

Hon Peter Foster MLC

Chair

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Parliament House

4 Harvest Terrace

West Perth WA 6005

Legislative Council of Western Australia

Environment and Public Affairs Committee

Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission into past forced adoptive policies and practices.

I note the terms of reference:

On 22 February 2023, the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs resolved as follows:

To inquire into the past adoptive policies and practices of the twentieth century, notably the years between 1939 and 1980.

In particular, the Committee will seek to:

1. understand the lived experiences of those affected by historical forced adoption practices
2. examine the role of the State Government, health services and private institutions in these practices
3. identify what measures are currently available to assist persons experiencing distress, their effectiveness, and how those persons may be supported further
4. consider any other matter that arises during the course of the inquiry deemed to be relevant by the Committee.

By way of summary, my answers to the Committee's suggested questions are as follows:

In what capacity am I affected by forced adoption practices?

I am an adoptee.

Where and when did the adoption occur?

I was adopted in the State of Western Australia in the year of 1968.

In what way was the adoption forced?

Coercively and unethically-

Coercively for my birth mother due to parental pressure and lack of support options.

And forcibly in my father's case where his objection to my adoption was overwritten by adoptive parents.

This is a quotation taken from a summary regarding my adoption provided to me by the Department of Communities; my birth father, on being and contacted by solicitors acting for my adoptive parents to advise of my birth seek his agreement to my adoption "*would not consider for one moment consenting to the adoption*" and "*The solicitors concluded that your birth father quite positively refused to sign any consent to your adoption and that he would continue to refuse to sign any consent.*" My adoptive parents' solicitors then applied to the W.A. Supreme Court to dispense with my birth father's agreement to my adoption, which was finalised on the 28th of December 1968, 15 weeks after I was born.

My father's name was not recorded on my birth certificate. He was my father, his name was known, and he seems to be the only one who understood what a travesty all of this would turn out to be! I still don't, and likely will never know, who this person, provider of half my DNA, is.

As far as I am aware neither of my original parents were offered the opportunity to seek legal advice, independent or otherwise.

The adoption, in my case, was forced. I did not, and have not, ever agreed to it nor has my consent ever been requested. I have not ever been asked how it's worked out and if I'm OK. I'm not.

What effect did the experience have?

Adoption isn't about the experience of being placed in an alternative family, it's a constant, profound and lifelong experience of processing the loss of your family of origin.

The experience of being adopted is a continuous loss that does not lessen over time.

At each life stage, it is waiting for you to confront in these sorts of ways:

- Loss of your connection to your family
- Loss of connection to your ancestors, your people
- Loss of any knowledge about who you are, who your people are and where you come from, when growing up
- Loss of a sense of belonging
- Loss of secure attachment
- Loss of any sense of being wanted and loved
- Loss of any hope of being 'normal'
- Loss of never having any guidelines about what to do with your inherited attributes or genes
- Loss of knowledge regarding your health legacies
- Loss of Intergenerational connection for my children and descendants
- Loss of any opportunity to live a simple, uncomplicated life

The effect of adoption on my life has been hugely traumatic because the removal of me from my mother, at the very point when I was most dependant and being left in institutional 'care', has been hugely damaging. Separating me from my mother, who was still recovering in the hospital where I was detained, without anyone to bond to, for three weeks awaiting a court order regarding my adoption is a gross maltreatment by my birth grandmother, the State, its institutions and authority figures, the hospital where I was born, the Supreme Court of Western Australia and the solicitors acting for my adoptive parents. This inhumane treatment has had lifelong psychological impacts on me.

Compounding the trauma of separation was the culture of secrecy in which my adoption occurred, which has led to my feelings and unchallenged ideas of rejection, shame and self-blame.

Shame – feeling ashamed of being adopted, as a child feeling like there was something wrong with you, which is why you were not with your family. As an adult, feeling ashamed of being adopted because when you are adopted, there normally will be something wrong with you due to the awful mental health consequences of past adoption practices. Feeling like you are everyone's dirty little secret.

Self-blame – If you are given no information regarding the circumstances of your adoption, you harbour thoughts that something really bad has happened, and that you are at the centre of it. Something so bad that it caused you to be booted permanently from your family and never spoken to or of again. In addition, if, like me, your family doesn't 'get' adoption, not only do you harbour self-blame but also cop the blame from your nearests.

Rejection – Again without any contrary knowledge about your original family, which is compounded by not having any contact with them over the course of your life, as a child you are left only with your feelings of being unwanted and rejected. For me this is the worst and most impactful of consequences and the most difficult to overcome.

Further details regarding my personal experience of adoption are attached overleaf.

Recommendations:

Provide adequately resourced and properly funded ongoing lifelong subsidised or free support to alleviate effects of post-adoption trauma.

Take responsibility for past harms and make the parliamentary apology meaningful - stop fobbing affected individuals off onto poorly funded advocate groups.

Remove barriers to access of information.

Provide properly funded search and reunion assistance including DNA search and support.

Demand that institutions such as the Catholic Church and its instruments, like the hospital now known as Mercy Hospital, formally apologise for their part in destroying people's lives.

That the State of Western Australia apologise to me and others such as me for unethically removing me from my parents and placing me in a poorly screened and poorly supported family.

State-funded research into the impacts of past adoption practices to help with support and education.

Improve community and professional education regarding the pain and trauma of adoption.

Streamline processes for legal repatriation or 'un-adoption', where it is desired.

Currently there is a nine month wait list for Post Adoption Services provided by the Department of Communities. This is an unacceptably lengthy time to wait for assistance and must be addressed.

My adoption experience:

Christmas day 2022. It's hot and I've been slaving for days to put on the big show for my 'family' which in my case, is a family I was adopted into in 1960's Western Australia. I'm undertaking this task out of obligation, not desire, and feeling deeply resentful. I'm doing it because as an adoptee of the 60's you grow up with an implicit requirement to be grateful. Grateful that you have been saved from abandonment, the orphanage, your unwed parents - so you keep up the charade, the sham of manufactured family that has been the task of a lifetime because you know, at base psych level as an adoptee, you must earn your keep. So, I slave, and we largely get through the 'festivities' when my stepmother decides that Christmas is going too well and needs fixing. My stepmother, a woman of callous insensitivity and self-absorption, deftly steered the conversation to both herself and her presiding over a recent event which has caused me extreme anguish. Christmas ruined, a master stroke! My adoptive father and his wife disappear from my home without thanks or farewell. All of this is this is later referred to by my father as 'my problem'.

The Christmas killing event concerned the death of my (adoptive) Aunt, of whom I was very fond. My adoptive father rang me to advise me of his sister's death and I asked him to let me know the details of her funeral. Instead, he rang me after the fact, to advise me that there had not been a funeral and the rest of the family had gathered in remembrance. I was gutted to learn this occasion had been hosted at my adoptive father's home and that I had been specifically excluded. It was particularly hurtful that my brother who is a biological child of my adoptive parents managed to score an invitation. Given the lifelong challenges an adoptee has with belonging and family legitimacy, this was a savage blow and sadly one of many.

Given this preamble, which I offer as just one recent illustration of which there are plenty, the questions I would like to put to this inquiry are this:

How does the State and its agencies, which have been named in the past things like the Department of Child Protection or Child Welfare and the like, feel it has gone in 'protecting' the child that was me? How concerned was the State for my 'welfare' in removing me from my mother and father and placing me in the care of the sort of family described in the above scenario? Did the State undertake any proper evaluation of these random parents I was assigned to? Other than minimal income and marital status, no. Has any agent of the State ever checked in to see how it was working out for me? Sadly not, and as you can probably gather for me, the very unhappy beginning has been backed up with an unhappy continuum. Finally, how does the State deal with the mess that it has created in people's lives through these past policies and practices? In my experience, not well. I have asked the State to help with making sense of this on a few occasions, but aside from engaging in a very convoluted and unsupported (user pays and without any counselling) process of providing me with my birth records or a list of non-government agencies whom I can employ at my own expense, I've been summarily dismissed due to current policies or lack of resources.

Essentially my experience with the State in terms of post adoption services has been one of being delivered another rejection. As any adoptee knows, rejection is the quintessential psychological condition of parental abandonment- it's up there with things to avoid at all

costs. So, from the State's point of view this strategy works brilliantly. Poor, sad adoptees wanting to get some help from the instruments that forcibly removed them from their parents, then placed them in the care of inadequate but socially sanctioned replacements, are very easily fobbed off and it can take decades for them to pluck up the courage to try bothering these authorities again. Soon we'll all be dead, and the State won't have to worry about its uncomfortable legacies. Perfect for everyone! except for those former children, such as me, who this process was purportedly meant to benefit.

Just so we are clear, I have not benefited. I have suffered terribly from being removed from the woman who bore and birthed me, I have suffered terribly from being forced to grow up in an unvetted, unsupported and unempathetic family. I have suffered terribly growing up in a culture of shame and secrecy that was the stock and trade of past adoption. I have suffered terribly from the genealogical bewilderment of not knowing where I come from and who my people are. I have suffered terribly from not being effectively assisted in dealing with the heavy burden of all of this, and I continue to do so.

Adoptive parents flanked by their private solicitors and the Catholic Church in the form of hospitals such as St Anne's Mount Lawley (where I was born) were the apex predators in the game of 'shame the mum and shunt the baby', all presided over and sanctioned by the State. The victims being the newborn child and the young, unwed mother (and sometimes father).

This arrogant and spiteful 'keeping up of appearances', trumped up as child protection, consistently resulted in damage to those at the centre of the drama. The idea was "what could be worse than being raised by unmarried parents?" I know, from lived experience, that there is a lot worse. Whilst there has been a revolving door of mothers in my life, the pain of separation from the first has been a firm constant.

My adopted mother grew up as one of 11 in a family headed by a violent alcoholic and abusive father. My adoptive father grew up in a house headed by a shell-shocked WW2 vet who retreated to his armchair in silent hostility, nursing his beer. Neither had effectively dealt with any of this trauma when applying to adopt a child or, as far as I'm aware, at all. There doesn't appear to be any record regarding the psychological evaluation of my adoptive parents and, if any proper assessment were to be undertaken, it's unlikely that they would ever pass any tests regarding resolution of grief and adoptive parental preparedness. It's hard to imagine that given this background, anyone, let alone the mother of their prospective child would pick them in a line-up of possible parents. She was never asked and let's hazard a guess about how things panned once these hopelessly inadequate and unprepared parents were granted someone else's baby?

It doesn't require too much imagination to foresee that things did not work out well for this hapless, poorly educated couple who hadn't confronted the challenges of their own childhoods or properly come to terms with their assumed infertility, and especially not well for 'their' traumatised little baby (me). A baby who was, and still is, wounded by being removed, and left languishing for weeks just down the hall, from the woman who had given birth to her, whilst a court order was obtained by my adopting parents; an order by the Court of Western Australia to override the express wishes of my original father that this adoption did NOT proceed. My original mother was not aware that I remained alone for weeks in the same hospital as her. She was unaware of my birth father's objection to my

adoption. She was told that I had joined my new family - a lie which was compounded by describing my situation completely differently to the couple I was assigned to. My original mother was not allowed to see me or hold me. The cruelties inflicted on her and me are breathtakingly awful and of enduring impact.

In essence, the separation from my mother has caused me great sadness and distress that I haven't got the words for now, let alone when I was a kid. The problem of what to do with these difficult feelings was further compounded by the secrecy and shame surrounding adoption at the time. To top it off, I found myself in a family environment where one just knew that anything to do with the 'A' word was most definitely a no-go zone. I desperately tried to fit in to my family, like my life depended on it, because at a practical and psychological level, my life did depend on it.

Despite my efforts to keep a lid on it, sometimes things spilled out and I got upset or angry. How my adopted parents chose to deal with my hurt and frustration was, in the case of my father, to ridicule, belittle and tease me. Family jokes were always at my expense. In the case of my mother, it was to beat me, usually until the instrument of violence (wooden spoon/vacuum cleaner-whatever was at hand) broke. The State placed me in the care of a pair who had zero comprehension about what being adopted might mean for an adoptee, so whenever anything difficult arose, I was to blame. I was bad, bad because I had difficult feelings that I couldn't manage on my own and bad because my difficult feelings caused them to have difficult feelings they couldn't manage as adults. In addition to being bad I was a whinger, a rotten egg of some unknown origin and worst of all, an embarrassment. For them the embarrassment was the worst part because the whole point of adopting a child was to avoid this and any questions that might be asked about why they didn't have children. "Why couldn't I just be more like them?", was the sort of question their demands for compliance implied. It was also the sort of 'Stockholm Syndrome' question I desperately asked myself.

Just to complicate things, it turned out that they weren't actually that infertile, so six years after they 'welcomed' me into their lives my brother, their 'real' baby was born. The arrival of a sibling in any family can cause upset for the existing children. However, given the insecurity of attachment I already felt in my family, this was devastating. How my adopted parents chose to deal with this was to assume the default position of ignoring things in the hope that they would go away. I got the distinct impression that this particularly applied to me. Now they had the genuine article I was surplus to requirements and an embarrassment that they wished would go away. Having got the child they really longed for; I became an even bigger problem. I was relegated to the position of second-class citizen within the family unit I'd been arbitrarily assigned to, a position I continue to occupy today. Again, why the State didn't think to properly check on their infertility is of interest to me. Why was it ok to assume this pair couldn't have children when, after only a couple of tries, things didn't work out? Yet another institutional failure from my perspective.

In addition to my adoptive family being poorly vetted from a psychological perspective, I also wish to add that we were not well off financially. Our circumstances were modest, and my adoptive mother approached family finances in the same way she did with everything

related to me, with meanness. There were few luxuries and those were all for 'show'. The lack of generosity in resources perfectly reflected the emotional poverty of our household. I was made to feel that I was a burden, a drain on their accounts. My mother couldn't wait for me to leave home, and when I did there was no ongoing support. The implied social argument that I would be 'better off' adopted failed on the economic front also. The topic of money is somewhat problematic, but 'stuff' matters more when there isn't enough goodness to go around.

I now have three children of my own and through these experiences appreciate the enormity of the mother-child bond. I didn't experience any of this from my adopted mother. I love my children with the most fervent passion and can barely imagine the sorrow of being separated from them. It was a gut-wrenching shock to meet my first blood relative – a daughter that I had just given birth to. I was deeply upset and enraged that I had been 'given' away by my mother. A mother who I knew nothing about and, as a scared and loyal adoptee, was supposed to forget about and pretend never existed. How could she? How dare she do that to me? How could anyone do that to their own baby? To me!? Who is she?

I had to find out who this baby abandoning monster was. It was terrifying. Plucking up the courage to search for and initiate contact with a person who occupies such a foundational position but had wholesale rejected me for my entire life was an existential level difficulty. But one I eventually overcame. I was fortunate to find a mother who was alive and willing to accept contact with me. She wasn't a monster; she was a survivor of this mess like me. More lately I have come closer to accepting that she did not have much say in it. I have wished that she could have stood up to them, to have fought to keep us together. I know however from my birth father's experience that it would have been futile. My rage and indignation are now turned to those who forced this upon me and my mother. How could they? How dare they? How could the moralistic judgements of the Church and State and her/my family override that most fundamental and primal of relationships: mother and child? This is surely the patriarchy at its most hateful. What happened to me is immoral. What happened to my mother is old fashioned, Hand-Maid's Tale misogyny.

Having become a mother myself, I can't imagine how weird and hard it must have been for my adopted mother to parent both an abandoned/taken child as well as her own. She made a lacklustre and ultimately failed attempt to keep up a veneer of fairness. I wasn't convinced but we all stuck to the family script, as best we could, of trudging ignorantly along until I reached adulthood. It then became apparent to me that whatever transactional relationship my adoptive parents had signed up for had been dispensed. For them, clearly parenthood (at least of the adoptive variety) was not an unconditional, unbreakable bond. Parenting me was something they had unwittingly gotten themselves into and a burden they were keen to rid themselves of. I didn't get a forever family. I didn't even get an ever family. I therefore find myself repeatedly in the opening Christmas scenario, despondently clinging to this dysfunctional, socially engineered family, because it's all I've got. A duty-bound one-way street. To add to the various injuries my adopted father (my adoptive mother is now dead) has advised me that I have no stake or say in his estate. This has been reserved for his and my stepmother's 'legitimate' children. I am left to endure the resultant torment alone, pouring out my sorrow to paid help (psych) at \$250 an hour. The State, which has played

such a critical role in all of this, has nothing to offer in the way of financial or other assistance. I think this is a terrible and unfair travesty that I am forced to endure alone.

The problem with past adoption practices is the perpetuation of the myth that the child was abandoned, unwanted or unable to be looked after. This was rarely the case. We now know, since the introduction of benefits, that mothers rarely choose to 'give up' their children. The practice of forced adoption tended to create a 'rescue' complex for adoptive parents - i.e. thinking of themselves as really good people for rescuing this poor abandoned baby. The problem with this, for the 'rescued' being, is that you somehow owe them, and from here it's easy for things to slip into a transactional dynamic. The family becomes contingent, in my case contingent upon holding secrets, compliance and keeping up appearances; and the hovering, veiled threat of 'sending you back to where you came from' whenever you reached the limits of the boundaries you were seeking to define.

I wanted what every child wants – a loving family to simply belong to, and share a lifelong, unbreakable bond with, a family that would support me throughout growing up and then help me raise the next generation. What I got was a poor, State-manufactured version with a use-by date. What my adoptive parents wanted was a baby of their own. What they got through adoption was someone else's. There was a difference in this that I don't think they have been able to effectively reconcile. It's difficult to unpick the ways in which the social experiment of my family failed. There was a roof over my head and dinner on the table. I was cared for, but it felt perfunctory. What was missing, was any sense of delight in my mother's gaze. She never looked upon me with pleasure - her countenance set in thin-lipped, grim disapproval. It's hard to feel lovely and worthy of love when you don't get it mirrored back in the eyes of your mother. I now know from experiences with my own children, of the simple but powerfully emotive act of looking upon each other with recognition, connection and enjoyment.

Due to the haphazard approach to family match-making that was employed in my case, I do not look like my family and, as the odd one out, blamed myself, in a classic, ugly duckling kind of way. I hated my physical embodiment. When I look at photos of me as an infant with my adoptive mother there is a weird lack-of-fit which became more pronounced as I grew. I wanted so much to fit in – to avoid the frequent, cringe-inducing comments pointing out how I did not look anything like my family. I'm tall with an olive complexion so I stooped down and covered up to try make myself short and pasty in the futile hope that I might be looked upon with something other than regret. Keeping up appearances was both a literal and social challenge which I ultimately grew tired of falling short of, and my resultant teen rebellion was worse than most. I sought out 'cult'-like groups in the subconscious quest to find the essence of family I was sorely missing.

It's distressing that I have been asked to carry this all alone, without scrutiny, for most of my life. I just knew there were areas that were off limits. The keeping of secrets does, however, come at an enormous cost. My origins were a mystery that I could never even dare think of let alone seek and explore. I could never allow myself to imagine the people who created me let alone consider having a close and kind mum and dad that matched me – it would be too

devastating to have to continue in what was my then present reality. Plus, I was well trained in the idea of tiptoeing around my parent's feelings and denying my own. The early death of my adoptive mother, whilst sad at the time, did allow me to instigate a search for my people when I was ready to tackle it. I now know my original mother and some of her family (also biologically, my family). I have searched for my original father and his/my family without success. When I finally did get to meet some of my original family, it was a relief to see others who look like me. Whilst generally positive, my reunion experience is not without complexity. Its one thing to have the recognition of I'm a 'swan' but you are then confronted by all the things you have missed out on, having been made to live forever after as an ugly duck. It's an ongoing sadness that I don't know my dad and I would like the State to provide greater support services for search and reunion.

I feel much grief over all of this for myself but even more essentially for my children- which raises the topic of intergenerational and long-term trauma. I have not enjoyed the support or assistance of parents and extended family in raising my children. I have not had anyone to turn to when I have faced difficulties, and given I was dealt the heavy blow of adoption, there are a cascade of difficulties. It pains me that my kids have been cut off from the branches of our family tree. We exist as a weird and tenuous 'graft' onto some other.

There is much ignorance regarding adoption in the community, including amongst those who are participants. Most, including psychologists, do not have any comprehension of what it is like to be adopted. I have had a psychiatrist say to me "*there is no such a thing as a primal wound (the wound suffered by adoptees as a result of being removed from their anticipated mother) and if there is, I'll eat my hat*". From lived experience of possessing such a wound, I hope she likes the taste of straw. To further illustrate what I'm dealing with, my adoptive father, when I eventually tried to explain that it was hard growing up as an adoptee said of me, "*you were a baby what would you remember?*" and of him, "*well we didn't know at the time*" – so essentially bad luck, I refuse to take any responsibility for any of this and you must carry the burden of all this alone. Given my rough start, what I needed was more care, more compassion and more love. What I got was shame and blame.

I would like the State to consider funding proper community education regarding the impacts of adoption, especially for providers of healthcare, psychology and child welfare services.

To be chosen, you had to have been, to use the wonderful euphemism, 'let go' by someone else. By sanctioning the forced removal of me from my mother and father, the State and its social instruments denied me the chance of belonging to a family. I was adopted into a family, but I have never belonged within it. Whilst I now know some of my original family I don't belong there either. The brutal reality is I don't really belong anywhere. Once the bond has been broken you can't just stick it back together. I wasn't rescued, wanted, lucky or any of the other empty ways that adoption has been referred to by people like my adoptive parents. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy, let alone a vulnerable infant.

I can understand that adoption is, on the rare occasion, necessary in the instance catastrophe such as death of one's parents but in my case my mother was not dead, she was simply young and unmarried, which the state and church decided was more problematic. It beggars belief that it was thought that strangers were better equipped to parent me and that I wouldn't notice the switch. I did notice but because it happened so early on, I have difficulty articulating the very real aching sensation at my core. A black hole that's always at the ready to be triggered.

I have suffered from identity and self-esteem issues as a result of firstly being adopted and secondly being adopted into a family who were unable to assist me with these issues. I have been made to live a lie because it suited my adoptive parents' version of events. I feel like adoption has placed many hurdles in the way to living a life to my fullest capacity. I carry a heavy emotional load, and I have to work especially hard at stemming the flow forward to the next generation. I have not been able to have full and productive employment for much of my life and have suffered greatly in bearing and rearing my own children. Simple things such as placing your children in day care so you can maintain your career are hugely problematic for me. I cannot bear anything that feels like abandonment. I have several long-term, interrelated health problems which stem directly from being adopted.

Most adults understand what it is like to go forward after one's first broken heart, when your feelings have been crushed, your hopes dashed and your love unreturned. You move forward, but not as a whole, never with the same openness and trust. I experienced a broken heart on the day I was born and have had to limp along without assistance ever since. The tragedy of this occurring on day 1 is there is no previous 'whole', 'unbroken' self to refer back to.

Consequently, celebrations are never straightforward. Birthdays, for everyone else, a day to rejoice in the day you came into the world, are also an occasion to grieve all that was taken from you because your birth, to an unmarried woman, was not sanctioned by the Church and the State. Your birth was not something to be celebrated but something shameful for which you and your mother were severely punished. Understandably for an adoptee the anniversary of this occasion is highly problematic. Ditto Mother's and Father's Day and, as we started, with funerals.

I go about my life expecting and fearing rejection because that most fundamental of human relationships – mother and child for me was one of total rejection. This is an assumption I came to at the beginning of my life, which has not in any way, been challenged or explained by anyone, so I've stuck to it. It does, however, get in the way of forming relationships, asking for help or applying for anything of benefit. When you've been knocked back by your own mum how can you expect anyone to give you a break?

Given how I have been excluded, and continue to be excluded, by my family, I conclude that from my experience, the adoption process does not work. Given my exclusion from my father's will, it is possible to doubly infer from my adoptive father's perspective that adoption does not work. My recommendation to current policy makers is that every effort

should be made to avoid the requirement for adoption, and it should only be used as a last resort.

The permanence and 'closed' non-disclosure nature of past adoption practices point not to a desire to assist a mother and child in crisis but a desire to reallocate a child and ensure no questions were asked, especially by the child itself. To protect, above all, the recipients. I ask the Committee to consider what it might feel like to know you have a family out there somewhere but are not allowed to know anything about them and are tacitly forbidden from asking. Further, when you do ask questions there many barriers to obtaining information as privacy is considered more important than knowledge or assistance.

If that State Government wants to achieve anything from the feel-good apology it delivered in my presence at Parliament House 10 years ago, it must direct proper funding to assisting with the consequences for adoptees like me. Otherwise, the apology will continue to ring hollow. I understand that many of policies and practices that have adversely impacted lives such as mine are now in the past. Sadly, the suffering is not. I do hope the Parliament of Western Australia will aid those such as me who continue to suffer as a result of past practices.

Writing this submission has been difficult. Dredging up all the sadness I've endured and committing it to paper is not an easy task. There are some areas especially those relating to the impact adoption has had on my role as a mother that have been too excruciating to bear writing about. Due to the highly personal nature of this account, I request my privacy be protected and not published or reported without my consent. My hope is that my account along with others who share the experience of past adoptions will help inform the Enquiry, I am available to be contacted should the Committee require further assistance.

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