

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria

Wodonga—Tuesday, 18 May 2021

MEMBERS

Ms Natalie Suleyman—Chair

Mr James Newbury—Deputy Chair

Ms Christine Couzens

Ms Emma Kealy

Ms Michaela Settle

Mr David Southwick

Mr Meng Heang Tak

WITNESS

Name Withheld 2.

WITNESS

Name withheld 2.

The CHAIR: Let me go through the proceedings while you get yourself organised. My name is Natalie Suleyman. I am the Member for St Albans. To my right is Christine Couzens, MP, the Member for Geelong, and to my left is Meng Heang Tak, MP, the Member for Clarinda.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting today, and I pay my respects to their elders both past and present and any other Aboriginal elders of other communities who may be here today.

I now declare open the public hearings for the Legal and Social Issues Committee's Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria. I welcome [name withheld] here.

All evidence taken by this committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, meaning that anything you say here is protected, but if you go outside and say the same things, including on social media, you may not be protected by this privilege.

All evidence today is also being recorded by Hansard to my left. You will be provided with a proof version for you to check as soon as it is available. Any transcripts or PowerPoint presentations or handouts will be placed on the committee's website unless confidentiality has been requested.

For your information we also have Debbie here today. She is a counsellor, and she is available for you to talk to during the hearing but also after the hearing as well.

We truly do appreciate you making the effort of driving here to meet with us, but more importantly we are very much interested in hearing your story, your experience in forced adoption and your experiences with accessing services but most importantly what you would like from this inquiry. So I thank you again and now invite you to make a brief opening statement, which will be followed by questions. Thank you so much, [name withheld].

NAME WITHHELD: How does the confidentiality work, Yuki?

Ms SIMMONDS: I can talk you through that afterwards, but at the moment you just say whatever it is that you want to say, and then we will work through it later.

NAME WITHHELD: Thank you. All right, I will start. It is not going to take as long as it looks [witness refers to folder containing adoption information]. First, are any of you adopted or do you know anyone adopted as a friend or part of the family?

The CHAIR: I am not adopted, but I do have close friends that are.

NAME WITHHELD: Yes, all right. It was very important for me to appear here today, and I thank Yuki for fitting me in at very short notice.

I am from here, but I do not know where and I do not know my family from here. Wodonga is the area my birth mother lived, I believe, potentially Tallangatta, and an address in Albury that does not appear to be a real address in the information that I have got. As I was saying to Yuki, it is very empowering to me to see this referred to as 'forced adoption', because that is what it was, and for this inquiry to be what it is.

My name is [name withheld]. It is my adopted name. It is a name that I am proud of. I have got another name, Darren Marshall—that is my birth name. [Name withheld] has got a family and has been loved very much by his parents and his younger sister, who is also adopted. We have both got curly hair, so we never really got asked too many questions.

Darren Marshall, who is also me, has no idea if he has got any brothers or sisters or if his birth mother or father are still alive, L Marshall and Robert—I only have a first name for Robert. [name withheld]/Darren Marshall—me—has a beautiful daughter in her early 20s. She is the only person I know that I am directly related to, the only person I see myself in.

I have said [name withheld]/Darren Marshall because they are me—they are the same person. I look at my daughter and see myself and her mother, and seeing myself is the only experience I have got of this.

There are minimal details of my birth mother, L Marshall, of Albury, New South Wales, as I was saying, possibly formerly of Tallangatta. The Tallangatta information I only received in 2018. I have the first name only of my birth father and that he was possibly in army signals, so I have not really got much other information. I have tried to find them since the early 1990s without any success. I have tried to do this without help from those such as VANISH etc but as another birthday approaches in June and I get older, so do they so it is time.

I grew up in a really great environment, a loving environment, with a nanna that lived with us. I had a very close relationship with her. I am close to my mum—my dad not so much these days. But I grew up in a loving environment in a 1970s, 1980s suburban Melbourne family. I have a partner of nearly 30 years. I have a daughter. I have nieces and nephews of my sisters and my partner's sister as well. So I am part of a family, but I am trying to find another one and I do not know if they are there or if they exist.

I know, being adopted, you are always trying to fit into situations. You are always trying to find out where you fit and who you are. You are always wondering who that person in the mirror is and where you came from.

I was not allowed by law to find out any information about myself until 1984—and then only with the consent of my adoptive parents, which I did not ask for at the time. I was a goofy 16-year-old around about then. My mum did not have a great experience with my sister's mother, who somehow found out where we were very early on and overstepped the line a few times quite a lot.

I have always known I have been adopted. It has never been an issue. I have always known I have been loved, and we have always been treated very special. My mother had a child when she was younger, a couple of years before me, and could not have any more children, so we were always told that we were very special to my mum and my dad. I waited.

I did a lot of fly-in fly-out work in my early 20s in [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. There were not phones back then and there was not internet in the remote exploration camps. It was when I moved to Perth in my mid-20s that I started to finally look around and rang up Anglicare, as it is now, to have an interview. I found that a bit confronting—that I had to have an interview and be approved to get my own information, which I had to pay for—but the person that did it was only doing their job and under the constraints they had. But I did not get all of the information, which seemed to be government policy at the time.

From these initial records, this part here [witness points to folder], I finally got some detail. I saw for the first time ever writing that looked like mine, where my mother signed a piece of paper giving me up two weeks after I was born, which from my reading seems to be about the last possible gasp that she can hang onto without—I do not know. I have got documentation in there of my adoption. I have signed more documents buying a house and a car and getting a phone than the half a dozen pages of that [witness points to folder].

I am not sure if my birth mother was made aware that she could retract her consent, as the consent document is in there but it is completely blank. I do not even know if she was aware of it. Coercion, shamed—all the more, I am guessing, poor woman. What do you do when you get to the point where you sign a document giving away your kid? She was 20 years old. She had her own reasons. I never blamed her for anything. I completely understand: social situation, church pressure, all of the things of the time—a vastly different time from what we are in now. But it happened.

You have called this forced adoption. It basically is. It makes me very sad for what she went through. I have got no idea how long I spent with her in those two weeks. I do not know if I saw her for more than a few minutes. I do not know. I do not know what she looks like. I have got no photos. Look how curly my hair is. You do not run across people with curly hair like this much. Every time I do, I look at them. I always have since I was little boy.

I have got a final message that I want to leave there, but I just want to go through and show you a few things [witness refers to folder]. This is all I had until I applied for my birth certificate when I was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in 2005. I thought this was a birth certificate; it is a schedule 6. I used to hand this over to things all the time when I was a kid, and they would go, 'That's not a birth certificate'—well, it is mine. I did

not know until I needed to get out of the country. I did not get out of the country when I was younger because I was working in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and never really got the chance after going to uni. So I applied for a birth certificate and finally got one—there it is [witness refers to folders]—[REDACTED]

So I got this bit of paper in 1996. I rang up when I moved to [REDACTED] and spoke to this lady at the mission, got an envelope. I have still got all this stuff. I got this envelope, and this is the only information I know about myself—one-and-a-bit pages. I did not even know what time I was born until I opened this. No-one did. No-one could tell me. There are different spellings of my mother's name. There is an address here in Albury that does not exist and never has. The street exists, but it does not go that far and never has. It gives her birthdate and place. I have got a couple of different birthdates in all this documentation. This seems to be an interview, placement of child for adoption, that was taken a couple of weeks before I was born, on the 27th of the fifth, 1969. I was born on the 11th of the sixth. She was living in an expectant mothers homes, Kedesh, in Melbourne at the time. I have got a bit of information: first child—first time I ever saw anything like, 'She's fair, she's got a few freckles, badly in summer, and burns'. That is me. It says my father and she worked at the Albury Woollen Mills. I went there about 15 years ago—it was still open—and they put a couple of people onto it for a week or more, pulling apart a room of old records, and they could not find a thing. That is a way to spin a business out—rock up and say you are looking for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

So this is the only identifying information I have got. It says here that my birth father does not know and that he is in Malaya and he is in signals—he was in the army. The only people that were in Malaya at that time were people that were in the special forces, and I cannot find anything about him on any of the websites or national databases, so it might be there, it might not. It might not be the right information, I do not know. There is a little bit about her. It says two brothers, two sisters. There is a step brother and sister. I think her name was changed when she was younger and her mother remarried. I have hit a dead end and cannot find her. And then there is scant information about Robert—but, you know, there is a little bit of identifying information on me there. That is it, that is all I have got. I am happy for you to have a look at any of this if you would like. That is me; that is a person in a nutshell. That is the 12th of the 11th 1996 in an interview about myself to get that a few days later. I think I had to pay 75 bucks for that at the time. I had the internet, I was one of the earlier adopters of the internet, and the next day I looked up all the [REDACTED] in Albury—I have still got the stuff [witness refers to folder]—and Wodonga. They are not there. They just have not been.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I had not met them before. One of the guys lives over the river (in Albury NSW). The first time I met him he said, 'How're you going? I didn't realise from your photo how familiar you look. Any of your brothers or anything play footy for Albury? You're a dead ringer for a bloke in my son's team'. You know, they are here somewhere. So, yes, that is it. So that is that stuff.

This is all the records from there at that time. I am happy for you to have a flick through these after we are finished talking [witness refers to folder]. There are things I have circled, like when I was taken direct from hospital, red tags and things. That is an original extract, not a birth certificate. That is a second schedule—massive, big 'adopted' stamp there. I will talk more about that a bit. As I said, I have signed more information signing away a house and buying a house. There is my birth mum's signature. She has got the same writing as me; it is exactly the same.

The information I got back then, stuff like this, is typed out, and I got the handwritten, which I was allowed to get when I recontacted the Anglicare in 2018 [witness refers to folder]. It did not have Tallangatta on it at the time or I would have researched Tallangatta. This is a typed-out document of an admission of me to St Gabriel's Babies Home; a letter from my mum telling how I am going; a letter from a woman engaging herself with the place I was adopted from to try to get another kid, which is my sister—a lovely letter with some photos of me; various other things. Oh, there is my receipt—this one I feel like framing and putting on a wall. It is a receipt for me—like I am a horse—that my lovely mum and dad, [REDACTED], got. 'This is to certify that I have this day received from the Mission of St James and St John consent to an adoption order'—of me. And somewhere in here there is a receipt of picking up the child. There is my medical that says I am good enough to be adopted; a lot of pamphlets and information.

The lady back then in the late 90s was lovely. None of this is a comment on the people I have dealt with; it is the system. When I went to Anglicare in 2018 they asked me if I accidentally may have been given some originals of stuff. I had them and they did not have them, so they took a copy of that and they gave me a couple of other things that were potentially accidentally put in the file behind at another time, and that is where I got the Tallangatta information. I believe you have already spoken with Rowena Robinson from Anglicare, who is an absolute gem. She was so apologetic when she gave me that in 2018, because I had not updated my address. They still had me living in [REDACTED].

So here is through the years [witness refers to folder]: early 90s, I had a bit of a go and had a bit of a stab at stuff; then we get to 2014, had a bit of another stab and sent away for some info; did not do anything about it; spoke to Rowena back then; started looking things up on the internet again; joined that Ancestry; phone records, trying to track people down—not trying to ring them, just to track something down; electoral rolls. I am running my own [REDACTED] business while I am doing all this. You do all this stuff late at night after you have finally sent your invoices out and dealt with your life—try to deal with your other one.

So in 2015 I got hold of Anglicare again. I spoke to Rowena back then and, you know, got sent the standard, ‘You’ve got to do this, required by law, and then we have to register that you have had a chat with us’—all of that type of thing. She sent me all the information. Pretty confronting—and again, no comment on Rowena or her great work with me. She is doing her job by what she has to do under the rules. ‘Yes, you want to find out about yourself. Here you go. We have got to list you with this department. We have got to list you with that. The *Adoption Act* requires that you, you, you, you, you’. I am as stubborn as hell, so I keep going. I know a lot of people that would have stopped back there. Roadblock after roadblock after roadblock. So that is pretty confronting. I put that one in the drawer for a while. It sits in my bedside drawer. I have not told my daughter about any of this, and I am going to tell you why in a second. So that is Ancestry.

In 2018 I was [REDACTED], and I thought, ‘You know what? I’ve got a bit of time on my hands now in the evenings. I’m going to do this again’. I rang up Rowena: ‘Hi. I spoke to you a couple of years ago’. She was great. I had to apply again. I emailed it off, and then I flew back up and went over and had a chat with Rowena and she gave me some more information.

I got another certificate of interview. Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria have no idea what to do with them, neither do New South Wales. We had an interview—I don’t know—in the morning. Straight out of there from Yarraville and over to births, deaths and marriages. The thing with the buttons of what you want is about half as big as that table at the front door next to the security guard. It does not have an adopted person button. They did not know how to deal with it. And then when I showed them this, I got, ‘What’s that? I don’t care about your special letter. What is it? I think someone came in here a few years ago with one of them. I’m not quite sure what to do with it’, or words to that effect. I got bounced by one person, who then said, ‘You have to go and fill those documents out before I deal with you’. It was like 10 lines. ‘Can I fill it out here?’. ‘No. Off you go. Go and get another ticket’, because they were finishing in about 10 minutes and did not want to deal with it. And then when I went to go back to them, they said, ‘Sorry. I’m finishing in 2 minutes. Back to the line’. Great.

Anyway, I finally got put in front of a young guy who tried to tell me he was just inexperienced and did not really know anything about it. He went upstairs to find someone who thought that they would, and that lady came down and said, ‘Get this guy whatever he wants. He’s allowed to ask any questions’. So I applied for ‘L’s’ birth, death, marriage—anything.

So I got a few more documents then from Rowena—same deal again—identifying documents [witness refers to folder]. But, you know, a couple of big things there. It has got Tallangatta on one, because I finally got the handwritten copy of something that was typed back in the 60s—and there it is, Tallangatta, just down the road.

This is a typed thing that I got off the same document: misspelt name, false address potentially, misspelt ‘Marshall’—I do not know if that is intentional or not, but how do you misspell something like that on an important piece of paper? [Witness refers to folder.]

This one here is a beauty: this is me in a ledger [witness refers to folder]. Here is me, Darren Marshall, in an accounting book getting picked up, and other legal documentation—the same sort of stuff I got before. This is again in no way a comment on the people involved in this. It is the rules and the laws that this all happened under.

So, I got back from that and a couple of weeks later to the post office box—walk into the post office on the way to work and there is some information: ‘Beauty, here’s my stuff. I will go and ring my partner, who is back in Melbourne, and open it up’—really excited. One of them is my original birth certificate—never had one of them before. I have only had schedules and my [name withheld] name. So here I am, in a car on the side of the road in [REDACTED] opening this up, thinking, ‘You beauty’. Yes, that is me all right.

Has anyone else got a massive red stamp on their birth certificate that says ‘ADOPTED’ that someone in the office could not even do properly and had another go? [Witness refers to folder.] My daughter was coming [REDACTED] three or four weeks after. I wanted to talk to her about all this. I took all of this back. She was 19 then. I wanted to show her all of this; I wanted to show her this. I am not showing her that. So, I wrote back to Rowena, saying how confronting I found it. That might as well say ‘DIFFERENT’—or, you know, I said, ‘Do Aboriginal people get one that says ‘STOLEN’ or ‘INTEGRATED’ on it?’. I understand; you cannot give two legal documents. That is a document. But, you know, down there—something. That was a big roadblock that stopped me in my tracks, and I just put it away.

So, again, I am stubborn. It takes a while, but I get back into it. So a couple of months later I rang births, deaths and marriages in New South Wales, because on the same day in a different envelope I got a ‘no record of result for L Marshall’. Birth, marriage, death—good, not in Victoria. I tried New South Wales because the kids here were born in Albury back then. I rang New South Wales births, deaths and marriages on 11th of the ninth, 2018: ‘Yeah, mate, that’s great that you’ve got some sort of letter that you reckon you’ve got. Why don’t you just get certified copies of all your documentation and pop it in the post?’. ‘Where to? I am not doing that because this is, like, my information. I am not just putting in the post.’ ‘Or you can email it then’. ‘To who? Give me a name’. ‘No, you can just email it to a general email or send it “Attention: Adoption unit”. We’ll find someone to give it to’. That was pretty much the vein of the conversation. Massive roadblock. Sitting there crying—a 50-year-old bloke sitting at his kitchen table crying his eyes out because he has just poured his heart out to someone on the end of a phone in a government department that was not even really trying.

There she is: that is my daughter, [REDACTED] [witness refers to folder]. It is the only person on earth I know that is directly related to me, the only person that I see myself in. I come from a very loving family. I am not complaining about that at all.

To keep going, in 2019 I came up here and went to Tallangatta. Tallangatta has got about twice as many people as are in this room, so it is a little bit hard to walk around and say, ‘Hey, I’m looking for someone that might exist, and I’ve got a baptism certificate and information saying I’m from here’. The lady at the library put me onto someone at the shop who put me on to the churchwarden who was out playing golf and who stopped his golf game halfway through. I did not tell him any information, and he said, ‘You’re after someone really close. I’ve had someone like that before come and talk to me’. I said, ‘Yeah’. ‘Where are you up from? Melbourne? Yep. Good. I’ll just finish this hole, and I’ll see you in 20 minutes’. He came around and took me into his little warden’s office. He spent about 3 hours with me going through this massive big old safe with all the old books. And we went through everything, and we could not find any record of L Marshall. We could not find a L Marshall. We could not find anything. I do not know if that is just, ‘Hey, if you want to be in this Kedesh home and you want to be part of this, you have to be baptised somewhere’, and they have just gone and got that. I do not know.

I spoke to a really old lady that the guy from the historical society put me onto. She did not want to meet me in person. I think she was 87 or something. I had a lovely conversation with her. She used to live in old Tallangatta, where it is now covered by the weir when that was raised back in 1959 or so. And she said, ‘No, there were no Marshalls back then. However, there was a young girl ‘L’ who used to skip up and down the main street past my house and who would have been about the right age back then, and she had red, freckly skin. I don’t know if that’s her or not’.

A guy at the historical society was helping me out, and he put me onto a couple of cemeteries. He had lived there forever. He gave me a couple of names of Marshalls that lived out of town on a farm and had ginger hair and fair skin. There is a record in there somewhere [witness refers to folder] of ‘L’ getting help from her uncle, and Rowena told me that he was apparently a farmer who helped her. He gave her some money and came down and picked her up.

2020—what a year. Nothing done there, sitting in my study Zooming. So, Yuki, there is your email from the other day. A friend of mine sent me the link to this and said, ‘Hey, here’s something I reckon you need to go to’. And, Yuki, here I am. Yuki sent me a bit of info about Kedesh—thank you—a bit of a pamphlet about that back at the time (witness refers to folder). Apparently my mum was quite looked after. It never stops. I had a couple of hours this morning. I went over to the council and asked what they had on Marshalls in Wodonga and where the cemetery was. That is me [witness refers to folder].

The CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you so much for your evidence. We truly appreciate it. It has been extremely challenging and painful, and we really share the challenging experiences that you have had. But I would like to give you this opportunity to I suppose tell us what you would like from this inquiry. What are some of the points?

NAME WITHHELD: I think it should be easier for people to get information. Every time I try to do something it costs me 200 bucks. I do not think adopted people should have to pay for their certificates. I think there should be dedicated people that have training at each of the births, deaths and marriages around the country to deal with people, because you might hear that someone has moved to Darwin that you are trying to track down, so you deal with them and they know what is going on.

There were nearly 7000 kids adopted in Victoria in 1969, and I was the first person to walk into births, deaths and marriages for several years in Melbourne in 2018, in the information age. That shows me that there is an enormous amount of roadblocks that people are being pushed back on. Potentially, walking in there, someone that was less stubborn than me might have walked straight out after getting bounced at the first desk or not finding an adoption button or confidential button to deal with a well-trained staff member.

You know, even little things like over at the council, helping me heaps: ‘How can I help you, mate?’; ‘I’m looking for Marshalls in the late 60s in this area. I’m trying to track down some family history’; ‘Oh, no, I haven’t got anyone there. What else have you got?’; ‘Give me a bit of pen and paper, mate, I’m not yelling it across the room’, because I am very conscious of someone else being in there when I am looking for L Marshall. It could be her granddaughter standing there paying her dog registration or something.

I have not done my DNA with Ancestry, because I would not like my daughter to ring me up and say, ‘Why did someone just appear on Ancestry next to me?’. So I am conscious of that. I know people stalk people by social media. I might have looked people up on someone else’s account. There are a few people around here that look like me.

So yes, I think it should be a lot easier for people to access information, I think there should be trained staff in these places that actually know what to do and I think there should be a confidential, secure way to send stuff. I said to births, deaths and marriages New South Wales, ‘I’m quite happy to send all of this identifying certified information by registered mail’, and they said, ‘Well, bad luck. No-one is going to pick it up’, or words to that effect, not those exact words. But that is what you are hearing. So lots of little progressive steps.

I am 52 in a couple of weeks. You know, it is about time I engage people like VANISH and that sort of thing, because I am running out of time and I am running out of roadblocks. ‘L’ is 73. You know, she is 73 years old. I have not seen that lady for 52 years. I hope one day she would like to meet me, even just to say ‘Hi’, give me a bit of info, and I will meet someone.

So in answer to your question, what do I want out of this inquiry, I guess the main thing I wanted out of today was to tell you what it is like from my perspective and to give you a bit of perspective. I am a pretty happy person. I have got a pretty good life. I am not usually walking around crying and staring at books. But yes, it is pretty confronting to come here.

It is confronting to be adopted and to try to do a work medical: ‘What’s your medical history?’; ‘No idea’; ‘How come?’; ‘I’m adopted’; ‘Oh, another one’; ‘Yes, another one. But this one’s me. Don’t talk to me like that’. I do not know any long-term medical history. I have got no idea. The only thing I have ever known, the only thing my mother was told, and it is on that bit of handwritten paper, ‘Oh, watch out, he’s a bleeder. He might be a bleeder. One of the rellies has haemophilia’, so I do not know. I do not know. I just think it should be easier for people. I think there should be more means of confidentiality and more ways for people to easily find access to information.

You know, the federal government said sorry a few years ago, the state government said sorry. I do not know if that has changed anything. It has not changed a thing from my perspective. You know, you would think after the federal government says sorry about something that when you go to a government department in a state government it should be on their radar, but it is not. Apparently Rowena went back to births, deaths and marriages, and legally there has to be an 'Adopted' stamp on there or they will not do anything else, but now it is black. I hope that has helped some people not be as confronted. I have not applied for my replacement copy to see if it is black, because I should not have to pay for another one.

The CHAIR: Okay. I might just pass on to Christine. Do you want to start with some questions?

Ms COUZENS: Yes. Thanks, [name withheld]. We really appreciate you coming and sharing your experience with us today for this inquiry. You know, obviously we have heard from a whole range of people and we are taking on board that information. Actually you have sort of answered my question because I was going to ask you about Ancestry and whether you have pursued that angle or not. I think you just mentioned before that you have not at this point.

NAME WITHHELD: Well, I have had a look on Ancestry, but I am not a researcher, I am not a genealogist. I was having a look with a friend a little while ago. They were just doing a different way of searching—I am not too bad on computers and at searching for things—and they came up with a few more names. I was thinking, 'Oh well, that's just someone doing a few different search names'. So that sort of reinforces again that perhaps I need to go to somewhere like VANISH and so on, because they will actually have the, you know, 'You've got to do it this way and not that way'. I do not want to find someone's address and turn up at their front door. I am not interested in that, but I would like to find someone.

Ms COUZENS: And we have had evidence from people who have used Ancestry so—

NAME WITHHELD: Yes, there is a guy at my work who did Ancestry and recently found a brother he did not know he had, through the DNA. You know, that is great. It turns up on the screen in front of you. I am not expecting too many 73-year-old people to be that flash with Ancestry and looking stuff up on computers from my experience with them. At my age I am sort of on the cusp of knowing this stuff, but I don't have any experience. Anyone 60 on that I work with is a bit scared of computers.

From this inquiry: I have asked for my information to be confidential because I do not want it going out to all and sundry. I have spoken to Yuki a little bit about having my 'Darren Marshall' name on it and some sort of message I would like to leave to 'L' and Robert. I was trying to write one this morning before I left and I was trying to write one in the car before. Look at that handwriting: it looks like a seagull has walked on the page. You know, something like:

'L' and Robert, I've been looking for you. Please know I understand it's not your fault. I'm okay.
I miss you, 'L'.
Robert, I would love to meet you.
'L', I would like to see you again.
Please call Anglicare in Yarraville, they've got my details—Darren Marshall.
And I want you to meet my beautiful daughter.

The main thing I wanted out of this was just to come and tell you what it is like and the types of hurdles. I have not even had time to read all the documents. What is your overall scope with this? Where do you go with all this? What do you do?

The CHAIR: Well, it is very wideranging. But let me say on behalf of the committee: we are going to put forward a very strong report back to government, and we hope we do justice to all those who have provided evidence. I know it has been challenging. We have got some strong and very emotional evidence. The next steps for us will be clearly we have got other evidence to hear. We are going to keep you updated through Yuki. If there is anything that we can do, please reach out to any one of us. The report will be tabled in August. As I said, I cannot pre-empt it, but we have heard pretty loud and clear through all our submissions and evidence—and, as I said, I hope that this report really is a step forward in the path—

NAME WITHHELD: Yes, it is fantastic that it is happening.

The CHAIR: Again, thank you so much. You have really been able to share your story and we have been able to see and experience it with you today. I wish you all the very best. Hopefully we can in some way assist you through the process.

NAME WITHHELD: Thank you for the chance to appear and for hearing me.

The CHAIR: No, we need to thank you, [name withheld]. Thank you so much.

Witness withdrew.