

Submission to the Environment and Public Affairs Committee

Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices

Parliament House

4 Harvest Tce

West Perth WA 6005

Submitted by Peter Capomolla Moore on Monday, 31 July 2023

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/37426099>

“The Object of it is to provide for the adoption of children, and to see that when they are adopted, they cannot be taken away from those who adopted them when, perhaps, they are becoming useful”

The Minister for mines Hon W H Whittenoon

Adoption of Children’s Bill 12th August 1896 Western Australia

To be clear, I am here by way of Forced Adoption, Forced Adoption was my mother’s trauma, my trauma is Adoption not how I came to be adopted.

In Summary I am writing to address the issue of Adoption and its impact on individuals like myself, who have experienced adoption. I am a Late Discovery Adoptee, who only became aware of my adoption at the age of 59 through an Ancestry DNA test. Since then, I have been grappling with the trauma and deception associated with adoption practices, particularly the fabrication of Birth Certificates. I strongly believe that Birth Certificates should accurately reflect genetic parentage, and I urge the government to rectify this issue for the well-being of adoptees. I also advocate for equal rights for adoptees, including the right to be listed on their biological parent's death certificates, the right to self-determination, and an end to adoption discrimination.

Points to Raise

1. **Self-Determination:** Adoptees should have the freedom to identify with their true identities and be allowed to update details on their Original Birth Certificates.

I recently won a Civil and Administrative Tribunal case against the Registrar of NSW Birth Deaths & Marriages to have my deceased father’s name to be entered into the register by way of entering his name on my pre-adoption “Real” Birth Certificate. Adoptee Equality with other non-adopted citizens.

<https://www.caselaw.nsw.gov.au/decision/18900b2950cfb869247d33d8>

This simple request took me six years to bring to fruition, many application rejections by the Registrar of NSW Births Deaths & Marriages.

There needs to be a simple process and framework to ensure that a reasonable

argument that can show that on balance the likely hood of a man being the father should be accepted as such.

2. **The reliance on NATA DNA:** as per the family law act NATA DNA should not be a requirement for the following reasons:
 - A) The Family Law Act is not “Fit for Purpose” for the vast majority of Adoptees whose father’s are deceased or father’s who are unable or unwilling to take a DNA Test in the absence of state legislation to force / require a father to take DNA test which is available under the Federal Family Law Act.
 - B) NATA DNA is only testing DNA between two people of which either could provide a look alike DNA Donor who could simply use the Photo ID document, sign the statutory declaration, and substitute themselves as the person on the Photo ID hence resulting in either a negative or positive test.
 - C) It is a red herring that consumer home DNA tests are somehow not reliable indicators of DNA relations. A consumer home test cannot be frauded like the NATA accredited two person DNA because of the sheer number of DNA matches to family members or distant relations that are likely to match with, these multitude of DNA matches cannot foreseeably be fabricated.
3. **Implement the recommendations of the Senate Inquiry:** were accepted by all states but most 10 years on have not been implemented.
4. **Adoptee Equality:** Adoptees are the only minority group that is legally discriminated against. This disparity needs to be addressed, and adoptees should be granted equal rights as non-adopted citizens.
5. **Ending of Adoption:** The overwhelming evidence of trauma associated with adoption negates any perceived “**best interests of the child argument**” therefore the practice of Adoption should logically end.

There are always alternative care plans for children in need that do not involve adoption, including kinship care, foster care & guardianship which do not have the added trauma of identity & cultural erasure. Western Australia has few adoptions per year, this number should be arguably zero.

6. **Data Collection and Research:** It is essential to collect data with adopted individuals as a distinct demographic and fund research to study the long-term outcomes of adoption.
7. **Family Searching and Reunion:** Adequate resources and support should be provided to adopted individuals seeking information about and reconnecting with their biological families.
8. **A publicly funded awareness campaign:** should be implemented designed by adoptees to help change the narrative and to stop the current invalidation of Adoptees lived experience.
9. **Support and Trauma-informed Services:** Consultations on support services should involve adoptees, and adoption language used by government departments should be informed by adoptees' experiences.

10. **The Cancelling of Original Birth Certificates:** The practice of cancelling and fabricating Birth Certificates must stop, as it leads to identity confusion and trauma for adoptees.
11. **Adoption VETO's:** Adoption VETO's should be invalidated retrospectively, as they only cause further trauma for the adoptee.
12. **One Life One Birth Certificate:** Adoptees should have the right to have only one Birth Certificate that accurately reflects their genetic parentage.
13. **No Fault Adoption Discharge on application forms:** I congratulate the West Australian Government on their world leading policy of granting Adoptees their discharge without a costly and retraumatising court appearance and in the process saving the taxpayer the expense of the court system as well as freeing up precious court time. This should be reflected in naming of application forms called No Fault Adoption Discharge Application Forms – this is a low cost to the government.
14. **Death Certificates:** Adoptees should have the legal right to be listed on their biological parent's death certificates.
15. **Anti-Discrimination laws:** It should be illegal to discriminate against individuals based on their adoptive status.
16. **Duty of Care:** Governments and their departments have a duty of care to ensure the well-being of Adoptees, and anyone affected by adoption and forced adoption.

Duty of Care: Should extend to informing all adoptees of their Adoptee status – not to do so is a serious breach of their perceived Human Rights to know their parents, their family histories and cultures, their Vital Medical Histories.

17. **Removal of Statute of Limitations for all childhood abuse including Forced Adoption:** The ability to come to terms with the full ramifications of the effects of adoption on an individual's life can take many decades to recognise. Many like me spent a lifetime wondering what was wrong, why I didn't fit in, why I could not relate to adopted parents, lifelong depression and anxiety, my traumatic separation from my mother at birth, a PTSD non-verbal event that haunted me my whole life and continues to do so.
18. **Tick Box:** A cost effective strategy to raise awareness of Adoptees and Mothers of Loss would be the addition of a Tick Box on all health-related forms. This would assist in recognition of Adoptees and Mothers of Loss as a vulnerable population. This is particularly important as we age and require more care, especially where Dementia and Alzheimer's may come into play and verbal skills diminish.
19. **Suicide Prevention, Data Collection & Awareness:** Whilst overseas studies & anecdotal evidence suggest higher rates of suicide among Adoptees, we have no data to back this up in Australia.
Due to the secrecy and lack of access to adoption records, are coroners made unaware of the adoptive status of cases coming before them? Are findings made without access to all relevant information? Can reliable findings be made when information is not provided or hidden? Would a coroner even ask such a question as "was this person adopted"? Would the Coroner be adoption trauma aware to ask any of these questions? Are any statistics recorded anywhere of the suicides of Adoptees? My assumption is that the coroner looks only at the evidence brought before them and that adoptive status is unlikely to be among that evidence, or even

be seen as relevant among those gathering the evidence for a coroner. As a consequence we have no statistical evidence, once again leaving Adoptee mental health in societies blindspot.

<https://www.facebook.com/intercountryadopteememorials/>

My Short Story: At the age of 59, I discovered through an Ancestry DNA test that I was adopted. This revelation shattered my entire identity, as I had spent years as a family historian and genealogist, researching my supposed ancestral roots. Learning that I had two Birth Certificates, one of which was fabricated and falsely stated that I was born to adoptive parents, deeply traumatized me. I lost my biological family, including my father, who I never had the chance to know before his passing.

I have since met some of my biological family members, but the pain of loss and the feeling of being an outsider persist. The impact of adoption has affected not only my life but also the lives of my children and grandchildren.

Conclusion: I urge the Environment and Public Affairs Committee to carefully consider the points raised in this submission and take meaningful action to address the long-lasting effects of forced adoptive policies and practices. Adoptees deserve equal rights and recognition, and steps must be taken to ensure that the adoption process is fair, transparent, and trauma informed.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Peter Capomolla Moore

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]