

From: [Inquiry into responses to historical forced adoptions in Victoria](#)
To: [forcedadoptionsinquiry](#)
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into responses to historical forced adoptions in Victoria
Date: Monday, 20 January 2020 11:52:23 AM

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into responses to historical forced adoptions in Victoria

Mrs Nancy Johnson

[REDACTED]

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

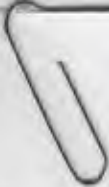
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File3:



Nancy's story.

I feel like I gave birth to a faceless baby, on the 13th May 1972, at the Women's hospital in Carlton, Victoria.

I was sent to a home for unmarried mothers, I was not given a choice. To me it was like a prison, a little room with a single bed, wardrobe and a small window. A big shower and toilet, one day room where we could sit, read, watch tv or do our own thing. We lined up in the dining room to be served our meals. We worked like slaves, my job was working in the kitchen preparing meals, making sandwiches and handing them to the homeless through a square hole in the locked gate. This was frightening because they were dirty, unshaven, teeth missing, smelt terrible.

We were given a ring to wear on our wedding finger to hide the shame, "Face the voice of shame". Told to ask God's forgiveness for the terrible sin I committed, no man would marry a second hand woman if he knew I had a child outside marriage. I would not make a good mother, this hurts me now.

When I gave birth to my son I did not see him, cuddle him or hear him cry, he was taken straight away into another room, to a crib probably with BFA, Born for Adoption.

My son was intended for adoption. I faintly remember seeing white in front of me just before he was born, so I could not see him. Maybe a white sheet, I have learned this happened. I was drugged up with Valium and other sedatives at 36 weeks of pregnancy to block it all out.

I do not remember signing adoption papers.

I did when he was 10 days old, which was illegal at the time because I was under 21 at the time, you had to be over 21 to sign legal documents, vote, or get married without parents' permission.

The adoption papers were already completed I only had to sign. The birth certificate I had to name the baby. For original birth certificate I did not see or fill or give details. It was all done by doctors, nurses and social workers.

The option of keeping him was never discussed the decision was made before he was born, we had no say in the matter.

We were told to start a new life as if nothing had happened. Feeling guilty and sedated with Vallum. I felt a failure, I did not share with anyone, living a lie and my dark secret I kept buried, we got no support.

Now I understand later I had experienced emotional trauma, suffered a huge loss, my feelings were normal, natural reaction to what I had experienced, it is a silent grief.

Yes, forced adoption is painful, I lived my life not knowing whether my son was alive or dead, what he has done with life. If he had a happy and good childhood. I remember his birthday every year, especially Mother's Day as his birthday is on Mother's Day some years, 13 May. Relinquishing mums suffer silent grief for years, you never get over it.

When I came home nothing was said or talked about. My brother and sisters knew and were told not to say anything. I did not know one of my sisters got married until I got home, I missed her wedding.

Conclusion

I had no feelings for the pregnancy or my son. I knew he would be 'taken'.

My son was not welcomed into the world with joy and love, who was part of me. Unless you experience relinquishing a baby you do not know what we go through.

I have to carry the stigma until the day I die. It is amazing how many memories have been suppressed.

We did not forget.