

SUBMISSION written 14/1/20

I was adopted in Victoria in 1958 at the age of five and a half months.

Now at sixty-two I have perspective on the impact of adoption.

Please listen to the people who have lived this experience

It never stops hurting.

Having protection, security and love that another family environment can provide does not negate the trauma of being separated from the birth family.

Having your identity denied. Not knowing where you belong. Keeping The Secret is damaging.

Please learn from lessons of the past. Please listen.

I have been involved in Adoption Peer Support group for the last thirty years.

The stories I have heard, over and over again. The pain is real.

Child protection is paramount. However, the need is more than physical protection. The emotional toll of separation from family must be balanced against the potential harm.

Surrogacy is wrong.

Adoption is wrong.

Putting children's need first is the only way forward.

I endorse the recommendation made by the organisation that represents the Self Help model in Victoria: VANISH.

Thank you

Lauren Ruth Howe (born Marlene Clarke) 14/1/1958

Adopted through Methodist Babies Home.

