dated 6 August 1954
 - v. Hand written Birth record in my adopted name which has been misplaced/or lost.

The only checks as to the suitability of my adoptive parents to adopt was that they were married and lived with my father’s widowed mother and had no children. I have found an Electoral Roll listing for my parents in 1954 which was different to his mothers. There are a couple of other details also incorrect on the Application. I know I was adopted during the adoption peak but surely more of an investigation could still have been done as to the suitability of the family I was being given too. I was raised in a home where my parents were present but I have no memory of them being there. I do not have happy memories going up in this family. I never felt I belonged to my adoptive family. I have found my birth mother and we are close I do not belong in the family either. Her children are not accepting.

I am unaware what the outcome of the Enquiry will be but people need to know that we had no say as to what happened to us we were only babies not a product to be legitimised by the stroke of a pen as they saw it. I was one of approximately 11,500 babies adopted in Tasmania. How many of us were not issued with birth certificates in our adoptive name at the time of our adoption? I found out I was adopted in 1975 when I ordered my birth certificate and was sent a Certificate of Adoption which Tasmania now states were never issued. Being young and naive I had no idea what this meant as my parents never told me I was adopted and I hid the fact I knew. The realization I did not have a birth certificate happened in 1998 when I ordered a full certified copy of my Birth Certificate. I was informed that no birth was registered in my name. To register my Birth I had to ring the Birth, Death and Marriages in Hobart and I gave my details with no checks as to who I was over the phone. After paying the required fee a copy of the Record of Birth was sent to me. To confirm my identity I have

to produce my Order of Adoption as well as my Record of Birth to explain the gap in years. At the time of my marriage I had an Extract of Record in my adopted name which my parents gave me and it was questioned but accepted at the time. I have been told our adoptive parents were told to forget it ever happened, no one will ever find out, destroy the paperwork they will never know. But the facts are that we have found out and now the Tasmanian Government refuses to correct the problem. Putting an endorsement on Birth Certificates issued to us for the first time since 2006 with details of the adoption doesn't fix anything. We were all entitled to a Birth Certificate the same as a baby whose parents were married. Why are birth certificates in Tasmania called Record of Birth? The Tasmanian Government has failed us and now we adoptees live with the consequences. All adoption files in Tasmania need to be examined to find the extent to which birth certificates were not registered in our adopted names at the time of our adoption and fixed to reflect the correct details and dates. Not every adoption is happy ever after as they portray on television and in my case it definitely wasn't. The truth needs to come out – the system failed us and is still failing us. We are a lost generation and still nobody cares.

Attached is an email received from

Adoptions Tasmania.

Laurie Watkins

From:
Sent: Thursday, 14 July 2011 2:19 PM
To:

Dear Laurie,

I have just spoken to the assistant manager at Births, Deaths & Marriages and found out what happened with the date on your birth certificate. Firstly I can confirm that your Order of Adoption was given on 20 August 1954 and notice of this was sent to the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages. Under the pre 2006 system the date of the first application for a copy of the new adoptive birth certificate was put on the certificate. In your case the first application was in 1998 so that is why this is on your certificate. I gather you had no need of a birth certificate before this date. This process changed in 2006 as it was recognised that this was not a sensible thing to do and any certificates requested after 2006 for the first time have the year of the Adoption Order. Unfortunately existing certificates such as yours cannot be changed retrospectively but at least you have an explanation. Please feel very welcome to contact me if you have any questions or want to talk about this.

Kind regards

Department of Health and Human Services

3rd Floor, 86 Murray Street, Hobart TASMANIA 7000 Phone: (03) 62 33 22 73

Facsimile: (03) 62231343

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