

## FORCED ADOPTIONS

*Statement by Minister for Child Protection*

**MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Child Protection)** [1.19 pm]: Today is a significant day for survivors of forced adoptions. It marks 10 years since former Prime Minister Hon Julia Gillard apologised, on behalf of the Australian people, for the policies and practices of forced adoption and the lifelong legacy of pain and suffering they left. Former Prime Minister Gillard's apology included the following poignant reflections, and I quote —

*To you, the mothers who were betrayed by a system that gave you no choice and subjected you to manipulation, mistreatment and malpractice, we apologise.*

...

*To each of you who were adopted or removed, who were led to believe your mother had rejected you and who were denied the opportunity to grow up with your family and community of origin and to connect with your culture, we say sorry.*

...

*We acknowledge that many of you still experience a constant struggle with identity, uncertainty and loss, and feel a persistent tension between loyalty to one family and yearning for another.*

...

*... To you, the siblings, grandparents, partners and other family members who have shared in the pain and suffering of your loved ones or who were unable to share their lives, we say sorry.*

...

*We offer this apology in the hope that it will assist your healing and in order to shine a light on a dark period of our nation's history.*

I acknowledge the people affected by forced adoption here in this Parliament, including people who are making these discoveries decades later. Recently, I met with women with lived experience of forced adoption to listen to their experiences and proposals for change. Their pain was clearly evident. Their desire to support others in the same situation and to work to ensure that these horrific practices do not happen again was so strong.

Yesterday, with some of my parliamentary colleagues across both chambers, I had the pleasure of joining many of those women and others affected by forced adoption at a morning tea here at Parliament House to mark this important anniversary. Their powerful and moving stories and the importance of having them recorded reinforced the need for a public inquiry, which our government requested last year and which the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs decided last month to undertake. I have also assured those I have met of our commitment to implement the recommendations of the 2018 *Statutory review of the Adoption Act 1994* and that the Department of Communities will continue to consider the recommendations of the commonwealth and Victorian inquiries.

Today, I acknowledge the loss, trauma, pain and hurt of those affected by forced adoptions, and I, too, say sorry. Members, it is so important that we work together to provide those impacted Western Australians with opportunities to share their experiences and highlight this significant issue within the broader community.