Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
Inquiry into Forced Adoptions.

I would like to add to my submission No 18.

We mothers were never given any kind of help whatsoever in Queensland after the adoption records opened up here in 1991. The Qld govt didn't provide any kind of counselling for us as other States did, it took them 20 years to provide a post adoption resource centre, now called PARQ where mothers and adoptees could be given assistance and psychological help. We were a non entity and prejudice was still rife in the Dept of Families and Community Services. Many of us in a complete state of distress were left to our own devices even though were we in an extreme state of depression and aggravated grief. I tried psychologist after psychologist and couldn't find one who understood adoption loss and who were treating us for guilty consciences rather that aggravated grief and trauma which of course made us feel even worse and even more marginalised because our babies had been stolen. Prejudice was so rife in Australia even only 20 years ago that we were all seen as mothers who willingly gave our babies away and so should feel guilty. We had to try to educate the psychologists and it was a lengthy and expensive process as there was no funding for psychologists those days, they labelled us with everything else but the true reason for our depression, child theft.

I was on anti depressants for a while and I rang up the Dept to try to get help just before Mothers Day once, probably about 16-18 years ago and the person who was in charge talked condescendingly to me, and then said at the end of the phone call " but we did a good job matching them up didn't we" I was absolutely distraught, I couldn't believe my ears, I'd been suicidal and was asking for help and told her I was on anti depressants and she had the nerve to dismiss everything I said and brag about what a good job they'd done matching our stolen babies up with strangers, and not only that, they knew nothing about genetics those days, what a load old hogwash.

I asked my sons adoptive parents for a photo of my son as I'd been pushed down and held down and never saw my son, and they knew that. It took them 3 years to send me a photo but only after I kept writing to them and begging them for one. I was in an aggravated state of grief, I was trying to raise my 4 subsequent children, and I was like a Zombie, I couldn't do anything. It was a terrible state to be in, I don't know how on Earth I survived and I did seriously consider suicide. I had it all planned but I couldn't go through with it as I couldn't leave my children with a legacy that I'd been left with, as I knew they'd find my body after they came home from school .

It's much harder for women who were never allowed to see their babies, they are more stuck in aggravated grief than mothers who saw their babies. It's essential that mothers like us be given assistance or help. If it wasn't for people like Dian Wellfare, Lily Arthur, Linda Bryant and Elizabeth from Victoria and Dr Rickarby I never would have survived the trauma of being treated so inhumanely and prejudicially a second time. It was an absolute

nightmare for me and for my children who were only 2, 4, 8 and 10 when the adoption records opened.

I'll explain to you how my body reacted to the trauma I experienced because a lot of people denigrate us and still mistreat us. I did write this into the Qld Dpt of Family Services about 15 years ago so they knew full well that mothers like me needed help but did nothing about it.

I was so traumatised that every exocrine gland in my body stopped working. My eyes, nose and mouth and other organs dried out, I had to use eye drops to moisten my eyes, nasal spray to be able to breath, and artificial saliva in my mouth. I suffered from nightmares, flashbacks, I had panic attacks, I felt like vomiting every time I saw a baby or heard one cry when I was out shopping or when I saw or heard one on tv. I couldn't sleep or eat, I dropped down to 39kgs, my heart was racing non stop, if I'd had a weak heart or high blood pressure I would have died. I stripped my stomach lining off and when I went in for a gastroscopy the doctor asked my husband if I'd been under a lot of stress lately as he said I was so full of adrenalin he couldn't put me under and had to use an extra large dose of anaesthetic to do so.

Sincerely Yours

( please withhold my name)