Why Did the Western Australian Government Apologise to Mothers, Fathers and Children Torn Apart by Adoption?

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In 1994 the grief and pain was more than I could manage. I contacted a support group: Mothers for Contact. A group that, as it names suggests, had been instrumental in working to open up files previously closed so no mother and her stolen child would ever get the opportunity to meet. I met with these women and for the first time heard stories reminiscent of my own. For the first time I realised there were thousands of others: just like me, no longer was I the only one, who at sixteen was deposited at a hospital to be drugged, humiliated, shamed and then have my baby forcibly taken without ever having a chance to view my beautiful baby's face. Never to have gazed into her eyes, touched her velvety skin, or felt her warm embrace.

Like many young mothers of the era I believed these 'professionals' had a right to take my daughter in the cruellest of possible ways. Being unmarried and pregnant seemed to give those working with unwed mothers' carte blanche to treat us less than animals. Degraded and dehumanised an invisible incubator, there to serve one purpose to provide an infant for people we never met.

I had been admitted to The Women Hospital at Crown Street via the social work department. No single mother was admitted unless she first saw a social worker. That way, like lambs to the slaughter our baby's were earmarked for adoption. Unbeknownst to me my file was marked by a social worker with a secret code. The file was marked whether or not the mother indicated she wanted her baby adopted. The file was usually marked with terms such as BFA: baby for adoption, or UB-: Unmarried baby for adoption. Marking the files in this manner guided the maternity staff in the method of treatment the unwed mother would receive months later when giving birth. The Head Social Worker in a sworn affidavit (1994)[1] explained the practice: The mother was to be drugged; she was to have a pillow placed in front of her face so she could not view her baby at the birth, and her infant was to be immediately 'whisked' away so the mother's maternal instinct would not be aroused. The mother traumatised by her inability to finish the birthing process would be less likely to put up a fight. Some readers may not be aware but extreme trauma often causes such disassociation of the person's mind they can be silenced by the event for decades. The trauma of that unfinished birthing process will forever run through every cell in my body. They say the body never forgets, even though the mind tries to block the trauma out, my body will never forget the daughter I gave birth too.

Usually within 24 hours of giving birth, mothers were transferred by an ambulance, without prior notice or permission, to an annex of the hospital, Lady Wakehurst, miles away from her baby. Her clothes were locked up, she had no access to money, was not allowed visitors and on the fifth day, the minimum time possible to gain a consent the mother was informed she had to sign in order to be discharged from the hospital. No consent was ever supposed to be taken prior to the fifth day, no consent was supposed to be taken under duress or coercion and it only stands to reason that if a person is heavily drugged no contract should ever have be entered into. All of these

1 P Roberts, 'Statement of Pamela Thorne, nee Roberts, 30 September, 1994' in the matter of *Judith Marie McHutchison v State of New South Wales* no. 13428 of 1993

practices were substantiated at the New South Wales Inquiry into Past Practices in Adoption.

Mothers were isolated, nurses were forbidden to talk to us, in case they felt any empathy and gave in and allowed us a glimpse of our newborns. The instinctual part of the brain that deals with: birth, feeding one's infant, protecting our young, death, does not comprehend something as artificial has having your live healthy baby taken, sight unseen, to be given to strangers you will never meet. Kidnap is the only way that part of your brain understands the phenomena that happened to me and the thousands of other mothers, infants and fathers. The number of Australian citizens affected by the government's past removalist policies is huge. If you work it out there were over 200,000 babies taken, 400,000 mothers and fathers, subsequent brothers and sisters, assorted relatives who only found out about their stolen granddaughter, niece or nephew years later, the stolen children, now adults who went on to have their children, our grandchildren. Possibly one to two million Australians have been impacted by a social engineering policy that failed miserably and created immeasurable suffering for more than a million Australians.

How did the trauma affect me in the subsequent years? I remember searching for my daughter, firstly in prams, then later scouring the faces of girls around the same age. Forever, searching. I am told that is what happens when one's child is kidnapped there is no closure, just the constant grief, anger and searching. My subsequent children suffered, they had a mother full of grief and trauma. A mother that lived in absolute fear that one of my sons would be stolen. I had always wanted a large family, but with each pregnancy such pain would rise up and rather than enjoy my pregnancy I would collapse in grief. Another child never makes up for the one lost. Maybe if my daughter had died, there would have been some closure, but she was not dead, she was out there, somewhere, but with whom and how was she being treated? Indeed, what if she had died and nobody bothered to inform me?

You may ask: "How did this happen in Australia? How did this happen over so many decades? Why has no-one ever been made accountable for such atrocities being committed against mothers, fathers and their children?" The one simple answer is the Federal government through its state counterparts was the 'guiding hand' behind it. Royal Commissions, Inquiries, Human Right's Commissions had all uncovered the atrocities committed on mothers and their infants over decades, but no-one has ever been made accountable. The same practices, not allowing mothers to view their infants at the birth, drugging them, marking their files with secret codes, injecting them with drugs immediately after the birth so they could not feed their infants, not allowing mothers to leave hospitals until they signed adoption consents, did not happen in one hospital or in one State, it happened to thousands upon thousands of women right across Australia. State Welfare Ministers were aware of the practices and they were aware they were illegal, but they did nothing to stop them. The broader Australian community was lied to and kept in the dark of the reality of what was happening to vulnerable young pregnant mothers and their infants inside hospitals and mother and baby Homes.

Researching various State Hansards and Annual Reports of Child Welfare Departments reveals a collusion and conspiracy between various Federal and State Departments intent on ridding Australia of what the elite of these institutions deemed racial inferiors, mothers and their 'illegitimate' infants. Part Indigenous mothers were placed under white laws as they were not considered Aboriginal, but as racially

inferior as their unwed white sisters.

Driven by my unending pain I was compelled to find answers. I have researched the phenomenon I have labelled the white stolen generation for 16 years. The last four years in even greater depth as I have made it the focus of a PhD. So the following is what I have uncovered and why such a Nazi style social engineering exercise was able to develop and flourish in Australia. The propaganda around adoption is such that most people on hearing the word immediately think: 'unwanted baby' 'saved by altruistic childless couples'. There is no thought of the pain of the mother, the dislocation of the infant from its family of birth. In fact what the public does hear via various media is complaints that there are not more baby's available to supply the constant demand for infants by adults. It's declared a 'crisis'. My suggestion: why don't you solve the crisis and hand over your infant to some stranger!

Imagine the decades of propaganda it took to make the broader Australian community believe/accept that thousands upon thousands of normal Australian mothers committed such an unnatural act as to willingly give away their newborns to strangers they had never met, and then freely sign a document that did not permit them to ever meet or be given any information about their newly born infant again. Who created this propaganda campaign and why?

To give you an insight into the nightmarish situation as the one described above, that has become accepted as normal by the general populace, imagine if you will, someone climbed through your window one night and took your sleeping baby, and it was gone forever. Then imagine those around you told you to get on with your life, after all the kidnapper could probably give your child a better life than you. And then one day you find the kidnapper and you're told, oh just move on with your life your child now has a new family and he or she doesn't want to know you anymore! After all if you had really loved your child you wouldn't have allowed him or her to be kidnapped in the first place. That is the reality of adoption as practiced for most of the 20th century. So to understand how such an unnatural act became so normalised in the Australian psyche I will do my best to offer an explanation.

Firstly I need to explain eugenics. Eugenics was a pseudo-science that was accepted by most of the intellectuals in Australia, Britain and the United States in the late 19th early 20th century. It was the 'art of better breeding'. Scientific principles would be applied to human reproduction so that we would develop into a racially superior society. There was a belief that only the fit should reproduce, whilst the unfit should be eliminated. Increasing production of the fit would solve social problems such as immorality, delinquency and in decades to come crime would cease to exist. There were various forms of eugenics. Positive eugenics was getting the 'fit' to increase their numbers: encouraging fertility by financial means, baby bonus, tax exemptions, or providing them with other people's children. Negative eugenics was implementing measures to decrease the population of the 'unfit': such as, segregation and sterilisation. Environmental eugenics: transferring infants whose genes may be less than perfect to a better environment where "the best could be made of their poor genes". This could also be described as an assimilation policy. The racially inferior would be absorbed into the white, middle class, and hence disappear.

Overview

In the late 19th early 20th century there was huge concern both for the falling birth rate and the quality of the citizens the country was producing. Ex nuptial or 'illegitimate' children were considered racially inferior and there was a eugenic agenda to reduce their numbers.[2] Eugenicists saw illegitimacy as a threat to the family, morals and society itself. At the same time there was a pronatalist push to populate Australia. The combination of a eugenic and pronatalist agenda resulted in a social engineering experiment where thousands of newborns were transferred from their single mothers to state approved, childless married couples.

Darwin's theory of evolution was applied to population, with notions of the survival of the fittest and that evolution was linear and if we did not keep the race 'pure' it would lead to 'racial suicide'.[3] Importantly, Sir Charles Mackellar, highly influential environmental eugenicist, politician, President of the Child Welfare Department, Commissioner on the Decline of the Birth Rate, staunchly believed that environment could bring out the best in genes and could stop the transmission of the acquired characteristics of 'vicious' parents.[4]

Britain played an influential role in Australia's social engineering experiment. It wanted a colony of vigorous, strong vital individuals it could call on in times of war. 'Good white stock' could only be produced by the progeny of legally sanctioned marriages: the fit. The unwed mother, after having her baby taken, was considered rehabilitated, decades later this would be described on the bottom of her medical files as: 'socially cleared'. She was no longer the mother of an 'illegitimate' child and as such could return to the workforce. In time she would marry, become assimilated into a normal nuclear family, under the control of her respectable working class husband and 'go on to have children of her own one day.' Childless couples would be normalised by having children. Other people's, but not to worry, these children would be cut off from the contamination of their past history, re-issued new birth certificates and would be as if born to the substitute parents. Positive eugenics: the middle class was marginally expanded by the transference of thousands of infants to a 'more wholesome environment' with 'real mothers and fathers.'

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2 Leonard Darwin (1918) cited in Reekie: 1998, pp. 79-80 stated: "illegitimate children are inferior in civic worth. Reducing their number could only improve the race"

3 Gillespie, P. 1991, *The Price Of Health : Australian Governments and Medical Politics 1910-1966*, Studies in Australia History Series Editors: Alan Gilbert and Peter Spearitt, Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, p. 33, 35 : 1991, p. 33, 35; Edith Waterworth, Unmarried Mothers The Women's View Letter to the Editor *The Mercury* Hobart April 10, 1931, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article29904099 - Mrs. Waterworth (a eugenicist) was the President of the Tasmanian Council of Maternal and Child Welfare see: Problem of the Young Unmarried Mothers A Conference, *The Mercury*, Hobart, September 10, 1938, p. 15, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article25552104

4 Mackellar, C. (1904). *Annual Report Child Relief Department* at p. 24; Mackellar, C. & Welsh. (1917). Mental Deficiency: A Medico-Sociological Study of Feeble-Mindedness Sydney: W. A. Gullick, Government Printer, p. 31 (book donated to UWS library by NSW Dept of Community Services).

Child Welfare Departments around Australia vigorously promoted adoption because they saw it as a service to the state. It saved money and stopped the spread of illegitimacy by removing the child and placing it into a 'wholesome' environment. There was no concern for the feelings of the mother and no research on the long term effect on the infants removed.[5] The media campaign was run via radio and newspaper articles and the 'catchcry' was that babies "given up" for adoption were unwanted[6] and were given away after all means of assistance to keep the child was offered and the full psychological impact of surrender was explained to the mother. It was always publicly stated that it was the mothers who decided.[7] The Child Welfare Departments and social controllers/social workers therefore used the media to promote adoption, stigmatise single motherhood and continue to remind the public that the infants were 'unwanted' when they knew that to be blatantly untrue.[8] The adoption industry was duplicitous. Social work literature that guided social work practice stated that mothers were not autonomous and the mother was too 'immature to make her own decision'.[9] The literature informed social workers that it was they who would be the deciders.[10]

The promotion of adoption led to infertile couples believing they had an inherent right to be provided with infants.[11] As the demand for children far outstripped supply more draconian legislation was introduced to diminish the rights of natural parents even further in an effort to make more children available. There was still a concern in the adoption industry about the intelligence of mothers and social workers who took over control of the "problem of the unwed mother"[12] by the late 1930s defined it in more Freudian terminology, which underpinned their profession's epistemology. Unwed motherhood was now considered to be a result of unconscious conflicts that caused the neurotic woman to defy social norms and become pregnant without being first married. It was social workers', armed with their case work theory, intention to reform/rehabilitate[13] unwed mothers (by removing their infants) whilst at the same time 'curing' the infertility of married couples by giving them the 'taken/stolen' infants.[14]

5 *Proceedings of seminar held on 3rd and 4th November*, Melb: Victorian Council of Social Service
6 Perkins, K Power of the law protects the fatherless *Daily Telegraph* 27/1/1967; Dupre, A. Unwanted Babies and their New Parents *The Sun* 28/11/1973; Gilbert, C. (1968). 'These children need parents (But adoption's a slow business)' 500 unwanted babies in Background *Sunday Telegraph* Feb 18, 1968, p. 41
7 Perkins, K Power of the law protects the fatherless *Daily Telegraph* 31/1/1967; Kennett, J. (1970) The losers in the baby boom: For some mothers an agony of mind and heart lies ahead *Sunday Telegraph,* 12 December; Staff Reporter The unmarried mother's problem should she Surrender her Baby? *The Australian Women's Weekly* September 8, 1954, p. 28
8 Kerr, R. (2005). *The State and Child Welfare in Western Australia 1907-1949* Unpublished Thesis Curtin University ,
9 M McLelland, *Proceedings of a seminar: adoption services in New South Wales',* Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, 3rd February, 1967, p. 42. Since it was the mother, who was the legal guardian of her child, and only the mother that was to make any decision with respect to relinquishment, what Mary McLelland is advocating: (that social workers either make the decision or help a mother to a decision), is clearly unethical and unlawful; JH Reid, 'Principles, values and assumptions underlying adoption practice', *Social Work*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1957
10 Cole, C. (2008). Releasing the Past: Mothers' stories of their stolen babies Sydney: Sasko Veljanov
11 McLelland Report (1976).
12 Staff Correspondent (1950). The Problem of the Unwed Mother, *The Sunday Herald* June 28, 1953, p.12, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18504211
13 Parker, I. (1927). *Fit and Proper A Study of Legal Adoption in Massachusetts Boston* Mass.: The Church Home Society for the Care of Children of the Protestant Episcopal ChurchParker, p. 54
14 Marshall, A. (1984). *Review of Adoption Policy and Practice NSW Report*, December NSW Dept. of Youth and Community Services

The adoption legislation introduced around Australia was implemented to protect the rights of adoptive parents and to facilitate the adoption process. This resulted in an ever increasing number of applicants applying to state governments for infants.[15] For most of 20th century the supply of infants did not meet demand, and by the 1960s the wait was approximately four years for a girl and three and a half for boy.[16] Hence enormous pressure was exerted on state governments to find more children. A review of Hansard in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales indicates that adoption legislation was never formulated to protect the rights of the child or the natural parents but to keep the numbers of adoptable children up and to save the state money. During the 20th century any loop holes by which natural parents could reclaim their children were met with even tougher legislation to close that loop hole.[17]

Secrecy was never introduced to protect single mothers or their infants but to protect the identity of the adoptive parents. Before the legislation introduced in the 1960s adoptive parents had the name, address and occupation of the adopted child's mother. After the introduction of the new legislation they still had her name on the top of the Adoption Order.[18]

After reciprocal legislation was introduced in 1948 it became routine to traffic mothers across borders and place them in unmarried mothers Homes.[19] This effectively isolated, and cut women off, from any support they might have had from their partner, friends or supportive relatives. The young women had their identities hidden which made it near impossible for them to be found and assisted. None of this was done at the insistence of mothers, who were powerless and as far as policy makers went: invisible.

In the 1950s the state Child Welfare Departments began a second wave of promoting adoption and stigmatising single mothers,[20] as did social workers.[21] Sterility clinics were operating in hospitals and there was a belief that if a woman adopted a child she would be more likely to go on and have children of her own. Adoption therefore had the added bonus of being a fertility device and in this way it

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15 Import Babies *The Argus* Melbourne March 29, 1947, p. 18; Babies for Adoption in Demand The *The Mercury* Hobart, January 26, 1949, p. 21, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article26495765 ; More babies wanted for adoption Advertiser and Register South Australia, July 25, 1931, p. 18, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article35674843 ; Should Unwed Mother Give Up Her Child *Sydney Morning Herald* July 15, 1953, p. 9 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18388329

16 Playing God with a Child's Life Insight Report on Adoption *Daily Mirror,* 17 October, 1967; Berryman, N. So you want to adopt a baby *Sunday Herald* 8/4/1979

17 Adoption of Children: Matter before Cabinet, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Oct 2, 1953, p. 3, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18391156 ; Appeal by mother in baby case almost certain *Sydney Morning Herald September*, September 24,1953, p. 6, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18379333 ; Fate of adopted child: Need for uniform laws *The Courier Mail*, Brisbane, April 20, 1934, p. 14, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1191370; Girls fight for baby goes on *The Argus*, Melbourne, February 6, 1954, p. 6, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article26589409

18 Glennis Dees A paper written and submitted to the Minister for Community Welfare Services, Victoria 24 January, 1983

19 Kerr, R. (2005). *The State and Child Welfare in Western Australia 1907-1949* Unpublished Thesis Curtin University Hon R. J. Hamer Adoption Children Bill, (1964) Vic Hansard, vol 274, p. 3648; Staff Correspondent (1950). The Problem of the Unwed Mother, *The Sunday Herald* June 28, 1953, p.12, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18504211

20 Government to consider Report on unwed mother, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 13, 1954, p.4 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18439860 ; NSW Unwed Mothers Report Soon: A Report on the Problem of the Unwed Mother (Committee made up of adoption social, medical & welfare workers *Sydney Morning Herald* August 7, 1954, p. 13, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18429216

21 Should Unwed Mother Give Up Her Child *Sydney Morning Herald* July 15, 1953, p. 9 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18388329

was used in a way that has been termed positive eugenics: increasing the production of children by the section of the population decreed fit.[22]

Disregard for the rights of natural mothers and their infants was evident in a practice labelled 'breast-feeding adoptions" or "rapid adoptions". A married mother who gave birth to a stillborn was given the healthy newborn of an unmarried mother to nurse. It would be unthinkable that the unmarried mother would ever be given the opportunity to revoke her consent after the occurrence of this practice. It also makes a lie of any notion of a proper consent being given by the unmarried mother, assuming as it must that consent was given prior or straight after the birth. It was during this time period that many mothers were deceived by being told their babies had died at or soon after their birth.

Dr John Bowlby in 1950 was commissioned by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to do a study on a mother's relationship with her children and its effect on their mental health. The WHO's concern with the mental health of children stemmed from its belief in a linkage between a child's emotional well-being and their later ability to become industrious citizens. In Bowlby's subsequent Report (1951)[23] he confounded single motherhood with earlier ideas of mental deficiency and the more modern 1950 social work/Freudian psychoanalytical theory that Tavistock Clinic adhered too. Bowlby's Report was politically expedient for several reasons. It was used by western governments to push women, who had been working, as part of the war effort back into their homes. Childless women though would need extra encouragement. Bowlby's 'scientific' findings were therefore useful to support a social engineering experiment that was already in operation in Australia. Removing children from undesirable parents (single mothers) and eliminating their influence via coercive social control methods, such as 'closed secret adoption' and placing them in the homes of the childless to encourage those women back into their homes.

There was and still is much confusion about what mothers' rights were, not only by mothers' themselves but those working in the industry. The internal policy was not to allow mothers to see there infants, to drug and to force them to sign consents the public policy promoted via the media was that mothers were the ones who made the decision.[24] There is only one mention that I am aware of in the public domain, a newspaper article, that stated mothers did not see their babies at birth,[25] most of the publicity focused on 'unwanted' babies and desperate couples who were willing to open their hearts and homes to the desperate plight of these unfortunate babies. [26]

Since it was illegal not to allow mothers' access to their infants it was justified by asserting that mothers would be less distressed if they did not see their infants. There was no medical or social research that supported that assumption, in fact the

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22 McHutchison, J. (1984). *Adoption in NSW an Historical Perspective* p. 14 citing *Progress* (a quarterly publication of) the NSW Public Service Board (1964). 3(2), p. 17

23 Bowlby, J. (1951) *Maternal Care and Mental Health*. Word Health Organisation Monograph, Series No 2, World Health Organisation, Geneva New York

24 Perkins, K Power of the law protects the fatherless *Daily Telegraph* 31/1/1967; Kennett, J. (1970) The losers in the baby boom: For some mothers an agony of mind and heart lies ahead Sunday *Telegraph*, 12 December; Staff Correspondent (1950). The Problem of the Unwed Mother, *The Sunday Herald* June 28, 1953, p.12, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18504211

25 *Sunday Truth,* Ward I Crowded: Unwed mothers: A special ward, set aside at the Brisbane Women's Hospital for unmarried mothers October 24, 1965

26 Perkins, K Power of the law protects the fatherless *Daily Telegraph* 27/1/1967; Dupre, A. Unwanted Babies and their New Parents *The Sun* 28/11/1973; Gilbert, C. (1968). 'These children need parents (But adoption's a slow business)' 500 unwanted babies in Background *Sunday Telegraph* Feb 18, 1968, p. 41

research that was available stated that mothers would not be in a fit state to make any decision about the long term interests of the baby too soon after the trauma of giving birth.[27] It was known that not allowing mothers to see their babies was traumatic and could physically damage the infant. It was known that mothers suffered if they did not see their babies and their long term psychological well being was impaired by being coerced into relinquishment and/ or not seeing their infants to finish the birthing process and make the baby a 'real person'.

The internal policy was therefore punitive, illegal and one of denying mothers access to their babies to facilitate adoptions.[28] The external policy was that mothers' should be given every assistance to keep their babies and only if they insisted on adoption was it to proceed and only as a last resort. The public was duped, and the illegal and unethical treatment of mothers' and their infants was consistent across Australia both in public and private hospitals as well as in religious and government institutions such as unwed mother and infant Homes.[29]

Adoption was a Commonwealth project and this was certainly evident in the creation of the new *Adoption Act*s implemented throughout Australia during the 1960s. It must be said though that these *Acts* did not appear in a vacuum. The fundamental ideology that it was in the best interests of the child to be removed from its single mother had been national policy from the 1920s. The implementation of the *Acts* only strengthened the state's ability to further its agenda and gave those working in the adoption industry a stronger more 'legalistic' foundation on which to base the expanded role it now needed to satisfy the increasing demand of middle class white couples for babies.

By 1971 there were more babies taken than available adoptive parents to rear them, hence it was a buyer's market and adopters could pick and choose from the many babies available. A situation then arose that babies were discriminated on hair colour or nose shape if not appealing, or those who were of mixed race or had minor health defects. Many babies languished in institutions for years.[30] Needless to say, a costly exercise for the government and social engineering experiment that had gone horribly wrong.

In the same year, 1971, because of the difficulty in placing infants labelled: deferred adoptions, the government encouraged that "Every effort should be made by a good adoption agency to find adoptive homes for "hard to place" babies, special recruitment schemes through magazine, radio and television publicity being used to boost the supply of such homes from time to time, providing Departmental approval is granted."[31]

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27 Fanning, M. (1950). Should we Deprive an Unmarried Mother of her baby's love, *The Argus*, Melbourne, July 18, p. 8. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article22913146

28 Emerson, D. (2010) Former Driver recalls heartbreak of baby lift *The Western Australian*, March 10, p. 17

29 Staff Correspondent (1950). The Problem of the Unwed Mother, *The Sunday Herald* June 28, 1953, p.12, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18504211 ; discusses women coming from interstate and overseas, hidden in the maternity home, used for labour, and when one young woman gets married the couple are told their baby died. The hospital where the mothers deliver is connected to the unwed mother's home. The mother is expected to make a decision before entering the home and is not given the same access to her baby as married mothers.

30 Berryman, N. So you want to adopt a baby *Sunday Herald* 8/4/1979

31 The Australian Association of Social Workers, New South Wales (1971). Manual of Adoption Practices in New South Wales, p. 13 ; Playing God with a Child's Life Insight Report on Adoption *Daily Mirror*, 17 October, 1967: Because of the shift in supply beginning, older children not preferred, and "recruiting parents who are by no means ideal"

After the new adoption legislation was implemented the numbers of babies taken increased so that by 1972 there were nearly 10,000 babies taken from mothers around the country. The methods used to remove the infants were the same in all states and territories. By this time most hospitals had internal policies that facilitated adoption by such means as not allowing mothers' access to the infants at the birth, drugging and forcing them to sign consents before allowed to leave hospitals.[32]

In July 1973 the Whitlam government introduced the Supporting Mothers' Pension which was widely publicised and overcome to a large extent the connivance of social workers to withhold information about Benefits available prior to 1973, which were not so widely known. In 1982 a Circular[33] was sent round by the Health Commission to all hospitals advising them that not allowing single mothers the same rights as their married counterparts to access their infants was illegal and should cease immediately. The Circular signalled the end of what had been a holocaust for single mothers and their infants throughout most of the 20th century.

32 Gair, S. & Croker, F. 'Missing Voices About a Foreign Place: Exploring midwifery practice with midwives who cared for single mothers and their babies in Queensland (1960-1990)' *Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies* 10(2), p.60; Farrar, T 1997. 'What We Did to Those Poor Girls! The Hospital Culture that Promoted Adoption.' In *Proceedings of the Sixth Australian Adoption Conference*, 116-127. Sydney; P Roberts, 'Statement of Pamela Thorne, nee Roberts, 30 September, 1994' in the matter of Judith Marie McHutchison v State of New South Wales no. 13428 of 1993; Final Report No. 22 (2000). *Releasing The Past: Adoption Practices 1950-1998*, pp. 94-95; Cunningham, A. (1996). *Background Paper for the Minister of Community and Health Service On Issues relating to Historical Adoption Practices in Tasmania*, 4 December; Joint Select Committee, (1999). *Adoption and Related Services 1950-1988*, Parliament of Tasmania

33 Health Commission of New South Wales, *Circular No: 82/297*, issued 1 September 1982