CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As you can see from this paper, the first Australian State to introduce Adoption Legislation was Western Australia. This took place in 1896 – before Federation, so naturally a national approach was not possible at the time. However, this should not prevent the Federal Parliament today from being involved in addressing some of the long-term consequences of Adoption.

From a mother's perspective, the crucial issue is to know the answer to that all important question – 'TO WHOM DID I GIVE BIRTH?'

Not to be permitted to know this is the ultimate humiliation - one which has led many mothers into very low self-esteem and even suicide.

Much has been done over many years of hard work to try to address this matter.

In all Australian States, adopted people have now been given the right to their original birth certificates and in all but one state, natural mothers have been given the right to the amended birth certificate when their child turns 18 years of age – provided the adopted person has not placed his/her name on the negative register.

NOT SO FOR THE VICTORIAN MOTHERS!

They stand alone in being denied the right to know –

'TO WHOM DID I GIVE BIRTH?'

Unlike the other States, Victorian mothers do not have the right to apply for their child's amended birth certificate when the child reaches adulthood.

The children have had the right to their original birth certificate since the 1980's. Victorian mothers do not have a reciprocal right.

This inequality between the States has caused enormous pain for the Victorian women who have waited decades longer than anybody else. Meanwhile, they are gradually dying out.

The situation is untenable and should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Many thanks for your attention

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