

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Environment and Public Affairs Committee](#)
Subject: Forced Adoption Inquiry
Date: Friday, 27 October 2023 1:30:46 AM
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Dear Committee

After watching the interview of the Ngala CEO and checking my paperwork I received from Post Adoption Services which I didn't have to hand when I made my submission, I ask that you please accept a supplement to my submission as there were questions raised during the interview that the Ngala CEO could not answer, but I can as I was actually there during the period in question, the FAE.

[REDACTED]

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With kind regards

[REDACTED]

After watching the interview with the Committee with the representative of Ngala, I wish to add supplementary information to my original submission. At the time I made my submission, I was not in receipt of my paperwork from Post Adoption Services. I was offered the option of delaying my submission until I received my paperwork, but I opted to send in my submission. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I hope you will accept this supplementary information, as it is very important.

The thing that struck me while watching the video of the Ngala representative, was how little back-up / evidence she had at hand. It seems there has been not much in the way of record keeping, no minutes of meeting the “panel” who made the decisions, no financial records to hand, and as the new CEO has only been there a short while, she only has anecdotal evidence from staff or ex-staff as to what happened in the FAE at Ngala – whereas I WAS THERE. I can tell you the answer to questions she could not!

Firstly – re the question of wages for work performed at Ngala. No! – we did not receive payment. In fact, my Sickness Benefit was paid to Ngala to cover my stay. I am not clear on how this was done – I think I had to sign a form so that my cheque went to Ngala instead of me... that detail of how it came about I can't swear 100% to, I only have a vague memory of being in the office with Matron [REDACTED] and her telling me something to the effect of I should be grateful they took me in. I know I was quite angry that my money was to be taken but I was still told I had to work to “earn my keep”, and even more upset later when I experienced how poorly we were treated and how awful the food was. I certainly did not receive any money in “wages” and to my knowledge, neither did any of the girls. I think the only girls who would have been paid for “by the state” as the CEO stated, were likely the girls there who were already ‘wards of the state’ because they had been removed from their homes. (Some girls were very young – I was the oldest at 17).

Secondly – re the question of visitors. Were we allowed male visitors? No! – not unless it was an approved person, like a relative. This I remember clearly – the house mistress (I can't remember her correct name as everyone called her [REDACTED]) asked me to write a list of people I would like to visit. *{I actually have been given a copy of this list in my paperwork from Ngala. It really brought back sad memories when I saw it.}* She then told me that she had the final say of who was allowed in and my then-boyfriend, [REDACTED] (not the baby's father – someone I had known through my drama group for about a year before I even met the baby's father and we had then formed a relationship before I realised I was pregnant. Once he knew I was pregnant, he said he still wanted to be with me, so he was a supportive person.) [REDACTED] said I could not see “boys” – they couldn't have “boys” coming in visiting, she said something along the lines of hanging out with boys was how we got to be where we were, and so only my parents were allowed. I heard stories from the other girls of how their boyfriends were supportive and wanted to be with them but were not allowed in... some had tried to sneak in to see their girlfriends or had tried to call to them through the fence and that was why we were locked in the dormitory at night and why we couldn't go to the area near the fence. So we were effectively cut off from supportive partners and friends.

Thirdly – were we allowed out of Ngala? No! See above! We were locked in at night, checked on during the night by a torch through the glass window in the door, and during the day we were always watched – just like a prison – even in the showers. The only times I was not supervised was when we had free time in our rooms. I was told that sometimes a few of the girls were allowed to go to the shops with nurses supervising us, to buy sweets or personal care items, but that never happened in

the time I was there. When this was questioned, the answer was that they were responsible for us and if anything happened to us, it would be their fault so we had to stay where they could see us.

Lastly – did we get antenatal care. Yes. There was a visiting doctor. (*I have the records from Ngala.*) His name was [REDACTED]. He took my bloods and it said my leukocytes were “scant”. He said I was ‘run down’ as I had told him I had nearly fainted a few times when working in the dining room and that is when he asked me whether I was eating properly (I wasn’t). I left Ngala before my baby was born so I did then have antenatal care through the public clinic at King Edward.

The other thing I was puzzled about, not related to the Ngala CEO’s submission, was when I actually signed the consent papers for adoption. You may recall in my submission, after my baby was born, she was taken away from me. I heard nurses at KEMH talking about the “Special Nursery” and I followed them and found my baby. This is all detailed in my submission. The first day I went there, I held her – though the nurses there were very nervous and unsure about me being there. I kept saying I haven’t signed anything – so she is still my baby. Then the next day, I went again – but they wouldn’t let me hold her.. said they would get in trouble if they let me. The third day, which would have been 25 March, I went there and she was gone – and that is when they gave me the talk.. about how she had gone to a good home, how I mustn’t be selfish, how heartbroken the parents would be if I changed my mind, and so on. For years it puzzled me how they could take her like that when I hadn’t signed any papers. I kept thinking .. maybe they got me to sign something at Ngala without saying what it was? ... did I sign something when I was still recovering from anaesthesia? I couldn’t work it out. Listening to the other women’s submissions about signing forms in the hospital after giving birth really made me wonder ... why can’t I remember signing a form? I could only remember signing the papers in West Perth, when my mother took me in. And I thought all along that was the final papers – once signed, that was it.. I could not change my mind. So I signed because, as far as I knew, my baby had already gone to her new family. And my mother signed an affidavit because I was under 18 (I wonder - did the other younger mothers sign with no parent or guardian present?)

Tonight – I got the answer to that question. I pulled out my paperwork and read through again to find out how long my daughter was at Ngala before she went to her adoptive parents. On **25 March**, I was told my daughter was gone from the hospital. No – she was still in the hospital. It is in the paperwork. She had a blood test on that day at the hospital and there is a note saying she would be picked up from the Kensington Annexe on 27 March. So – when she was taken away from the nursery on **24 March**, they took her to the Kensington Annexe so I could not find her. Then she went to Ngala on **27 March**. This was unknown to me. (My parents took me out of the hospital on 27 March because 28 March was Good Friday and they wanted to go down south for Easter. They also took me down south so I could not have the means to get back to Perth to try and find my baby.)

Now, looking again with calmer eyes, I see the papers I signed on **2 April** with my mum in West Perth were the consent papers! So they took my baby away *before* I signed the papers. How could this happen? The adoption order went through on **30 April**, with me never knowing I still had time to change my mind. According to paperwork, my baby never actually went to her adoptive parents care until **3 May**!

I also hope the Committee will get more details on the “panel” who made the decisions. I think Matron [REDACTED] had a lot of sway in these decisions. I wonder why she was felt to be qualified for this power, having never experienced motherhood herself. I was also very interested to hear you ask the Ngala CEO about what criteria the parents had to meet, and she could only come up with “white and married”.

And what about the question regarding follow up made re the welfare of the child?

I have a letter from a [REDACTED], Senior Social Worker at the Adoption Centre in Ord Street. It was in reply to my letter of 29 July 1982, asking if my child had, in fact, been adopted and if any information could be given regarding my baby and if she was being cared for. Her reply was “When an Order of Adoption is granted, our contact with the family ceases.” She said the fact that the family had “not come under the notice of the Department” was another indication her “happy future was assured”. Obviously, in retrospect, this was not so but their attitude seemed to be no news is good news.

I wanted also to tell you of another experience I had at Ngala. There was an afternoon when I and another pregnant girl were called down to Matron’s office. She said she was having a meeting and the other girl and I were there to serve the tea and biscuits (none for us, of course). I thought at the time it was strange. The cups and tea and milk were all set out already in the same room and I wondered why on earth were we there to serve when they just had to stand up and serve themselves. I also had the strange feeling that it was somewhat “staged” – that we were there for another purpose. There were looks passed between the ‘guests’ and also between them and Matron and I just felt something was odd. I have always held the opinion that the ‘guests’ were prospective parents and were eyeing this other girl and myself over – like so much livestock – to see what our babies might be like. Of all the girls there at the time, she and I were the only blue-eyed, fair girls. Not something I can prove, but I have never been able to shake that feeling – even 48 years later. I wondered whether money was paid to grease the adoption wheels, and perhaps certain babies went to highest bidders. Certainly it seems there was no scrutiny of the parents, other than “white and married”. My baby was described in paperwork as a “dear little girl with blue eyes and curly blonde hair”. The social worker at Post Adoption Services told me she would have been sought after. It makes me sick to my soul to know why.

I would also like to make one more point – one the Committee might have already noticed? That the father’s details were not entered on the birth certificate, even when they were named and did not deny paternity. I gave the full name of my baby’s father, where he lived, what he did for a living.. they even asked me what he looked like and what his interests were, so they knew what traits my baby might have – but they did not put his name on the birth certificate because we were not married. I always felt this was to further shame me – make it look like I didn’t know the father. This was just another nail in our emotional coffins.

If you have made it through all this – I thank you for reading and I hope this answers some questions. It seems I am one of the few mothers who were at Ngala who have made a submission. The ARMS representative the Ngala CEO mentioned is an adoptee, not a mother – so she would not have the memories of the place that I do. I hope this fills in some blanks as I don’t hold much hope you will find actual records of these practices.

[REDACTED]

26/10/2023