

INQUIRY INTO PAST FORCED ADOPTION POLICIES AND PRACTICES.

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In 1968 my girlfriend became pregnant due our love for each other. [REDACTED] delivered a baby girl in January 1969 when [REDACTED] was 17 and I was 17. During [REDACTED] pregnancy she was, against her will, locked up in Ngala Home in South Perth, and I was unable to see her despite our love for each other.

We were both told that the baby was to be put up for adoption and we were not given any option at the time. My understanding is that our respective parents were also not given any options at the time.

We both were forbidden by parents, hospital staff and agency staff to see our new born baby.

The whole thing was very traumatic. The drama of it all split [REDACTED] and myself apart for a while. However we eventually got back together again, and much to my parents horror we ended up getting married in March 1971. We had [REDACTED] parents blessing.

During our early years of marriage we both despaired at what had become of our baby to the point where we were unable to conceive another baby. We ended up adopting a baby in 1974 and then conceived naturally having three more children.

[REDACTED] suffered for many years from depression and anxiety from not knowing what happened to the child we were made to give up. When it became available she registered with Jigsaw, an agency created to link consenting mothers and adopted children.

In 1990 [REDACTED] and I were contacted by Jigsaw with who our daughter had also registered. We were finally put in touch with our long lost daughter. This was a very emotional time for us both and our daughter, and our other children. As it happened she now lived in Sydney so we couldn't immediately see each other. [REDACTED] made the journey to Sydney and the reunion was a great success. I followed shortly after and it was very emotional but joyful for us all. We have since seen our daughter twice a year most years and enjoyed being part of her life.

We are grandparents to her children who we love dearly and see as often as we can.

Our adopted daughter had a traumatic childhood as her adoptive Mum was killed in a car accident when she was 12 and her adoptive father was absent quite a lot with his job taking him away. She was raised by relatives of her adoptive parents in Tasmania. We met her adoptive father who was quite a bit older than us, but who was a very nice and was pleased our daughter had found us. He also became a good friend.

My wife still finds the whole adoption experience traumatic and still suffers from depression and anxiety and it is something that we both wished we could have changed in the beginning. Once my wife's parents realised how we felt about the adoption several years later they wished they had kept our daughter, although they weren't sure that was even an option.