

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia resident in  
Queensland

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

I was 15 years old and the youngest of 6 children of Invalid Pensioner parents who  
were mortgage holders, pillars of society, practicing Christians who loved us all and  
each other. My father had developed a life-threatening Aneurysm in his Aorta, which  
had made exertion dangerous. I believe this weighed heavily on the decision to agree to  
make my son available for adoption. They struggled to make ends meet on the pension,  
and were led to believe that there was no extra financial assistance available to them or  
me, should I wish to keep me my son.

My eldest brother was married with 2 small children, and ditto my sister. The next eldest  
was married with two daughters (though one can also be referred to as a stolen child),  
the other two brothers were engaged to be married. I was baby-sitter to the children  
most weekends and for my sister's children through the week while she worked.

My sex education from my parents basically consisted of "don't go jumping into the back  
seats of cars with boys". On the other hand, my mother talked of marriage and babies,  
as my anticipated future. In my family the rule was girls not to marry before they turned  
19 and boys 21...well, that's what I was told was a part of the reason I couldn't keep my  
baby...it was against the rules...

On the other hand, I was being bombarded with Make love not war, Woodstock, the Age

of Aquarius, Free Love....songs of romance and everlasting love....all these suggestive messages beamed out across the world...the irony of which is that the operators of these media outlets were the same generation who vilified unwed mothers....and stole their children.

In the early days of my relationship with my baby's father, I didn't know anything about reproduction or menstruation. My boyfriend was a virgin from a Christian family, and we learned things by hearing what our friends were saying. He came to my brother's house sometimes when I was baby-sitting.....

As time went by, menstruation commenced and hormone levels started to affect us....our relationship eventually went to the next level of intimacy. In hindsight, I know I became "clucky" while babysitting my nephews & nieces, as did my boyfriend to a certain degree. Neither one of us really understood the reproductive process and didn't anticipate pregnancy though I had heard that if I missed a period "it was a sign". I also learned that it wasn't unusual to miss a cycle in the early days of menstruation, so I didn't really start to worry until the second trimester.

My boyfriend was an only child and dreamed of a big family, we were surrounded with my siblings, their wives, girlfriends, children.....all these young couples "living the dream" as we saw it, and in our immature minds we didn't see the difference between them and us....my brother( the second youngest) was engaged and he was only five years older than me and I believed that I was capable of caring for a child since I was doing it 7 days a week and loving it. I hated it when they went home, and because my family trusted me with there children I guess I thought they would welcome my baby the same as they'd welcomed the others.

I hid my pregnancy until I was 20 weeks or so, as something my mother had said started to make me feel that they might not be as willing to accept the news as I thought. She had made a comment about another girl who it was rumoured was pregnant.

I had heard the phrase "getting rid of it" and though I didn't know what this meant, I didn't like the images that it conjured up. In hindsight I know my parents wouldn't have considered abortion, but I didn't even know what the word meant at the time, or that it had anything to do with "getting rid of it".

I had applied for a job at the Post Master General's Dept as a Telephonist and my pregnancy was confirmed and announced to my mother during the Medical Examination I was required to have for the job. The Medical Officer advised my mother to take me to

Crown Street Women's Hospital, a "Teaching Hospital" where they provided assistance in these situations. The connotation of "Teaching Hospital" in this conversation was the fact that there would be Professors and Specialists to provide the best of care.....the part about me being a Lab-Rat for the students to practice on, wasn't mentioned.

I was presented to the Almoner who, after the admission to Out-Patients had been completed, led me to the waiting area whilst advising me to leave my dignity and modesty at the door as it was no longer required. I was then taken to a cubicle, told to undress and put on a gown that was open at the back and tied at the nape. This was an assault on my modesty and I felt most embarrassed.

I was examined by a Doctor who I remember vividly had a bad case of dandruff or perhaps Psoriasis and he was covered in skin flakes, all through his hair, on his shoulders, in his eyebrows and even along the top of his horn-rimmed glasses....they fell onto my bare skin when he leaned forward....I see him in my night-mares....I wasn't spoken to other than to be given instructions and the internal examination was a traumatic experience as no-one had told me what to expect.

In the meantime, my mother was being brainwashed by the Almoner about how wonderful it would be if I gave the baby to a poor unfortunate infertile couple who would give it everything we couldn't. My mother fell for it hook, line and sinker, being the Christian woman she was, she saw such a noble act as a worthy sacrifice to those less fortunate than she, a mother of six. It was agreed my baby would be adopted then they both set about to convince me that it was the right thing to do. It was harped on throughout my pregnancy and it eventually became clear to me that I was not being given a choice. My mother followed the Almoner's instructions to the letter....she being an expert and Mum being a novice. When my mother questioned anything, the Almoner convinced her that she knew best.

On several subsequent visits the examinations and degradation got worse. I was told to lay on the examination table, my legs were strung in the air, spread-eagled and tied into linen stirrups, a cold metal instrument used to expand my vagina was inserted and I was left like that for several minutes, after which the Dr and up to a dozen medical students (in their early 20's) entered the examination room. Each had a turn at looking inside me, they palpated my stomach and observed the change in the Areola....they might as well have finished the job and all had sex with me, I wouldn't have felt any more raped.....any more humiliated....any more devalued.....This happened nearly every visit after that. I was not spoken to other than to receive instructions and was treated by all and sundry as nothing more than a lab-rat. A three dimensional white board...

Remember, I was a scared, timid, powerless 15 years old. I was 16 when my baby was born.

At one antenatal visit I was informed that I was to go back to my home town with Mum and pack my belongings as I was to be put to work in the home of a solicitor and his family. A completely alien environment. I worked myself up so much that I had an emotional breakdown and my brother and sister-in-law came and took me back to live with them. I stayed with them until I was 38 weeks and then had to go to Lady Wakehurst to await the birth. Whilst at my brother's house I was allowed to see my boyfriend who always came bearing gifts of necessities for my hospital stay. We told my brother on many occasions that we wanted to keep the baby and get married. My brother and sister-in-law learned that the only way would be to apply to adopt the baby but they were told that it was a waste of time applying since the other applicants were professional middle classed people, and he, a "mere seaman", wouldn't have a hope against them. Every avenue we tried was blocked and it became even more evident that we were going to have our child taken from us.

Basically, the Almoner convinced my parents and family that there wasn't a way for the baby to stay within our extended family....we apparently didn't measure up to these childless couples....

On admission at Lady Wakehurst, described at the time as an annex of Crown Street Women's Hospital, I was anxious and depressed by the cold, distant attitudes of the staff and the regimental environment where we were required to work as unpaid labourers in turn for tasteless, unappetizing meals and a dormitory bed. I received no kindness or counselling in anything other than the reasons I wasn't fit to be a mother and why losing my baby would be a stern lesson to me on the wages of sin.

I was very lonely and afraid and took a while to make friends with the other "inmates". They were my "rocks"....I don't know how I could have got through it without their love and support. The physical labour was hard work on us all, especially when you're so close to full term, as I was....I am only a small person and was most uncomfortable in the last weeks, but apparently that didn't matter. I was given a cocktail of different drugs, though at time of writing, I can't say exactly what they were as I haven't received my medical records. I believe they included barbiturates and opiates as well as medication to dry up my breast milk. Until I see my records I am not sure when these drugs were administered to me, but I believe it was during and after pregnancy.

On the        of September, 1969, in the early afternoon, my waters broke. I was transported to Crown Street Women's Hospital, where I was admitted, shaved, given

an enema & a bed pan, and left in a small room. I was then told to shower and given a hospital gown to put on. Labour commenced, I was shown to a bed in a dimly lit room where I continued to labour for the next 36 hours with very little attention....I believe I was given pethidine during this time....I was given an epidural and my baby was born on the September, 1969 by forceps delivery....I also received an Episiotomy which left me with damage and life-long problems of discomfort and incontinence. I have learned that these Episiotomys were not even necessary in many cases but were performed as a demonstration to students...I don't know if that is the case with me.

My baby was whisked away as soon as he was born, I didn't see him...

I was made to get out of the bed within a very short space of time, I stood...and collapsed...the next I know I'm in an ambulance on my way back to Lady Wakehurst...

My recovery was slow as the Episiotomy wound wouldn't heal. I was made to take salt baths and lay spread-legged and naked with an Ultra-violet ray lamp pointed at the wound....it was excruciatingly humiliating....as was the whole ordeal.

I was told that after I signed the papers I might be allowed to see my son... When the day came that I was finally allowed to go home, my mother and sister-in-law came to get me....they told me they had a surprise for me....they took me to the Tressillion Home to see my 3 week old son....I'm not sure it was the best thing to do, I had to give him up yet again....

I was instructed to say goodbye to him and prepare to start a new life....

I went back home and went through the motions but there were so many reminders, everywhere I looked...

I took the job at the PMG, moved to Sydney where I lived and worked for 2 years. I then transferred back to my home town but only lasted a few months and left town again. I have tried to live there on and off over the years and have spent the past 22 years in QLD. My family are all still in NSW...

My 1st husband was a biker...I gravitated toward the lower echelons of society because I believed that I was a bad person and had no right to attach myself to "good people"...he went to jail for 2 years for his part in a rape....I moved on....

I went through a period of drug addiction, and it's interesting to note that in the beginning of my drug taking, my drugs of choice were the very same drugs that I

have learned were given to the girls at Lady Wakehurst. I met my 2nd husband who introduced me to Heroin....he was a violent, controlling man who kept me under control by continually threatening the lives of my mother and father....after several years of this, my cousin pulled me aside and told me that he was hitting me up with Heroin before I awoke....I so wanted to get straight and convinced him to at least come and enroll in a Methadone Reduction program....we were prescribed Methadone, had to attend St George Hospital daily, I got off the Heroin, he didn't....my father told me to come home and not to be afraid of him, that he and my brothers would take care of him if he came snooping around. The next thing I know, he'd been arrested for robbery and breach of parole and I was free to try to pick up the pieces of my life....

I met my 3rd husband who I've been with for 31 years. We have raised three terrific sons who we are very proud of. I hadn't fallen pregnant after several years, despite the fact that I had only ever taken a contraceptive for one month in my entire life. I was terrified of having children until I met him, so my infertility seemed like a bonus. I went on the IVF program and eventually arrived at the top of the list and commenced the process. Finally after all the tests had been completed I was given a prescription of fertility drugs and instructed to ring them when my next Menstruation cycle commenced...it didn't...within weeks my pregnancy was confirmed....my infertility appears to have been partly Psychological...I gave birth to my second child...a healthy baby boy that I got to keep, I can remember the first bitter-sweet moment I held him immediately after his birth, the joy of knowing that no-one was going to take him from me...and the pain of knowing I didn't get to experience this with my first born....

I fell pregnant again when my son was 5 months old but miscarried in the 4th month...my next two pregnancies produced another two wonderful baby boys and our family was complete.

When I was reunited with my first son, he came to me as a woman....I have never seen him dressed as a man....so I had to lie to my small sons and tell them he was their sister....

We spent a few months together as he moved into our community, but it didn't work out and he decided to move back to Sydney. It wasn't until after he left town that I learned of the thefts, the debts, and the damage he left behind....

His brothers want to have a relationship with him, they love him as a man or a woman...they understand, because they grew up with a neighbour and close friend who was effeminate and loved dressing up in girls clothes right from when he could walk, and still does, but they love him for who he is and how different he is...we know from our

own observation that it isn't a choice....and we wouldn't love him any more or less if he was a macho truck driver...

You might find it odd that I refer to him in the masculine, when he clearly would rather I saw him as a woman. I lost my baby boy, I have spent my whole life grieving for that baby boy...even though I referred to him as she and her during the months of our reunion, I feel like a liar when I say she....it's very hard to be dishonest when you take pride in your honesty...it feels like I am trying to kid myself...and others...I'm sure others in this situation would understand exactly what I mean.

The following is a letter I wrote to a friend....who was also a victim of forced adoption...

It is so heart-breaking to see how messed up they are, particularly when your own children are well rounded and secure. It just makes the whole thing so wrong...  
When my son \_\_\_\_\_ came to stay, he/she brought his then boy-friend... \_\_\_\_\_ was living as a woman so my sons 2, 4, and 6 thought he was their sister, (what could I say?) We lived on egg-shells afraid they would walk in on him or see his 5 o'clock shadow....and catch us in our lie. I made it my business not to lie to my kids, or if I did, I told them the truth as soon as they were old enough to understand why I couldn't tell them the truth before.

\_\_\_\_\_ would straddle his boyfriend on the dining chair in front of the kids and they walked in on them having bongs in the bedroom because they'd left the door ajar....my poor husband (borderline homophobic) was beside himself, he expressed his concern about the effect it was having on the kids and as he/she was getting known around the neighbourhood we were afraid that a kid at school might hear something and use it to tease them and embarrass them at school. It was a bitter/sweet time, I can tell you....unfortunately I have to say, I was relieved to see him go back to Sydney....it would have to be love from a distance...at least until the boys were old enough to understand...

It's different now though, I wish I could see him again, my son's are all adults now and know the whole story...they are not homophobic and are prepared to welcome him, though I can't say the same for my husband....apart from the turmoil he brought into our lives, he still hasn't forgiven him for trying to crack on to his boss at the work xmas party held at our local RSL. Can't say I blame him....it was a very embarrassing incident.

Hubby's there with all his workmates (building industry) and \_\_\_\_\_ "sidles up to him and imposes "herself" on the group...she's very attractive and beautifully groomed, quite classy looking...the boss was very taken with "her"....imagine how hubby felt when

he had to approach the boss on the QT and tell him "she's a he" to save the boss any further embarrassment....not good.

My son doesn't know where we are now, we sold our house in Brisbane in 2003, and moved up to the Bundaberg area in 2005...everyone he knew in the street has moved, my sister is in the same house but he wouldn't remember her married name, to ring her, so I can only hope he sees this site sometime or looks up his family history or checks facebook...I worry that he's dead as I thought he might at least want to catch up with his brother's even if he is mad at hubby and me. After he went, I wrote a nasty letter to his adoptive mother telling her off for her poor parenting...not a smart thing to do I guess, but he'd stolen from my friends, smashed another friends windscreen and kicked a big ding in her guard, and he did a runner owing money to the friend who offered to take him in when he was told by my hubby to find alternative accommodation.

Maybe he's embarrassed about his time with us and that's why we haven't heard from him....in all the turmoil, there was a time of bonding, on a personal level we got on very well together and had a warm relationship....the fact that there were so many others involved made it incredibly difficult for us though, and it was almost as if he wanted me to choose him over everyone else and when I couldn't do that, he felt I'd abandoned him yet again.

He loses whichever way you go...he thinks I abandoned him, and I told him the standard line, "I had to give you up for your own good"...I still believed the brainwashing then....so he heard it from me...now if he were to learn the truth, his reality doesn't change, he just shifts the blame to the govt and nothing changes for him...he still has to carry the same wounds...oh yea right "in the best interest of the child"...

The long term effects on me have been emotionally crippling. It is evident to me now, in hindsight, that the diagnosis of PTSD that I received in the late 90's had been present since the separation took place...

The circumstances of the diagnosis...my cousin had been raped, tortured and murdered. I attended the crime scene as part of the investigation and was later required to remove her property from her Unit where the crime had taken place. The outcome was that I couldn't close my eyes without seeing the crime scene, I had violent, frightening nightmares, suffered severe depression, anxiety, and panic attacks. It got more and more difficult to cope with the day to day issues and on top of this I had to go on a course of Chemotherapy.

I had been under the mistaken assumption that it was the murder that caused my

PTSD, but whilst working through the facts and receiving ongoing Medical and Psychological treatment it became evident that the PTSD had started much earlier than the murder...it can be traced to the forced adoption....it was the murder that caused me to actively seek treatment....

I have lived with PTSD since 1969...my husband and children have been a great support to me...and every time I have contemplated ending it all, the thought of hurting them prevented it. With PTSD, when a stressful situation arises, I have a panic attack, and am bombarded with thoughts of inadequacy at my inability to take control of the situation, and my dependency on others. This brings on feelings of worthlessness and I start to think that everyone would be better off without me around...I have lived with the fear that one day I mightn't be able to talk myself out of it....I have been to the brink many times...one day I fear I'll fall over the edge...

In all these years, I have never had a Doctor or Psychologist who recognized the effects of forced adoption...they seemed to want to find a different reason for my despair...it was never dealt with adequately and it is only since I joined the Facebook page "Australian Inquiry into Forced Adoption" that I have found some relief from my pain...finding others that understand has been my unfulfilled need since 1969...

An analogy I posted on that site as a response to the relief I felt in finding out that there is an Inquiry....it's like being buried alive...I've been clawing the lid of the coffin trying to get out, and someone has just lifted the lid off for me...and I'm gulping fresh air....

I can't begin to tell you the negative effect its had on my life, the life of my parents and siblings, my husband and children....and even my friends....and then the most severely affected....my first-born....

There have been financial ramifications also...my earning ability was diminished by my poor emotional health which is directly resultant on forced adoption....we have been a single income family for most of our 31 years because I have been reclusive almost to the point of Agoraphobia...for which I sought Psychological treatment....apart from the fear of leaving my "safe place" and dealing with people, I had a fear of leaving my children and going out to work as I felt I would be abandoning them to the care of others...my husband worked so hard that at 50 his back went on him, we were forced into Bankruptcy....we couldn't afford Insurance...we are now on Newstart Allowance because the wait to see a specialist is 2-3 years...when we get a diagnosis on paper, Centrelink will then consider a disability pension and carer's allowance...in the mean-

time we struggle to make ends meet...

The stress of this exacerbates the effects of PTSD.

Forced adoption is a travesty of Justice

Basically, I followed orders, I was powerless, I did as I was told, I wasn't informed of my rights, or the assistance available, I wasn't counselled or afforded the opportunity to express my wishes. We were brow-beaten by those in the adoption industry that it was the best course of action and that neither I nor my son would suffer in the long term.

As agents/representatives of the State and Commonwealth Governments, these people acted in an unethical manner, and the relevant Government Agencies failed in their duty of care to oversee the processes and ensure they were carried out in an appropriate manner.

I was not a slut, I was not promiscuous, I loved and wanted my child, I know the person I am, and he would have been well looked after and cared for by me. I may have been immature in age, but I had a good upbringing that prepared me well for motherhood. That was my mother's mission....to teach me to be a good wife and mother, my husband and children and people that know me will attest that even with all the problems I've had, I have been a very good wife and mother.

The results I would like to see come out of this Inquiry are

- That adoptees are made aware of the truth
- That mothers involved in forced adoptions be vindicated publicly
- That appropriate Psychological Treatment be made available to mothers and adoptees, ASAP
- That financial redress be made to these mothers and their children, who should be considered comparable to victims of crime...

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard

Yours Sincerely