

## FORCED ADOPTIONS

### *Statement*

**HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.29 pm]: Hon Dan Caddy's motion lapsed earlier today and I did not get a chance to add a few remarks then, so I will take the opportunity now during members' statements. I was particularly interested in paragraph (c) of the motion, which refers to memorials. Last year, I was in touch with Jennifer McRae from Albany. She is an advocate for and survivor of forced adoption in Western Australia. She has been advocating for more recognition for the survivors of forced adoption in Western Australia. The practice of forced adoption happened in not only Western Australia, but also Australia from the 1950s to the 1980s. In 2010, Colin Barnett apologised for it in the Western Australian Parliament. I believe that the Western Australian Parliament was the first Parliament in Australia to formally apologise for the practice. After the passage of time, we know that forced adoption was very abhorrent. It involved taking children from their unwed mothers who were deemed to be unfit parents. A Senate inquiry into the practice was conducted in 2012. That was a very broad sweep of the issue. There are still a lot of question marks and unknowns around the number of mothers and children in WA who have been impacted by force adoptions.

Jennifer McRae and a number of advocates in this space have been calling for a few things. The apology was a first step in acknowledging that something was wrong and that it should not have happened. As well as the apology, the advocates are looking for some redress. They want action, as well as an apology. When Mark McGowan was in opposition, he called for more truth telling in this space. There was an acknowledgement by Parliament on behalf of the people of Western Australia that a wrong was committed against those people who were affected. The advocates are also calling for more institutional apologies, particularly from King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, which was at the centre of the practice. They are calling for a memorial to be built at King Edward Memorial Hospital. A memorial was created in Victoria Park to recognise the practice and honour the people who were affected. That was brought about largely because of the hard work of the advocates in this space, and they are calling for another memorial to be built to honour the children who were taken away specifically at King Edward Memorial Hospital. I thought that was fitting, given the motion that was moved earlier today.

A petition that has now closed and was tabled by Hon Lorna Harper calls for the establishment of a WA-specific inquiry into forced adoption. I think that is fantastic and I congratulate Hon Lorna Harper for her advocacy in this space. I hope that the committee that reviews the petition will take it forward, that it will get the attention that it deserves and that the requests of Jennifer McRae and the other survivors and advocates in this space will be heard at that inquiry.

*House adjourned at 5.33 pm*

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