Senate inquiry into

"Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices."

I Josephine Yeats am a citizen of The Commonwealth of Australia resident in New South Wales.

As a citizen of The Commonwealth of Australia I have an inalienable right to protection under the Australian Constitution and the Common Law of this country.

As an Australian citizen, the Commonwealth affords me protection from the unlawful and harmful actions that threaten my right to life, liberty and justice from those who would deny me these rights, within and without, the borders of Australia.

Adoption, whether forced on the biological mother either by the social mores of the time, or to appease a religious belief, or willingly entered into, always has one party who has absolutely no choice or voice to protest - that is the child. The child, once born, becomes a commodity to be handed over to strangers, who have no further monitoring or accountability.

I am an adopted person, born in 1953. I have no birth stories to create a sense of being loved and wanted, as my friends did at school. I could only say that my mother gave me away, to which would inevitably come the reply - "She loved you so much that she gave you away". This was incredibly confusing for a young child who was being brought up by someone, who I now know to be a psychopath. My adoptive mother's cruelty and lack of love was obvious to me, even at that young age. All I knew was that one gave me away because she loved me and the next mother did not love me at all and took pleasure in humiliating me, ensuring that I developed no self- esteem. To be brought up by a psychopath and survive means to hide everything that is treasured, inside and live behind a mask. Once my mother knew that something was important to me she would either ridicule it, destroy it or take possession of whatever it was whether it was a person, an idea or a place. I learned at an early age to keep friends, my likes and dislikes out of her knowledge

pool. The scars of my childhood and life beyond are deep and still weeping. She has had a profound effect on my marriage and for me to bear children was the ultimate insult to her and she did all that was possible to intervene and ridicule my mothering and take control. I had no “home” or place of refuge; it was just a matter of trying to survive; a psychopath does not let go either, that would spoil the fun.

My adoptive mother was able to access the adoption system due to her father's status and his ties with the judiciary and men of influence at that time. Had she undergone a psychological screening process, it is extremely unlikely that she would have been given a dog, let alone two motherless children in need of nurturing and understanding.

My birth was not a joyous occasion, no celebration, no loving embrace by an emotional mother gazing at her baby with hope and expectation of many precious moments to come. No kisses or whispered endearments, because I would have been whisked away before my mother saw me. Having read the social workers notes there may even have been a sense of relief that it was all over along with a fervent wish to return life to the way it was before.

These things I will never know for sure, as my mother and half-sister both died before I was able to locate them. As for my father, his name and history will remain a secret forever because there was no requirement in place to identify the father. At the time, it was intended that I would never have access to any of the information anyway, so there was no need to obtain too many details. I now possess a letter written by my birthmother requesting that I be placed in an asylum or adopted out as she was a widow who already had a child to support and was not entitled to any form of welfare as she had not resided in the country for the required 5yrs. At the end of the war the Australian government employed her as an interpreter in the German refugee camp, where she was housed before coming to Australia. She was employed by A.S.I.O. at the time of my birth but neither jobs entitled her to any help. So it could be said that her part in the adoption process was forced upon her. I will never know.

I was given a name by my adopted parents and was then legally bound to use that name and pretend to be the offspring of people whose national background did not resemble mine in any way. I was forced to lie about who I was and pretend that I belonged in that family.
I was given enough information about my background to let me know that I did not belong

in a family whose roots were in Great Britain. My adoption was used by my adopted mother to bolster her position as a beneficent being whilst my background and its unknown nature became a subject of suspicion and gossip. The nature versus nurture speculation was aired freely within my hearing. I was driven past the Children's Homes and told that I could have ended up in one of those had my adopted mother not been so good as to rescue me. After the trauma of abandonment at birth I then suffered continual psychological abuse into adulthood. Her hold over me was quite extraordinary. Two needy children were perfect prey for such a person.

I was sexually abused by an older adopted brother whose psychological damage led to behaviour, which ultimately led to his death when I was 14. At the age of 16, my mother removed me from school as it was time that I started to contribute to the family. My father then physically escaped the situation that had made him retreat mentally many years before. I was not allowed any involvement in his funeral or the sorting of his things – no chance to even hold something of him as some sort of legacy. My father's adult step son announced in his eulogy that my father had no children of his own, my use was over and my legal status as his daughter were once more questioned as they had been many times before. It was then that the familiar feeling of being used as a commodity until no longer needed really struck home. Legal papers mean nothing; they are only convenient for the parents and do nothing for the child.

If this was a day or an episode in my life then documenting it would be easier but there is a lifetime of abuse to tell; my adoptive mother's hold on me was only broken when I turned 50 yrs. old and suffered a complete breakdown. Her grasp has not left any of my family untouched in some way. My hospitalisation, medication, E.C.T. and psychotherapy treatment allowed me the space to break my ties with that most evil person. The details of my story are too long and complex to include in this submission. I continue to be treated for Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and feel the effects of my adoption every day.