

Dear Senate Committee members:

RE: Senate Enquiry: Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies & Practices

I saw an article about the Senate Enquiry into Forced Adoptions in the newspaper last week. I was unaware that the Enquiry was being held prior to reading the article. I am offering a submission at this late stage after speaking to a member of your department as the studies I did in this area may be of relevance. My interest is in the potential role of the Commonwealth in developing a national framework to assist States & Territories to address the consequences for the mothers, their families & children who were subject to forced adoption policies.

I wrote a thesis as part of a Masters of Psychoanalytic Studies (1998) entitled "A Psychoanalytic Study of the Feelings of Birthmothers following Reunion with their Adult Children". Professional journal articles based on this thesis included:

2004

Goodwach, R. (2004). Jocasta & the Oedipus Myth: The Adoption-Reunion Context for Feelings of Sexual Attraction. *Australasian Journal of Psychotherapy* 23(2), 46-65

2003

Goodwach, R. (2003). Adoption & Family Therapy. *ANZJFT* 24(2), 61-70

2001

Goodwach, R. (2001). Does Reunion "Cure" Adoption? *ANZJFT* 22 (2), 73-79

The focus of the articles was to increase understanding of the feelings of birthmothers, both at relinquishment and after reunion, in a context in which it was widely thought that reunion should "make it all better" .

I have attached the journal articles. All documents contain recommendations based on my findings which are pertinent to Part (b) of the Enquiry.

I am a medical practitioner who works as a psychotherapist. I am currently President of the Victorian Medical Women's Society. In this role I initiated a project in 2010 entitled "Happy Healthy Women Not Just Survivors" advocating for the longterm health needs of women with a history of sexual violence. What both groups have in common is a history of trauma; deep feelings of shame; and a lack of recognition of their suffering and the health consequences over a lifetime. My ongoing work both in private practice and with the 2010 project have advanced my thinking about the effect of past traumas and what is helpful in terms of integrating feelings related to past trauma and enhancing the ability to engage fully in life after traumatic events.

I would be happy to provide further assistance to the Enquiry if required.

With best wishes

Raie Goodwach

Dr Raie Goodwach

VMWS President