



My name is [REDACTED] and I am seventy three years of age. I do not want my name used in any part of this submission that can be seen by anyone reading the submissions. Thank you.

I gave birth to a girl in 1969 at King Edward Memorial Hospital, after spending at least two months at Hillcrest Unmarried Mothers Home in Fremantle.

In what way was the adoption forced?

My Parents, who I was never close to, especially my Father who refused to speak to me at all when it became known that I was pregnant, made it abundantly clear that I would not be keeping my child. My Father made it extremely difficult for me to be at home, so I would spend most of my time in my bedroom. If Mum went away for the day I would go to an Aunt's for the day where I was equally isolated but didn't live in fear of physical harm. No one knew what to say to me. I didn't know what to say to people because being an unmarried mother carried such a huge stigma there was no cutting through or going around its enormity but no one if asked would have been able to explain why it carried so much loaded negativity and shame. You were not fit to be in the presence of those who had not got pregnant and don't think you can come back home and pretend nothing happened your past is never forgotten. The child has to carry this burden as well that society has put upon the mother. I could never have bought here back to the town I lived in as Mum said she would not help me if I did. Mum did help but only so long as I would do what she thought was best. After the child is adopted there is a letter sent to the young mother in case she has changed her mind. Mine did arrive but Mum burnt it.

I spent approximately two months in Hillcrest Unmarried Mothers Home in Fremantle. Many of us were visited by a Social Worker from the Welfare Department, who was always emphatic that my child would never be mine. If I did try to find or see her I would be in a great deal of trouble for disturbing the happiness of a loving family. It would be against the law for me to do so. All of these threats were quite frightening. I'm sure this is where the feeling that I am a criminal comes from. I often feel I have committed the worst crime ever. I've spent a lot of time looking for the crime that would fit the overpowering feelings of so much shame it could bury me. No one can grow or advance in any direction living with this burden. We were all caught up in a program that was only geared to supplying babies to childless parents. We were the carriers only. We were treated as though we had no feelings or sensitivities, they were only found in married people. There was never an offer of counselling, it most likely didn't exist then. Just go away and forget what happened. I've tried to forget to see if it is possible, it's not.

I did take a quantity of drug when I was still at home due to the isolation and ostracism, it all became too much. I only had the household pets to converse with. Thankfully no harm was done to either of us, only leg cramps.

When I did return home after an extensive time recovering I was strongly encouraged

to find work in Perth which I did, working with new born babies and children! After six years of living under a shroud of silence I went to Sydney to visit people I knew and stayed for ten years. I was a far easier existence as no one judged me or looked down their nose at what I had done. Escaping to the East was also a ploy to keep me from family and friends who all seemed to be getting married and having babies. I actually didn't know how I was supposed to behave around other peoples newborns. Did they trust me to be near their child, what was I supposed to say to them, it was all very uncomfortable. Keeping my distance seemed to work best. My sister had two boys but both her and her husband wanted a girl, when my sister got pregnant with her third my mother made me feel very uncomfortable because I was made to feel guilty about the girl I was able to produce but could my sister do the same. She did. For most of her pregnancy I stayed in Perth on my days off and did not go home. I was not invited to any family function from family or extended family and that still stands today fifty four years on

My stay at Hillcrest wasn't the worst place to be. We where all allotted house hold chores which we carried out in the morning and had the afternoon to ourselves. The Salvation Army people who ran the home lived above on the second floor and where reasonably good to us. There was no harsh treatment of anyone. To them it was a money making business and supplying a demand. One of the staff visited me in KEM, the only person who did. The girls who had chores in the kitchen and in the laundry where treated very harshly by their overseer, as if they had the right to dish it out.

After my child was born I spent I some weeks in KEM. There was only two nurses who treated me with any compassion and kindness. Unfortunately they headed back to Sydney after they graduated. The regular and permanent staff went out of their way to be unhelpful and downright nasty for the duration of my stay. I became quite ill from Septicaemia and for about four days I was very well looked after by a untrained nurse who was very kind.

I've spent many years shut down and shut out. Late last year I discovered that I have ADHA. This is a very good isolator. Because of it I am judged as being a bit odd, amongst other things. I spend a lot of time on solitary pursuits to reduce the attracting negative attention. Some people believe it is their right to find fault in others and point it out to them. I've tried very hard to find a niche for myself over the years, most I have failed at due mostly to the ADHD, lack of confidence and self belief. I have always lacked support due to my mental health conditions, so feel I can only find support if I go to a professional. I have also been diagnosed with PTSD and anxiety. I was in treatment for two years to address the PTSD. Fortunately I am able to get lost in many Art project and just creativity in general and I love exercising and sport.

In nineteen seventy seven I had what I call a breakdown at my place of work. I was advised to to seek the help of a Psychiatrist who attended patience at the clinic where

I worked. I would attend one hour meetings each fortnight and cry for the entire time. He never offered any input at all. I eventually cancelled and he and his secretary where quite menacing when I told them. They said I would never recover without his intervention. It was costing me \$80.00 an hour in 1977. A lot of money.

I have in also sort the assistance of at least sixteen separate Mental Health Workers. Only one of these people where of any help to me. She was the Psychologist who treated me for PTSD. I had been told by many Doctors that I probably did have this problem but they never addressed it or refereed me to anyone. This lady had worked in the prison system and had encountered many patients with it before. She was a great help to me.

I tried group therapy at Centercare in Bunbury where I was verbally attacked by one of the facilitators. I have been verbally abused by one other Psychologist in Sydney.

Once we where considered okay to go home from Hillcrest after the birth, there was no health checks carried out or even offered. Not long after the birth I began to experience severe lower back pain. After several years resulted in me needing major surgery to put right a Retroverted Uterus. This was severe enough to stop me walking before the operation. I've always put this episode down to medical neglect on the part of medical staff who where supposed to look after our Health and Welfare.

I did find my daughter when she was nineteen and I was thirty nine. We had both been looking at the same time. Our relationship was always conducted on her and her husbands terms. I did give her many opportunities to ask about why I had done what I did. She did ask a few things but mostly it didn't interest her. Her husbands name for me was 'loser.' After twenty years of marriage she had had enough and left to pursue a more exciting single life.

[REDACTED]

AT Hillcrest the Social Worker was giving her spiel about loving couples giving our babies good homes something that we could not provide. Well in the case of my child this was not true. I cant write about it here, Its not my story to tell but the promise of a good home was not a reality.

What I want from this enquiry.

Apologies are no more than wasted words. I apologise to people if I bump into them in the Supermarket! The perpetrators of the negative treatment that was dished out to us all are most likely not here any more and they are the one who owe us the apology.

Anyone dealing with it now will be younger and therefore have very little perception of how hideous the Forced Adoption racket was. Times were very different then to what we have now and how we like to treat people. They probably mean well but from my experience they just don't get it, they can't get it, it was all so long ago and no one wants to really look back at how dreadfully some extremely vulnerable people were dealt with, from top Politicians to the cook at the unmarried mothers home. .

What I would like from this enquiry is to be reimbursed the money I spent at Hillcrest on my board and lodgings the money I spent on a stomach operation and all the dollars I wasted on many hours on so called therapy that fixed nothing.