

***Senate Inquiry into
“Commonwealth contribution to
former forced adoption policies and
practices.”***

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Preamble to Submission

I Gabrielle Ann McGuire am a citizen of the Commonwealth of
Australia resident in NSW

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

Senate of Australia Parliamentary Inquiry

“Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices.”

Terms of Reference

That the following matters be referred to the Community
Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report

by 30 April 2011:

- (a) the role, if any, of the Commonwealth Government, its policies and practices in contributing to forced adoptions; and
- (b) the potential role of the Commonwealth in developing a national framework to assist states and territories to address the consequences for the mothers, their families and children who were subject to forced adoption policies

On January (...) 1977, I gave birth to a baby girl, I named (...) (...) Five days later I sign a consent order for her adoption at Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Being brought up in Catholic family where incest was an unspoken norm and dominance of females was also "normal", I have had little concept of my rights as a woman in Australian society.

When I was 13-14 my eldest brother brought his mates around to our home and told me to take my pants off, he then let his mates put their fingers inside me and he watched on. Later at 15-17 my father would come into the shower room whilst I was having a shower, the curtain was very see thru, I hated this and just stood frozen until he finished shaving and left.

At eighteen, coming home one evening for my TAFE studies at Ultimo, I was raped by a police officer. (I later discovered he was actually a Rail way police).

Weeks later upon discovering I was pregnant at a Pregnancy help centre, I was counselled by some very nice and kind ladies, who suggested the best option for me and the baby would be adoption, my family need not know and the baby would go to a wonderful loving family. One of the ladies said she had been in the same position, and adopted out her baby, and she was fine and getting on with her life, and the baby went to a wonderful family. She was very nice and refined and looked lovely, so I had no reason to believe otherwise, that maybe there was any damage to her in the long term, or the baby.

This consultation lasted over two hours, and during this time the ladies said that the hardest option would be adoption, but if I was brave enough and loved my baby I would give her the best opportunity in life, they both made me feel very good about myself that I was not being selfish and keeping my baby as some mothers do, and we all know how badly single mothers live and the children grow up delinquent. They made me feel very special if I carried this through, and my family did not need to go through any unnessecary pain and trouble, I could just go on a holiday interstate and return back to normal to my studies and one day get married and have a family of my own.

In a state of shock from the news of my pregnancy I returned to my flat where I was living, I continued my studies for a few more weeks. Finally when I felt I would burst I went home to my mother and told her I was pregnant, The look of disgust and horror on her face and her comments of my being a whore are still implanted on my mind and the feelings of shame implanted on my heart.

Later that evening with long discussin with my father as well, it ws agreed to make an appointment for me to see a social worker at the Mater hospital in North Sydney. The next day an interveiw was arranged, with a social worker. I was interveiwed alone first. She was a very nice and friendly young lady, very caring about my predicament and not at all condemning. She discussed various options

1. keeping the baby- she explained to me that this is a very selfish option and not in the best interest of the baby, and if I did not like the father I would probably resent the baby, my mother had also said this the night before. She (the social worker) explained

how financially difficult it would be to look after the baby, I would not be able to work, and then not finish my studies so would never have a good enough job to raise her. It would be very hard later on to get a husband as no man wants someone else's baby, so would never really be able to become a family, which a child needs. I also needed to understand how the rest of my family would feel and bring shame to them, and have to tell every body how I got pregnant who the father was, and since I was unable to tell the social worker nor my mother, I would really struggle having to tell this story for the rest of my life.

2. the second option was adoption,,she also said it was the hardest but bravest option and if I truly loved my baby I would give her up. The families are well selected, have good stable family life, good jobs, and I could even choose my own religion for the baby, so she would be brought up right. She discussed how even though I had done wrong I could now make amends and not make another bad decision(keeping the baby), give the baby a wonderful chance and not shame my family.

We then discussed the logistics, I could go to Brisbane , pretend I am on an great adventure , come back finish my studies and again one day get married and have a real family of my own;

My parents were then invited in to the room, they were then told of my decision , the look on my parents face of relief ,confirmed that I had made the right decision.

To this day this issue has never ever been discussed again with my mother.

This nice social worker then arranged everything for me, and when I arrived in Brisbane I had contacts of social workers who would be understanding of my story and continue to help me, I spent the rest of my pregnancy in Brisbane with regular visits to these social workers, based out of the Royal Brisbane hospital. The whole time , the interest of the baby was more important than mine, she would be better off, I would be selfish to keep her continued.

There was never ever any discussion of any financial support of any kind, no mention of foster care, no mention of seeking child maintenance from the father.

I was never ever warned of any life long implication and emotional risk of dire regret, in fact I was constantly told that when the baby turns 15 I could have her back.

Treatment during pregnancy by Royal women's hospital

I received regular prenatal care, though when examined by doctors, one particular doctor, would force her hand up inside me for examination causing me to scream in pain, the more I screamed the more she pushed.

During clinic visits other mothers went to physio classes and prenatal classes, exercises for after the birth, and learning all about labour and breathing exercises, I never went to any of these, even though I saw other women attend them.

Labour

During the 15 hour labour, I was left alone in the labour ward alone all this time, except for hourly check ups, until the last hour when things became really heavy. on many occasions I was screaming out for help but just ignored, the nurses visited, check the baby and then left immediately after the birth my baby was taken, I did not see her, my legs were in stirrups and eventually a doctor came in and started fiddling around, I eventually asked him what he was doing, he said he was stitching me up, he said I needed 20 stitches.

During labour with my 3 subsequent children, my midwife said that I had a very big scare and this would affect birth. All three of these births were excruciating and a tore very badly.

On the fifth day the dept. came in to get my consent, I had been told by my nice friendly social worker that I could see my baby immediately after signing and then all the pain would go and I would feel better, and anyway I had 30 days to change my mind

At birth the baby was taken from me, I did not see nor know her sex.

A few days later , I happened to be reading my chart at the end of the bed and discovered her sex, this seemed to trigger some reactions and cause pain, I was told that after I sign the adoption orders I could see my baby and all the pain would go away. Eventually on the fifth day two official people came to get my signature, the pain and grief and torment was unbearable, but I had been told I had 30 days to change my mind and after I signed I could see my baby, so I signed to relieve the pressure.

The next day all my emotions broke free and I became quite distressed and begged to see my baby and change my mind.

The nurse came in and said it was too late, she had already gone to a wonderful family. Nothing could stop my crying, eventually she allowed me to go to the nursery and view my baby for a few minutes

Later I rang my mother in total distress, she came up to visit for the day, I asked her would she like to see my baby she refused, and just talked social chit chat, it was as if the pregnancy and baby never happened.

I was discharged from hospital after 2 weeks due to internal infections, my nice friendly social worker arranged for me to stay in a nice family home for a few weeks so I could settle, she suggested going on a nice holiday to forget about things before going home.

Going home

I returned home resumed my studies and nothing was said

I counted the days till she turned 15. I was told when she was 15 I could get her back. I remember when she was 7 1/2 , I was now half way there to getting her back, I had survived this long and now on the down hill run. I was just recently pregnant with my son, conceived in marriage and all proper. The excitement of having a baby and being past half way gave me another burst of stamina. Though just after his birth was the first time I made contact with adoption search groups and started talking about the subject, but only to those who were experienced in the area, I made contact with jigsaw, and they said , having another baby would bring up many of the issues of the past and it could be a tough time for a while, but things would settle.

My (adopted)daughter was born on the day of the (...) (...) and living in the Blue mountains I was reminded of her anniversary every year, so I grieved too.

On one occasion I was with my father on her birthday, I said it is (...) birthday today, he just agreed and said no more

I, was never given any support or advice or information to assist to to keep my baby, all advice , assistance and information was geared towards adoption, and particularly how wonderful adoption was.

I was never told of any mental health or psychological damage or harm that would have on myself or my child

The effects of adoption on the rest of my life

When my daughter turned 15, I started to search for her, only to find that I was lied to, “they “ had no intention of giving her back at 15, she was gone for good. I had heard you could get a private investigator to search for her it would cost \$1500, not being flash with money I asked my father, as he had just sold a section of his farm. He refused and was most hostile to the idea.

I discovered that at 18 I could legally get identifying information. Only 3 years to wait , I have waited this long, so again counted the days, got on with life, functioned to an acceptable level. I had left my abusive husband some years earlier.

Reunion

She was finally turning 18 , it was finally happening, I contacted the dept in Qld, they

released her details and I made contact, all within a few short weeks.

We met 12 months later, I felt a lot of resistance by her adoptive parents, but I guess that is to be expected.

Our first reunion when my taken daughter met us all, a very emotional day

During this tumultuous time, I searched for support and contacted a number of support organisations, all with varying views on adoption. But with research I started to discover that all was not what it seemed. The more I delved and researched the more I discovered that I had been misled and lied to and eventually discovered that my daughter's adoption was illegal.

I told my daughter of this, her reaction was severe, she became hysterical and started crying and screaming. Eventually the adoptive parents got on the phone and were not too friendly, contact with my daughter diminished drastically after this, till eventually it stopped.

During this time my children were most excited to meet their sister and had a wonderful day together. My own family was not at all pleased, I was so shocked by their reaction, I was so happy and excited that after all these years I had finally found my daughter, and they did not want to know about it.

They did not want to believe me when I said my adoption was illegal, they could not possibly believe this, and then treated me as if I was deranged or crazy.

They started to talk behind my back, and eventually started to convince my other children that I was crazy.

(...) **and** (...) **just weeks before the family court case and our lives destroyed**

Research and book writing

To cope with all these issues and emotions and decided to write my thoughts. This was very helpful though distressing to bring up all the past. When I finished this, I felt I had enough for a book, so set out to put all this into a book form. It took 2 years to write the book.

During this time I got into a relationship with (...) His ex wife also had a child taken for adoption, so was aware of the grief and processes involved, he had been with her when she searched and met her daughter. Not long after getting engaged to (...) , I became pregnant, such a shock after going through menopause for a few years.

It was a hectic time, writing, establishing a new relationship, and dealing with all the upheaval of reunion, pregnant after my other children were just growing up and getting on their own feet.

This was taken just after the court case the the kids taken, I was happy to see (...) and (...) again, they couldn;t even manage a smile.

Family Court

And then the real war began, my ex husband decided to go for custody of my older children. I was so torn, which children do I fight for, finish my book, prepare for the baby, or fight a custody battle.

My ex had taken me to court in the past for custody, and was thrown out very quickly, he had tried other tricks to get back at me for leaving him, but I was always able to withstand his attacks. So I decided to continue with all 3, my kids said they wanted to live with me, so I thought this would be simple, I thought he was just trying to sabotage

my book, and jealous of my new relationship and pregnancy.

My youngest 3 , we visited (...) (...) a good friend of ours

I fought the court case as best I could, believing he had no grounds for custody, and anyway the children were old enough to choose , and they had said they wanted to live with me. I believed I was a good mother and always put my kids first.

I was not expecting the court to bring the adoption issue up. Constantly asked questions about my daughter's adoption. About me saying her adoption was illegal, and who stole her, "Are you saying the Queensland Govt stole your baby" ha ha,

The court suggested mental health issues, and when asked "Was I seeking counselling" I said, "There really wasn't any appropriate counselling available, especially, since the social workers were insisting adoption was all above board."

The family Court took my 2 children against their will, forced them to live with their father even after my daughter had said he had been interfering with her, and running away from him many times. The timing looks suspicious, two days later my book was published "you only have one mother". I was also 6 months pregnant with my youngest.

My ex husband denied my access rights, disconnected phone access, and constantly told my children I was crazy and a liar.

Contact faded and became less and less, until it was no existent. I was 10 years before they got mobile phone and older. I had very little contact with them at all during those years.

A rare visit to my farm, (...) and (...) with their young sister swimming in the dam, I really did photo every moment together as they were so rare

During the court case I mentioned my ex husband's abuse (which is why I left him 8 years earlier), but if I was lying about my boy being stolen, I was probably lying about everything

Last smiling photo of (...) just prior to court case starting

Because the Family court forcibly removed my children, saying "We don't take children from their mothers unless she has done something seriously wrong", this left my extended family and friends and clients, believing I had done something terrible to my children, nothing was said, people just turned away.

At family functions I was shunned, I had to leave town, and my business, teaching kids to swim, died, how can I be trusted to teach kids to swim if my own children were forcibly removed.

Living with being shunned by family and friends was terrible, but what was a thousand times worse was having my children being forced to live with their father against their will.

photo now show (...) very sad

What started the court case was my daughter coming home from access one weekend saying she did not like the way her father was touching her, she told me he would run his hands in between her thighs whilst sitting in the car. I immediately stopped access visits. I did not discuss this further with the children as I needed to know if she was just making it up or there was truth in this

I left my ex husband when the children were 5 and 3, and brought them up on my own for 8 years I left him because of his abuse, physical, mental psychological and sexual,

he believed he could have sex on demand.

Knowing my children were now being forced to live with this bully of a man, broke my heart and soul, this was all too much.

I had been warned by other mothers who had their children taken that if I pushed they would silence me, I said they cannot silence me, what can they do, I had heard on a number of occasions that they could take my others kids. “they can 't take my kids , I have done nothing wrong” After the children were taken, I went into a severe state of shock for about 5 years, only then started to come out.

A recent photo of my taken daughter

(...) **the day her sister was born, she ran away from her father again this week and never went back until ordered by the courts 9 months later**

These 10 tragic years I focused on bringing up my youngest as best as possible, hoping one day the truth with out..

I moved to the country, told my middle children , who were suffering from the court battles, that if they wanted to see me, to come out to the farm to visit. The Family court had said I was controlling and manipulating them, so I left it up to them to contact me. Their father then disconnected the long distance phone calls, without telling them, they could no longer get in contact and thought I had deserted them.

I spent the next 10 years getting on with life, making a go of self-sufficiency and farming, and when my daughter went to school, I returned to the workforce and went back to surveying, eventually getting back nearly to the level I left, working in the mines and on construction. After a number of years, I got a job with council, as council surveyor, a great little job. 5 minutes drive, great flexible hours, mostly office work. I was enjoying this, getting ahead financially, and mastering the art of coping.

One day I got a phone call from my uncle telling me my daughter is ready to make contact again, she was married and living in Sydney, my God what a emotional roller coaster ride that was. I had accepted that I would never see her again.

My middle daughter too started making contact, though very up and down, loving one minute, then hostile the next saying I was “crazy” and “poor dad “had suffered so much because of me, and how wonderful he was.

My son too had nice moments, but very distant, and said I was “crazy and a liar”. He said “but mum you always lose the court cases” I went back to court numerous times to get the truth exposed but to no avail.

A rare moment with my son at my brother's wedding

My son has very little contact with his youngest sister, he was very angry that she got to stay and he had to live with his father, he does not want to meet his eldest sister again, My middle daughter has met her sister and has had some warm moments, she can be very nasty to her youngest sister, and tells her I am a bad mother and she feels sorry for her.

My grand daughter

My grand son

My grand daughter

My youngest daughter has been brought up alone without any siblings, cousins are told I am bad, so they avoid us, she doesn't really see any relatives at all. She is developing a good relationship with her "taken" sister, though the age difference is 22 years, more like her aunt, she is developing a good bond with her "taken" sister's children, close to her age

My middle daughter (...) 22nd birthday, her taken sister came to meet up with her.

My "taken" daughter, has serious issues with attachment and bonding, especially with her own 2 children, and work. She has a science degree and a very good job.

I am starting to develop a relationship with her, though it is also when she wants, and only a few times a year, her husband, sabotages many of our attempts to get together, her adoptive female parent also pushes in first, especially for birthdays and Christmas. On our first reunion after 12 year break, the topic of labour and pregnancy came up, I said my son's labour was 2 hours, she replied by saying that is a very short labour for your first, I was stunned and said "second", she didn't seem to hear me, she sees me as her older sister.

(...) **meeting her niece and nephew (my grandchildren) for the first time**

My three daughters together for the first time

My grandchildren, love to see my youngest daughter, they know I am their grandmother, but still call me by my first name, this really hurts..

My relationship with my son is very distant at the moment, and yet we were so close for so long, I hope that one day all the lies are exposed and he feels free to reconnect.

My relationship with my middle daughter is very strained and currently she wants nothing to do with me. This works well for my extended family as it reinforces what they believe, that I am crazy and adoption really was the best thing for my daughter.

Last weekend I visited my "taken" daughter and family, the first time she has invited me to her home, upon leaving my grandson started crying and would not cuddle goodbye, when asked he said he did not want me to leave.

The relationship I have with her is so fragile and I am scared at any moment she could run away, and close contact, yet we have moments of sheer heaven when we are as one and as if there has been no time gap

After contact with her, I struggle to focus for many weeks, emotional rollercoaster, ecstasy, to grief and loss, up and down, wondering if I said anything to upset her, wondering she will want to see me again, waiting months to hear from her again.

I would love to have a relationship with my daughter like any other mother, and not have all these obstacles in our path, the biggest obstacle being the needs of the adoptive parents and the adoptee being "grateful" to them.

WHAT I WOULD LIKE THIS INQUIRY TO DO

acknowledge the truth so that it is common knowledge

1. .Make all social workers and councillors and doctors know the truth. I have

been to various councillors over the years, to try and talk through some of my issues, but I have not found one that seems to have any idea that what I am saying is true, so I have to educate them, and this takes weeks, and then my needs are not met.

2. Educate school teachers and all learning institutions
3. educate the courts in particular the family court
4. educate the media- so they stop running these “wonderful adoption” stories
5. educate the media that adoption and surrogacy is not a cure for infertility
6. educate young vulnerable women that giving their baby up is not in the babies interest, that they wont go to a better home, and that they need help to learn to be a good mother.
7. Educate all the churches and religious organisations.
8. Educate adoptive parents that these are not their children and that giving them back would help them
9. Educate adoptees that going home is the best thing they can do
10. if the aborigines benefit from finding their roots so should non aborigines
11. tell my extended family that I am telling the truth
12. tell my children that I am not crazy and a liar
13. reopen my family court case and clear my name that I am not a child abuser
14. explain clearly why there should be any adoption at all and why cannot guardianship be adequate to protect children.
15. Consider removing adoption as an option, in the construction industry, if a procedure caused so much death and destruction it would be banned well before 300,000 people had to suffer
16. by having adoption as an option you open the door to not only illegal adoptions but also trafficking
17. 'explain in clear language how it is possible for a mother to be in the right frame of mind to understand the long term implications of adoption
18. if you must have adoption why not adopt the mother and not the child
19. bring in a law that prevents people from interfering with adoption reunions
make the punishment hours of community service- and police it
20. consider what is needed for this to never ever happen again
21. understand the generational damage done, until these children are returned home, children of adoptees suffer many as well.

Where to send you submission

<http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/inquiries/index.htm>

or

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