

## **Submission - Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices**

**Name:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** 16 June 2023

My name is [REDACTED] and I was born on 13 July 1970 in Mount Lawley, Western Australia and adopted shortly after my birth. Our family moved to Victoria in 1976 where I have lived since.

The attached letter from Past Adoption Services, Department of Community Development, dated 2 November 2006 best describes the background to my adoption.

In 2006, I contacted Past Adoption Services who assisted me in contacting my birth parents.

In discussions with my birth father, I understand that at the time of my birth there was pressure from the hospital for un-wed parents to adopt their children. After my adoption was finalised, my birth parents made enquires for my adoption to be reversed.

I grew up in a loving family and my adoptive parents were always open with me about my adoption. It was not until I got older and our children were asking questions, that I thought more about my adoption.

Making the initial contact with Past Adoption Services in 2006 was a very emotional time and it took some time to gather the courage of facing the unknown. This was only possible with the support of my loving wife.

I have kept my submission brief as I would like to focus on providing my thoughts on the experience in locating my birth parents.

The team at Past Adoptions Services were great assistance and successfully put me in contact with my birth parents. This was such a positive outcome and at the time I remember feeling an emotional weight being lifted. In hindsight, I believe there could be some improvements for future adoptees searching for their birth families:

- Mediation services were offered at the time of contacting my birth parents and I felt that I did not need these services as 'mediation' indicates there is a dispute. Looking back now, I didn't understand how difficult it would be in navigating the communication and family complexities. Considering some form of mandatory facilitation/connection services may make the process easier and more successful for future adoptees looking to connect with their birth parents.

- The process of meeting birth parents and their families opens up a range of human emotions. Follow up counselling and support for a period of time during and afterward would assist adoptees and birth families navigate this path.
- I can imagine that in some circumstances there may be questions from adoptees and birth families regarding biological evidence. I suggest an option for genetic testing to be available for future adoptees and birth families.

I understand that my submission is brief and am more to provide more information or speak with the Inquiry at any stage.

Thank you

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Department for Community Development  
Government of Western Australia

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: Past Adoption Services  
Enquiries: [REDACTED]  
Freecall WA only 1800 622 258



Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing in response to your request for information about your birth and adoption. I have enclosed separate letters regarding access to your birth and adoption court records. Also enclosed are copies of your information from this Department's files.

The Department records have been searched and the following was located. You may find some of the following information or lack of information concerning and you may find it helpful to discuss the contents of this letter further with a Past Adoption Services' Social Worker.

There is very limited information available regarding the background of your birth family and the circumstances of your adoption as the adoption was privately arranged by a solicitor [REDACTED].

Historically solicitors did not provide this Department with anymore information than was legally required. Therefore very little is known about the circumstances of your adoption.

The solicitor [REDACTED] died in the late 1980's and some of his files are now in the care of this Department. Much of the following information has been taken from [REDACTED] file.

I can confirm you were born on 13 July 1970 at the St Anne's Hospital, Mount Lawley, WA. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Your weight at birth was 3540 grammes.

At the time of your birth, your birth mother was single and aged 22 years. She had been born in South Australia and she was employed as a Waitress.

Your birth father's name is not recorded on your original birth record however this is usual if the parents of a child were not married to each other at the time of their child's birth.

Your birth father was also single and aged 21 years. He had been born in England and he was employed as a Chef.

On 17 July 1970 your birth mother signed her consent to your adoption. At that time, your birth parents were both at the same address in Maylands. You will receive a copy of your birth mother's consent as part of your adoption court records.

Following your birth you remained in the care of the hospital where you were born until 23 July 1970 when you were placed in the care of your adoptive parents.

**Past Adoption Services**

189 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004 (P O Box 6334, East Perth WA 6892)  
Tel (08) 9222 2555 Fax (08) 9222 2607  
Website [www.community.wa.gov.au](http://www.community.wa.gov.au)  
ABN 41 889 424 592

The Order of Adoption finalising your adoption was granted by the Supreme Court of Western Australia on 23 September 1970.

That is the extent of the information that was recorded at the time of your birth and adoption. There was no further information recorded about either of your birth parents, their relationship or their respective families. Once an adoption is completed, this Department does not maintain contact with the families involved.

However on 29 September 1970 the Department received a telephone call from an Adelaide based solicitor, [REDACTED]. The solicitor advised that he was acting for your birth parents who wanted to stop your adoption.

The Department advised [REDACTED] to contact the solicitors who arranged your adoption; [REDACTED]. The Department did not have any further contact with the solicitor [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] file shows that on 1 October 1970, [REDACTED] received a letter from a solicitor [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] said that he had been contacted at home on 29 September 1970 by solicitor [REDACTED] who was acting on behalf of your birth parents. [REDACTED] said that they had been instructed to commence proceedings to reverse your adoption, that your birth parents wished to marry and deeply regretted their decision to relinquish you for adoption.

[REDACTED] replied on 5 October 1970 and advised that the Adoption Order finalising your adoption had already been granted.

On 9 December 1970 [REDACTED] wrote a further letter to [REDACTED] advising that your birth parents had insufficient funds to continue and no further action would be taken. It does not appear there was any further contact with your birth parents.

This now completes all the information that is available regarding your birth and adoption. I hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions at all.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

PAST ADOPTION SERVICES

2 November 2006

Enc.