

Legislative Assembly of Western Australia

Parliament House, 4 Harvest Tce,

West Perth WA 6000

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Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices.

My name is [REDACTED] (Married name) [REDACTED] (maiden name) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (birth name). I am an Aboriginal woman from the Bardi clan at One Arm Point.

I was born in Broome in the regional hospital. At the time of my birth my mother was given a twilight birth where she was given a sedative to keep her calm. As soon as I was born, I was taken away. My mother only got to see my black hair, no first contact, no being able to see me. Just left with nothing but a fleeting sight on my head.

She was then discharged, without her baby. She returned with her partner (soon to be husband) to the hospital to pick up her baby. She was told that I had been sent to Perth and that I was not in the hospital anymore.

In fact, I was still in the hospital, and remained there for about six weeks. These 6 weeks I believe I didn't have any bonding to anyone and had many nurses feeding and keeping me healthy.

When I was finally sent to Perth, I was picked up by two ladies, one who would later become my adoptive mother, the other would become my foster mother when I was in my teens.

[REDACTED]

When my adoptive parents divorced, I lived with my adoptive mother for some time. I then stayed with my foster family as my mother had gone over seas. Later I was staying with my adoptive father as my foster family divorced as well.

These events hurt me deeply, gave me a sense of insecurity, loss of sense of family, afraid to cause any trouble in case I was moved to another family. And a huge sense of not belonging to anyone.

My adoptive brothers were ok, but I was reminded often, that I was adopted, was not really their sister. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Later when my adoptive mother died of cancer, my younger brother stated that I shouldn't be upset because she was not my mother.

The trauma, hurt, dislocation to anyone/family have impacted greatly. I don't trust people much, don't make relationships with people or groups. I also keep to myself as much as possible, apart from my own family.

In my 40's I have applied twice for the Bringing them Home, Stolen generation reparation, only to be told that I did not qualify as I was adopted. This was another huge disappointment. To be told that I was not eligible for any of this, that I was not a part of the Stolen Generation despite what my birth mother had told me when I connected to Jigsaw WA to find my family. I have been told many stories as to why I was taken at birth. Again, this impacted on my mental health and sense of belonging.

I married at 17, have three children of my own and one that my husband and I fostered from 3 months of age. She is now 31 and still living with us. I have 9 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren, and these are my life. I will protect them however I can, to make sure that nothing like I went through happens to any of my family.

I am a damaged and disconnected person, even through my work as a social worker in child protection, mental health and Aboriginal health I continue to behave as remote and separate from these relationships, but also use my experience to assist and support people going through hardships.

I am happy for my name to be registered with this statement.