

The Committee Manager
Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Committee Manager

Please find attached my Submission to the Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions In Victoria.

I offer my apologies for the length of my Submission.

I have been a 'voice' for mothers for around 22 years. There are many mothers in Victoria who are still unaware that an apology was made to them in 2012. Hence the long Submission is for the mothers, who, for whatever their reasons, cannot participate in this Inquiry.

My submission presents for others, words that speak of a past that ill-treated these women and changed their lives forever.

The majority of mothers do not belong to mothers' groups, but I have heard them speak.

So I ask you please to accept my submission as it is.

Although I personally would have preferred the Statutes of Limitations being lifted over an Inquiry, I thank you for the chance to once again tell of our history.

I have always given my name, my full address, and my telephone number on every document I write. I have no problem in my name, address or even my telephone number being made public.

I look forward to meeting the Committee members of this Inquiry in person when interviews begin.

Once again thank you for the opportunity for mothers to have another chance to be heard and listened to.

With deepest gratitude

(no title)
june smith



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SUBMISSION

INQUIRY INTO RESPONSES TO HISTORICAL FORCED ADOPTIONS IN VICTORIA

"When we were young mothers we had no faces, no one noticed us, we were nothing to them and they treated us as such, as a lesser human being and dismissed us as mothers.

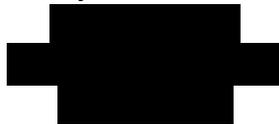
We now have faces, we are known to politicians because we have worked hard to be heard.

I do not want ever to be faceless again. I want them to know who I am and what they did to me. I am somebody, I have a face, and an identity, and I will never allow anyone to dismiss me again

(Written by june smith on the 29th February 2016)

.....

june smith



I am a mother who along with many other mothers has, for the past 22 years been an outspoken and active woman for all mothers who faced the brutality of the abduction of their newborn babies mainly in the 1960s.

I have been on television, spoken on the radio, reported in newspapers etc. etc.
It has been a very hard and constantly challenging road to walk.

On the 23rd January 2020 in a small coffee lounge in a town outside Melbourne. The Premier of Victoria sat down at a table next to me. With much trepidation I found the courage to turn and speak to him about our past, he responded warmly and positively.

I have since been told by others that this encounter was "Divine Intervention"
"It was meant to be" "Fate" and "Unbelievable!".

For me it was just plain "Awesome!"

I am writing this submission in the hope that the Committee of this Inquiry will at last expose the REAL truth of our brutal past, in the hope that justice will prevail, and in the hope that this Committee is sincere in committing to a fair and truthful account of the past history that inhumanely abused vulnerable young mothers and cruelly took their babies :-
As was validated by a Senate Inquiry in 2012.

MY FEAR IS THAT YOU WILL DO NONE OF THESE THINGS.

From the moment of birth, the mother became the binding and inalienable legal guardian of her child, no one had any right to touch her child without her legal authority. NO ONE! WHATEVER THE AGE OF THE MOTHER!!!

The words "Forced Adoption" came into being during a Senate Inquiry into the "former policies and practices of forced adoption," in 2012.

The words "forced adoption" are our children's story, not ours

The words "policies and practices" relate to those policies and practices that targeted a group of young mothers for abuse and the removal of their newborn babies, THIS IS OUR TRUTH,

This Senate Inquiry, according to their Report, covered a period of late 1950s to early 1970s. This is the ONLY PERIOD in Victorian History where babies were targeted to be removed from their young mothers during birthing, or minutes/hours/few days later, WITHOUT the written authority of the mother, actions which breached Victorian Statutory Law.

We mothers were also the very first surrogate mothers in Victoria's history, but we were never informed that we were.

FROM THE LATE 1950'S A PATRIARCHAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY PUBLICLY CONDEMNED AND JUDGED US PREGNANT YOUNG WOMEN AS BEING OF SUB-INTELLIGENCE, IF NOT RETARDED, HAVING BAD GENES, LOOSE MORALS, NEEDING REHABILITATION, ETC.

THIS PATRIARCHAL GOVERNMENT, THEIR FUNDED AGENCIES, RELIGIONS OF MOST DENOMINATIONS AND WELFARE WORKERS, UNITED AS A WHOLE AND MADE A DECISION TO PUNISH US FOR OUR PREGNANCY, BY IGNORING STATUTORY LAW, AND OUR HUMAN RIGHTS BECAUSE WE BREACHED THE BIGOTED IDEALS OF A PATRIARCHY

.....

EVEN THOUGH A SENATE INQUIRY IN 2011/2012 VALIDATED THE TRUTH OF OUR ABUSE AND THE ILLEGAL ABDUCTION OF OUR CHILDREN -

NO GOVERNMENT, HOSPITAL, RELIGIOUS GROUP, OR WELFARE GROUP, FROM THOSE ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAD WILLINGLY CARRIED OUT OUR "PUNISHMENT" HAS ATONED FOR THE SCARS WE BEAR, FOR THEIR BETRAYAL OF US THAT FOREVER DESTROYED OUR TRUST, FOR THE SHAME THEY INFLICTED ON US WHEN THE SHAME WAS THEIRS TO BEAR, FOR THE MYTHS AND LIES THEY HAVE AND STILL DO PERPETRATE ABOUT US, FOR THEIR CRUELTY IN PRESENTING US AS AN OBSCENITY, FOR THE TRAUMA THEY CAUSED US, AND THE AFFECT THAT THIS TRAUMA HAS HAD ON OUR LIVES AND WELLBEING - FOREVER SUFFERING THE UNBELIEVABLE AND CRUEL ABDUCTION OF OUR BABIES,

On the 21st March 2013 the then Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard branded our past abuse as a "cruel and immoral practice." She said :-

"We deplore the shameful practices that denied you, the mothers, your fundamental rights and responsibilities to love and care for your children. You were not legally or socially acknowledged as their mothers. And you yourselves were deprived of care and support. To you the mothers who were betrayed by a system that gave you no choice and subjected you to manipulation, mistreatment and malpractice we apologise"

"We say sorry to you, the mothers who were denied knowledge of your rights, which meant you could not provide informed consent. You were given false assurances. You were forced to endure the coercion and brutality of practices that were unethical, dishonest and in many cases illegal"

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My personal story of the abuse I faced, and the abduction of my newborn son [REDACTED] aged just 4 days old in 1961 is contained in both the Report of the "**Forgotten Australians**" and the Report of the "**former forced adoption policies and practices**"

Therefore I will adhere to the current Legal and Social issues Committee's requirements as quoted -

'In conducting this Inquiry, the Committee is examining systematic problems and failures in this area, rather than conducting forensic investigations into individual cases'

"This inquiry will explore the support services and responses provided to the people in our community who endured the past practices of forced adoption going back several decades.

It is an opportunity for community members to provide information that will enable the Committee to assess what support has been provided and to make recommendations going forwards."

(Natalie Suleyman, Chair, 6th November 2019)

.....

I, June Smith write this submission as a first hand witness to the past policies and practices that abused me and **abducted** my beloved baby son Michael aged just 4 days old.

I use the word **abducted** because at the moment of my son's birth I became the binding and inalienable legal guardian of my son by law.

His welfare was my **sole** and **legal** responsibility.

I was **never** made aware of my legal rights or indeed that I had any legal rights at all by those who abused me and stole my son.

I have been fighting for justice and compensation for mothers for more than twenty years.

I have written numerous letters to the Victorian government, their funded hospital the Royal Women's, and the St. Joseph's nuns.

I have written letters to these organizations seeking justice and redress for their past misdemeanours. Their cumulative responses are **always** platitudinous words, much hand-balling of my letters, downright condemnation or denial of any claims I have made against them, or more often than not just plain

SILENCE.

On the 27th December 2019, myself and another mother, Lyn Kinghorn (she will have no objection to her name being put forward) had the story of our past history of abuse written on the whole of page 4 of "**The Age Newspaper**" **our story actually beginning on Page 1, a great achievement for us two mothers who have fought so damn hard for justice and redress for all mums who suffered this injustice**

This article spoke of our absolute anger that the Victorian Government had implemented this Inquiry instead of lifting the "**Statutes of Limitations**"

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I personally believe this inquiry is a government ploy to prolong our anguish, and as a culling mechanism hoping to silence some voices of mothers due to our ages.

I have no qualms in making this statement due to my years of experience with the Ministers of the current Victorian Government.

The Victorian government has consistently refused to lift these Statutes of Limitations, which are currently a barrier for mothers in seeking litigation against their perpetrators.

The Failure of this current government to lift the Statutes of Limitations has displayed their entrenched commitment to continue to support the perpetrators of inhumane abuse, and abduction of children, by denying their victims the right to justice and redress.

The Report of the Senate Inquiry into former forced adoption policies and practices, Page 245, 11,50 declares that:-

"In cases where illegality is alleged in the adoption process the prosecution of those responsible should not be hindered by statutes of limitation.

The committee urges all states and territories to examine the limitations for infringements of adoption legislation to ensure that they do not act as a barrier to litigation by individuals who were not made aware of their legal rights at the time that offences may have been committed.

The committee does not want people who have been damaged by their experience of forced adoption to be damaged further by having to endure a long and bruising legal journey that may ultimately be unsuccessful due to a legal technicality"

"██████████, COMMITTEE SECRETARY OF THE SECRETARIAT, ASSISTING THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO FORCED ADOPTION, LATER BROADENED THE DEFINITION [OF THE WORDS FORCED ADOPTION" TO INCLUDE "A WIDE RANGE OF PRACTICES SUCH AS "coercion, bribery, bullying, physical restraint, kidnapping and theft"

██████████ Branch Manager, Financial and Specialist Support (Australian Government, Department of Social Services)
16th January 2016 in a letter addressed to me, June Smith)

AS THE ABOVE DEFINITIONS OF 'FORCED ADOPTION' DO NOT RELATE IN ANYWAY TO FATHERS, GRANDPARENTS, SIBLINGS OR THEIR PETS, PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT REFER TO THEM IN THE SAME SUBJECT MATTER AS MOTHERS AS NONE OF THESE PERSONS EVER FACED THE BRUTALITY OF THE INHUMANE ABUSE THAT WE MOTHERS DID.

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In Victoria in 1955 Chief Justice Sir Edmund Herring is on record -

"The love of a mother for her child has been recognised from the days of Solomon, if not before, as one of the strongest of all human instincts. It is one that in the ordinary course can be relied upon to endure throughout life, whatever may befall, and so assumes an added significance when one is considering the welfare of the child on the long view of it's whole life.... adoption is from the nature of things only a second best to be put into operation only when the first best is for some reason not available... And it has to be borne in mind that adoptive parents may not prove as long suffering as natural parents might be, nor as the years go by as ready to put up with the frailties of the children they adopt."

In 1961 Dr. Vincent Clark is on record saying -

"If the demand for adoptable babies continues to exceed supply....then it is quite possible that in the near future, unwed mothers will be "punished" by having their children taken from them right after birth."

"A policy like this would not be executed - nor labelled explicitly as "punishment." Rather, it would be implemented through such pressures and labels as "scientific findings" "the best interests of the child" "rehabilitation of the unwed mother" and "the stability of the family and society"

.....

Mothers, were branded with derogatory titles such as - unmarried, birth, or relinquishing mothers, in order to falsely qualify their mothershood as that of a "different' mother, an "abhorrent" mother, a mother "willing to give up her own newborn baby" "an unloving and unnatural mother"

.....this propaganda has continued to haunt us for decades

Society as a whole damned us mothers, we were treated without respect, and promoted and perpetrated as worthless, having loose morals by so-called professionals who usurped their positions of power to abuse us, with our having absolutely no access to defend ourselves from the lies that abounded about us. Like the following words -

"controlling in society of 'misfits' (describing mothers)

"poor, undernourished, of low intelligence, if not actually retarded"

(Dr. F. Grunsit of the Adoption advisory Clinic NSW)

"The prospect of the unmarried girl or of her family adequately caring for a child and giving it a normal environment and upbringing is so small that I believe for practical purposes it can be ignored"

"I believe that a good environment will make a better job of bad genes than a bad environment will make of good genes"

"When you walk through the nurseries , you know that some babies are hungry, some have a belly-ache, but none of you imagine that they are stuffed full of original sin"

"It is environment which pushes the sinfulness into these babies"

"The last thing that the Obstetrician might concern himself with is the law in regard to adoption"

(Dr. D.F. Lawson M.B., F.R.C.S.,F.R.C.O.G., Obstetrician RWH Melbourne 1960)

"Living an Immoral life" "Assist such a girl to rehabilitate herself" "the need to find work

for her away from former environments and habits"

(Isobel Strawn Almoner of the RWH)

In 1953 a social worker of the Australian Association of Social Worker's, Miss Margaret Thornhill is on record saying -

"The most able, competent and better-adjusted unmarried mothers are the ones who give up their babies for adoption" !!!!! DID SHE HAVE EVIDENCE FOR HER CRUEL STATEMENT

On the 13th August 2019 a Senior Minister of the current Victorian Government is on record in Hansard implying that because of "no pension" "no contraceptives" "no family planning provision" and the fact that we, a targeted group of young mothers, were unwed, can be deemed as mitigating circumstances for the enactment of illegal acts which breached Statutory laws of Victoria!

These are the same old, and well worn out words that have been used by the adoptive community for decades against mothers

These words were dismissed by a Senate Inquiry in 2011/2012 when the Committee stated that "*what is wrong today was wrong then*"

(For the record - from my research The Victorian Government did NOT even provide a pension to a widowed, or deserted wife living in Victoria in the 1960's, and I can find no evidence that family planning provisions existed for any woman In the 1960's

'IF YOU TELL A LIE BIG ENOUGH AND KEEP REPEATING IT, PEOPLE WILL EVENTUALLY COME TO BELIEVE IT'

(Adolph Hitler 1925 "Mien Kampf")

This current Labor Government, then in opposition in 2012, apologized at length to the "*women whose lives we devastated.*"

(I am aware that apologies have no legal standing in a court of law.)

"To acknowledge the tragedy you have endured I must affirm one simple rule - that is, to prematurely separate a mother and her newborn child against their will is to pervert the order of nature and to betray the basic tenets of civilisation. That any government, any profession, might violate this rule is a concept deeply unsettling to comprehend. It is wrong, it is inexcusable and the violation of this rule is a principle test for the health of any society. We failed that test"

"But most of all we failed it when elected representatives of this state allowed this systematic tragedy to unfurl and thought nil of those it affected, when they thought nil of the practice they enabled or their obligation to end it"

"We are truly sorry for our failure"

"We will always remember. We will not ever wear the pretence of denial; we will not attempt a feeble silence. We will always remember, because to forget is to discredit the courage of so many"

(Dan Andrews 25th October, 2012)

Sadly for us mothers, from the date the Labor Party came into power in 2014, we have been *forgotten, denied and have faced this government's feeble silence.*

We have been discredited for our courage by a government who forgot we ever existed.

"SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESPONSES PROVIDED TO THE PEOPLE [mothers] IN OUR

COMMUNITY WHO ENDURED THE PAST PRACTICES [and policies] OF FORCED ADOPTION"

The Victorian government provided a large sculpture as a memorial to our abuse. However, **everyone** outside of our issue who has viewed this sculpture has projected that this effigy does nothing to identify in any way at all of our past history of abuse and the abduction of our children. It appears as a happy mother and her children in a park.

Constrastingly to the above memorial to mothers -

Mothers in Western Australia raised funds themselves with the help of FASS West Australia to provide two sculptures, "**Empty arms - Broken lives**" which were erected in the town of Victoria Park to remind society of the past abuse of mothers.

The first sculpture (and it is a large sculpture) is of a young mother sitting with her knees folded to her chest, weeping into her arm held across her face, the other arm is imploringly reaching out in front of her. It is moving and identifiable.

The second large sculpture, placed near the first, displays a very, very tiny newborn baby in the centre of the palm of a **huge** fist, it represents the forceful hand of the perpetrators who took this baby from their mother. It brings tears just looking it. The innocence of a baby in an iron fist is overwhelming

The Shires of Wellington and Hepburn Springs Victoria also have moving memorials erected in their towns acknowledging the abuse mothers suffered.

I personally would like to acknowledge the organization BERRY STREET:-

To explain I have a copy of the **ORIGINAL APOLOGY** offered to mothers by Berry Street Management dated the 21st March 2013. This **Original** apology pulled no punches, their explanations long and detailed, not once indicating denial of their past deeds towards mother, no arrogance, or untruths. In fact they laid bare their past actions and relayed their true and deep sorrow at the practices they enabled that denied young mothers their right to raise their babies.

In this **original apology** the following words are written:-

"We now believe that in 1955 and 1956 the Berry Street Foundling Hospital and Infant's home, influenced heavily by senior professionals in the medical profession, shifted the focus of our work. Supporting young pregnant women with whatever choice they made for the future of their baby gave way to influencing them to make their children available to adopt to infertile couples."

They wrote on :-

"Our research found the following comment recorded in Berry StreetAnnual Report of 1968 :-

As I said in my report twelve months ago, the Royal Women's Hospital is attempting to cope with an increasing number of young unmarried mothers seeking medical care. The problem of placing these girls during the latter part of

their pregnancy is a constant worry to the Social Services Department of that Institution. When the Medical Superintendent addressed the Honorary Medical Staff and the Board of Management of Berry Street Hospital earlier this year. I am confident he convinced the authorities that the best way to fill the nursery, and to satisfy the many requests for adoption, was to accept, and give haven to, the young mother during the third trimester of her ante natal period" (Berry Street Honorary Obstetrician)

Sadly the integrity of Berry Street was short lived and their above words in their ORIGINAL APOLOGY were abandoned by a replacement apology, which offered the same signatures and date of the original apology, but the above said words were deleted, I would presume, on the advice of their legal team. Pity.

.....

There are members of "Relationship Australia (Victoria)" who have acknowledged our past abuse and have made much effort to support mothers. These wonderful people have made a tremendous effort to acknowledge our past abuse, by listening to us in an endeavour to know and understand about our trauma. Sadly there is no evidence that this effort to understand our past history extends to empathy from RAV Management.

I wrote and complained about a **Relationship Australia's** poster in their counselling office waiting room. A poster on their wall directed a telephone number to anyone who was affected by forced adoption I will never accept the words forced adoption being used to identify mothers, as they water down the truth of mothers' abuse and the abduction of their newborn babies, so I wrote and told them so.

The answer I received was that they understood why I was upset, they displayed, by their words their true and believable empathy for us, but stated that they could not change the wording as they are directed by the Australian Government as to the wording to be used in the issue of forced adoption! **Purposely hiding the truth?**

IT IS FAR EASIER FOR ME TO WRITE HOW THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, THEIR FUNDED HOSPITALS, AND AGENCIES, AND RELIGIOUS HIERARCHIES HAVE FAILED IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO ACKNOWLEDGE, RECOGNIZE OR SUPPORT THESE MOTHERS SINCE THE 2011/2012 SENATE REPORT DOCUMENTED 20 RECOMMENDATIONS OF CONCRETE MEASURES FOR GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS TO IMPLEMENT AS AN AID IN REPAIRING THE DAMAGE THESE MOTHERS HAVE SUFFERED; AT THE HANDS OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, THEIR AGENCIES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Failed to provide any form of counselling

Failed to speak out overtly about our past history, as this government stated they would do, instead they have maintained a despairing vigilant silence of our issue since the Senate Inquiry in 2011/2012.

Failed to deny the untruthful history of the myths, falsehoods and propaganda relating to mothers that have been validated as untrue by a Senate Inquiry, and instead have themselves continued to promote and use these same myths, falsehoods and propaganda, in writing and speech.

Failed and refused to answer any of our letters seeking justice and compensation by ignoring our many, many requests for **Statutes of Limitations** to be lifted
Yet discriminately lifting them for other abused groups. (mostly males)

Failed to implement ***any*** of the **20 Recommendations of the Senate Inquiry**.

Apart from offering an apology and introducing access to identifying information, which were implemented by a former government.

Failed by treating mothers as potential predators of their abducted children by introducing an \$8400 fine for any mother who sought out her stolen child without her child's permission. Projecting mothers to society as untrustworthy mothers whose now adult children required protecting from her. ***A veto recommended by VANISH in my presence.***
(This fine was later removed from legislation by the current government)

Failed by trying to introduce a New Adoption Act that again blatantly discriminated against a single mother and her baby!!!! The voice of **VANISH** again denying mothers rights.
This was a resurrection of the **1958 VICTORIAN ADOPTION ACT THAT DENIED A CERTAIN GROUP OF MOTHERS' THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS - HISTORY WAS GOING TO REPEAT ITSELF.**

Failed when a senior Minister of the current Government was quoted in newspapers stating -
****survivors of institutional*** [hospitals are institutions] ***abuse have already had to endure years of suffering and we're doing everything we can to support them and to make sure they have access to the compensation they deserve"***
Yet denying mothers, who were also abused in institutions, the same rights to justice and access to compensation.

Failed by not taking responsibility for past government's wrongs -

by ignoring -

Recommendation 12, of the Senate Inquiry Report which states -

11.43 *"The committee recommends that institutions and governments that had responsibility for adoption activities in the period from the 1950s to 1970s establish grievance mechanisms that will allow the hearing of complaints and, where evidence is established of wrongdoing, ensure redress is available. Accessing grievance mechanisms should not be conditional on waiving any right to legal action"*

Institutions and government have failed to implement any concrete measures or grievance mechanisms to ensure justice and redress is available to mothers

Failed mothers when the federal Government funded millions of dollars towards -
"access to specialist counselling services and support"

Much of these funds, which I believe were provided through the **State Government** have been given to an adoption organization known as **VANISH!**

From my experience not one cent of this vast sum of money has ever been provided to benefit these traumatized mothers

Cruelly informing mothers that if they believed they had a claim against the government, their solicitors would hear cases on a case-by-case basis, this entailed us mothers having to, on the advice of government personnel, engage the expertise and expense of a solicitor, we complied with this request and much later discovered to our horror that our claims will be difficult to succeed as the Victorian Government had left Statutes of Limitations in place as a barrier to impede our claims from succeeding to court.

For mothers this was a hurtful, torturous and a re-traumatizing action on the part of this current government - to offer hope for justice and redress, whilst being denied the full knowledge that we mothers had no hope of succeeding with our claims.

failed by renegeing on promises -

In August 2019 I received a telephone call from a Director of some section of the Victorian Government's Justice Department. She advised me that she was new to the position she now held in the Justice Department.

She thanked me for my many letters to government, she acknowledged our past history. I told her we just want the Statutes of Limitations lifted. so we could fight our fight in a court of law

She informed me she would be writing me a letter, her words re-assuring me that it would not be a usual platitudinous government letter.

She said it would be new information but would not elaborate on the contents, her words seemed to offer some sort of hope.

She said you will be receiving this information in the mail within the next two weeks.

4 months have passed and I am still awaiting her letter.

I have sent her two emails regarding her telephone call to me without receiving any response.

Failure to listen

In February 2019 after many letters to the Victorian Government requesting they lift the Statutes of Limitations I received a letter from a Member of Parliament who offered to

support me and wanted to meet with me. To say I was euphoric is an understatement! I had told her the government just builds brick wall after brick wall in front of us to prevent us being heard,

To cut to the chase, myself and another mother Lyn Kinghorn, were invited by this member of parliament to meet in Parliament to discuss our issue, along with another member of parliament.

We mothers put forward at this meeting that we wanted more than anything else was to have the Statutes of Limitations lifted, but during our meeting it was put forward to us both that an inquiry was the best way to go. We did not agree, as there had already been a Senate Inquiry into this issue. Later we were both informed, at another meeting, that this proposed inquiry would go ahead as was directed by the Attorney-General.

We were both very upset, again no one was listening to what we needed.

As this Inquiry is now underway you can determine our voices were ignored and another brick wall was built up in front of our faces again.

Ill-treatment and propaganda of mothers

In September 2017 I wrote to the Director of Birth's Death's and Marriages after a woman attended their office asking them how to enter the name of a father on an adopted persons birth certificate, she was told they would need to provide a sample of **DNA** from the father before his name would be entered. When she asked why? She was told **"You cannot trust the word of a mother"** Enraged by this information I entered into much dialogue with the Registrar of BD&M's. If proof is required I can provide all documentation. The result was that no **DNA** is longer necessary for the name of a father of an adopted child to be entered.

I have also written to the Minister for Women hoping to gain support in our quest for Statutes to be lifted for women, in line with other abused persons (mostly males).

I have never received any response from this minister.

On the 12th June 2014 The Chairperson of the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse addressed an international Men's Health Symposium in Brisbane. He spoke about his upcoming role as Chairperson of this Commission.

He related that children of the past would be heard from all walks of life and then added - ***"Others would have been born out of wedlock and because of the culteral norm of that time and surrendered to Institutional care. It can be assumed that with the cessation of those programs and widespread use of contraception and more accepting social attitudes the risk of children in those circumstances has been removed"***

The Chairpersons words maligned and falsified the history of our motherhood to other nations, this time accusing mothers as abandoners of their babies into institutional care.

I wrote to this man and informed him that not only was he ignorant and untruthful but that he was biased and uninformed, as an inquiry ***THREE YEARS BEFORE*** had validated that mothers were abused in order for their children to be illegally abducted for adoption to strangers.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS **PLEASE, PLEASE** NOTE: I am writing all these happenings to inform you that mothers are still being maligned as a lesser mother, a lesser human being, her abuse not to be taken seriously, the propaganda still continues to falsely judge her.others suffer the frustration of isolation from a society who will not face the damage

they caused to our lives, the thousands of tears we shed, the sleepless nights, the many days of mental anguish wondering why the government of the day refuses to recognize our brutal past, the horrible feeling of once again feeling worthless, isolated and disempowered as in the past, I perceive the current government is still part of the betrayal that took our babies. This leaves me in sadness and despair.*

*My sadness is brought about by politicians forgetting that they are no different from any other person in this state.

Because politicians hold positions of power and prestige they come to believe that they are therefore **"better"** than others. But they are not.

Page 208, 9.62 of the Report of the Senate Inquiry

"The committee is concerned about such arguments that practices 'were in keeping with social attitudes, available financial support, and medical and social work knowledge and beliefs of the time.' Institutions may be perceived as avoiding taking responsibility for their policies and the actions of the staff for whom they were responsible. Accordingly, considered the question of whether the policies of the period reflected uniformly-held values and best practice."

Page 211, 9.74 from the Report of the Senate Inquiry -

"Accordingly, the committee believes state government and institutions should take responsibility for past actions taken in their hospitals, maternity homes and adoption agencies. The conduct of the period was not the product of some uncontested acceptance about separating unmarried mothers from their babies. It was the product of decisions made, almost certainly at the institutional level, that decided to accept certain professional opinions, and to disregard (to varying degrees) the professional guidance of social workers of the time, and sometimes the manuals of the period. Taking responsibility means taking responsibility for those decisions."

THE ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

Within the past few years I approached this hospital seeking compensation from them for their past abuse of me and the illegal removal of my son Michael.

Their first contact to me was to inform me that their hospital had no records of me and that I had never been a patient in their hospital!

I HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO FOUR CHILDREN AT THIS HOSPITAL -

29th October, 1961, 3rd December 1964, 1st April 1968 and 7th November 1969.

In 1997, on the advice of the Convenor of the mothers' group **ORIGINS (Vic)** I requested under F. O. I all my records from the RWH and received same.

The Royal Women's Hospital's submission to the Senate Inquiry dated the 23rd January, 2012, regarding unwed mothers, states that practices, such as the "immediate removal of the baby, by this hospital, following birth was to prevent bonding, and were thought at the time to be in the *"best interest of the mother's emotional and mental health"* post-relinquishment, and that these practices were in keeping with social attitudes, available financial support and medical and social work knowledge and beliefs of the time!"

(Page 2 of RWH Submission)

For a mother to read these words is akin to being stabbed in the heart.

1. Did these arrogant, and apparently not so professional medical and social workers bother to ask the mother - the LEGAL GUARDIAN of her child, if SHE wanted her child removed at birth - NO! AND?

2. Did these 'professionals' really, no I mean really believe that stealing a mother's newborn baby at birth would be much more beneficial to her emotional and mental health, than her keeping her own child!!!! Really?????

Did they really believe that abducting a mother's newborn baby would not in any way at all affect her to SUFFER ANY EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL TRAUMATIZATION!!!!!!?

DO THEY POSSESS REAL EVIDENCE THAT THEIR CLAIM IS FACT???

Did they not believe that a mother bonded with her baby upon knowledge of pregnancy Really???

3. By this hospital admitting that they removed babies at birth, this hospital has therefore admitted breaching Victorian statutory law of child stealing.

4. In their submission to the Senate Inquiry this hospital also had the audacity to blame society for their OWN choices. The choices they themselves made to inhumanely abuse this group of young mothers, their patients, who were in their Fiduciary Care, by illegally removing their babies.

To those so-called medical and social work professionals who now claim that the illegal removal of our babies was *"in the best interests of the child"* I ask why then did the Victorian State government issue a new birth certificate to the adoptive parents that stated categorically that they, the adoptive parents, had actually given birth to another's child.

I ASK YOU THE COMMITTEE OF THIS INQUIRY in whose *"Best interests"* was this fraudulent document issued and WHY???

The Senate Inquiry Report Page 210, 9.70

Reflected on a RWH's obstetrician's comments -

"Dr.....'s comments are notable because they imply there was an opposing view. Dr.....was clearly conscious of these different views. some of them enshrined in law. His call to other professionals not only to disregard the natural mothers, but to disregard the law and pursue adoption for their babies, is an indictment of his professional conduct"

This doctor was an influential obstetrician of the RWH during the 1960's

The Senate Report continues to write of their assessment of the RWH - Page 205, 9.45

The committee does not express a view about whether any particular event described by a witness involved an illegal action. However in light of the evidence it has received in relation to practices at hospitals such as the Royal Women's, the committee queries whether the conclusion that it could find 'no evidence' of illegal practices at the RWH and no evidence of hospital-wide policies that discriminated specifically against single mothers' may be premature. The accounts of women, who were obviously eyewitnesses to their own mistreatment must be taken seriously as evidence"

The RWH's apology to mothers was equivocally reprehensible, blaming the mothers (their victims) for being complicit in their own abuse.

Refusing to take responsibility for removing babies from their mothers in their labour wards, even though they have openly admitted doing so in their submission to the Senate Inquiry.

Refusing to acknowledge their decisions and choices to treat a group of young mothers differently to another group of mothers.

Their apology was damned by the Senate Inquiry in their Report.

This hospital made statement that Professor Shurlee Swain found no evidence in her research of illegal practices in the RWH that discriminated against single mothers.

I would believe however that Shurlee Swain did not research nor write this document on the RWH. My understanding is that it was University student Christin Quirk who actually researched and wrote this report as part of her thesis **"SEPARATED AT BIRTH"** - This Thesis covered adoption practices in Relation to single women confined at the Royal Women's Hospital 1945-1975. Shurlee Swain was her mentor.

Christin Quirk is on record -

"NEVER MARRIED WOMEN VERSUS THE RECORDS, ARCHIVES, TESTIMONY AND THE HISTORY OF ADOPTION PRACTICES AT THE ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL"

Pages 14/15 -

"In writing the history of mothers who lost a child to adoption at the RWH in Melbourne, this article has explained the complementary nature of archival and oral evidence. While the documentary evidence may not always be consistent with the remembered experience, a significant proportion of these documents confirm punitive practices.

Notable exceptions include the question of whether financial support had been available and that the labelling of medical charts may not have been uniformly understood. The implications of these contradictions remain noteworthy.

But it is the degree to which archival research revealed such biased policies that was surprising given the divergent perspectives from which these sources speak and the expectation that such prejudice would not be recorded.

However, the archives yielded evidence of hospital policies for the differential treatment of married and unmarried women, ultimately supporting the oral testimony of women"

interviewed for this project. Mothers who lost a child to adoption consistently recount feelings of unjust and discriminatory treatment based on their never married status, and submissions to the Senate Inquiry also reflect the degree to which these women experienced prejudice and intolerance in the wider community - what was unexpected was that the documentary evidence reflected this prejudice.

(Christin Quirk, Australian Catholic University)

Mothers have always damned the RWH for marking their hospital documents with an 'A' to identify them as "unwed mothers" and their babies were for 'A'doption. The hospital told the Senate Inquiry that this letter meant the patient was an Almoner's case.

Yet in Janet McAlpin's book on the RWH she writes of 'A' patients as being identified as unwed mothers. **AND** as this hospital has already stated they took babies in the labour ward from unwed mothers, I would presume that mothers' concerns with this letter 'A' were well founded.

This hospital now cowardly hides from litigation behind the Statutes of Limitations

ST. JOSEPH'S FOUNDLING BABY HOME

From my personal experience with the nuns of this terrible place they were well and truly entrenched in this "system" of abuse and abduction.

On the 23rd July 1964 "The Sisters of St. Joseph's" wrote to the Victorian Government seeking funds for

"twenty (20) Stainless Steel Bassinettes 30" x 18" x 10" at a cost of 35 pounds and 4 shillings each.

These Bassinettes were needed -

"Owing to the large increase in the numbers of illegitimate babies now being left in our care for adoption, we are finding it necessary to open an additional nursery for tiny infants. Those babies who are suitable and available for adoption must be kept here for at least six weeks until the mother's consent becomes irrevocable"

The letter continues that the nuns will be seeking further fundings due to alterations and additions to their nurseries in the coming future.

If you ask any mother who had dealings with the personnel of this babies home, you will find that no mother "left" her baby in the care of these women. My personal experience is of the "taking" of my baby while I screamed at them to bring him to me, Instead the door was slammed in face. I can elaborate if necessary.

Also a group of nuns, in the 1960s, presented as a group of caring and God loving human beings. Why then did they ask for more money from government for themselves, rather than writing to government to support young mothers, and requesting the help that mothers wanted and needed so urgently?

If as this letter implies that babies cannot be taken for adoption until **6 WEEKS AFTER BIRTH**, why is the RWH Melbourne filmed handing over a baby of about a week old to a prospective adoptor, and why does their submission to the Senate Inquiry conflict with this 6 week waiting period? Many adoptees tell their mothers upon reunion that they were given to their adoptors within two weeks of birth.

In April 2012 a mother had made an appointment to meet with the person in charge of the Catholic Welfare Department, Father C....., somewhere in the city of Melbourne. She asked me to accompany her, I was very reluctant. I gave up my beliefs when people like those nuns were part of a system that abducted my son, but in the end agreed to go to support her.

Father C..... stated that he had never heard of our issue. (really?)

I told him I hated nuns and he, after listening to my words told me I had every right not to like nuns. This priest told us that he wanted to help with our issue but at that time there was a Royal Commission in place and the church was at the forefront of this commission.

On the 25th October, 2012, the day of the Victorian apology to mothers. I met again this priest, at the Windsor Hotel. He informed me again that he would do all he could for mothers, "I promise to make this right" I looked him in the face and said "I will hold you to that promise." we shook hands, he walked away never to be seen or heard of again.

Although the following information is before the advent of the words 'forced adoption' I believe it is relevant to my information above, regarding the St. Joseph's nuns of Broadmeadows Foundling home -

Within the Report of the Forgotten Australians in August 2004, of which we mothers were relevant, having been abused in a medical institution -hospital, and to which mothers presented their accepted submissions, is printed on -

Page 397, Table 5.11 Numbers of children in [religious] orphanages, this Table sets out the number of children in these orphanages over a period covering 1857 - 1997.

A total of around 38,500 children were in religious orphanages during this period =
13 Catholic orphanages = around 37,800 children
and 1 Lutheran orphanage = 600 children (though this orphanage only operated for just over twenty years)

Also detailed on this same Page list of orphanages is another group, I have not counted them into the above information -

(1) St. Joseph's Foundling home Broadmeadows. with a total of 20,000 (mainly babies/toddlers) during 1901 - 1975 More than HALF of the whole number of children held in 13 other orphanages.

AND

(2) St. Joseph's Receiving Home, Carlton, with a total of 10,500 (mainly babies/toddlers) during 1906 - 1985

I wrote to the Committee of this inquiry in December 2004 upon reading the contents of the above Table and informed the committee that one of these two institutions numbers of children in their care *were mostly babies of unwed mothers!*

I stated that the number of babies was around 14,000 more children than any other named institution's number of children.

I was incensed that these nuns would not take responsibility for their role in a 'SYSTEM" THAT ABUSED YOUNG MOTHERS AND ABDUCTED THEIR CHILDREN when the evidence is right there in front of me!

Their stated "Receiving Home" at Carlton, was in fact an unmarried mothers' home, which I was later to learn had been right across the road from the old RWH, the same hospital I have already claimed to be part of the same 'SYSTEM" that abused us young mothers and stole our babies.

My letter dated in December 2004, is mentioned as supplementary information against my submission to the Inquiry number 104 in the second report of the inquiry into children in institutional or out-of-home care dated March 2005.

MY QUESTION TO THE COMMITTEE IS WHAT THIS RELIGIOUS? GROUP OF NUNS WERE DOING AT THAT TIME TO KEEP MOTHERS AND BABIES TOGETHER

IT SEEMS TO ME THEY WERE WANTING MONEY FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE MORE ROOM FOR MORE BABIES OF UNMARRIED MOTHERS.

THESE NUNS BEHAVIOURS ARE THE REASONS I NO LONGER BELIEVE THERE IS A GOD.

The St. Joseph's nuns are too now covering behind the Statutes of Limitations They also now protest saying it wasn't us! it wasn't us, it wasn't us.

My comment is - yes it was, and worse, you all know it was

This religious organization has never apologized to mothers.

I APOLOGIZE for the length of my submission, I could write reams more, I just wanted and needed to present to you, all that I can, as much as I can, and as best as I can, the damnation, the brutality, the humiliation, the lies, the ignorance, the myths, the falsehoods and the everlasting propaganda of us as abused women that we have faced since our pregnancy.

This abuse culminated into the very cruel, unbelievable and life-affecting torturous and illegal removal of our children, while we were begging, pleading, weeping and screaming at others not to take our babies away.

This is my life, that I live everyday. This is what was done to me. This is what was done to so many mothers.

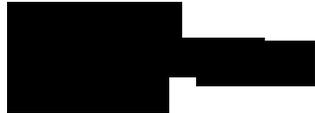
Abused with illegal drugs to confuse and control, carcinogenic drugs to prevent breast feeding, often permanently, or tight breast binding in an effort to suppress these mothers' breast milk, humiliated in front of other patients (married), scorned, damned and denied our legal rights to raise our own children.

THIS IS OUR TRUTH.

Please rewrite our history to tell this truth.

PLEASE TO NOT LET US DOWN AS OTHERS HAVE SO SUCCESSFULLY DONE IN THE PAST.

june smith (no title)



27th January 2020

WISH LIST :-

TO MAKE THE ADOPTIVE COMMUNITY AWARE THAT OUR [MOTHERS'] PAST IS NOT ABOUT ADOPTION. OUR HISTORY IS ONE OF UNWARRANTED ABUSE.

LIFTING OF THE STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS AS PARAMOUNT.

COMPENSATION - THE ULTIMATE APOLOGY

ONGOING TRAUMA COUNSELLING AT NO COST TO MOTHERS AND FOR AS LONG AS NECESSARY.

OTHER SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH COULD BE INTRODUCED SUCH AS FREE ACCESS TO MEDITATION/PILATES/YOGA CLASSES

MEDICAL RESEARCH AND DIAGNOSIS INTO OUR UNIQUE AND SIGNIFICANT TRAUMA -

(SEVERAL YEARS AGO A GROUP OF US MOTHERS ATTENDED A MEETING AT THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS (RANZCP) IN MELBOURNE. ONE OF OUR CONCERNS WAS THAT NO RESEARCH INTO OUR UNIQUE TRAUMA HAD EVER BEEN UNDERTAKEN, AND THEREFORE NO DIAGNOSIS. WE WERE INFORMED THAT THIS INFORMATION WOULD BE TAKEN BACK TO THEIR MEDICAL STAFF FOR DISCUSSION. WE WERE NEVER SPOKEN TO AGAIN ABOUT THIS ISSUE BY THIS ORGANIZATION)

AT THIS SAME MEETING AT RANZCP A MOTHER PROPOSED THAT AN IDENTIFYING CARD - AKIN TO A MEDICARE CARD BE PROVIDED FOR MOTHERS.

THIS CARD COULD THEN BE PRESENTED BY MOTHERS AT TIMES OF ANY NECESSARY HEALTH TREATMENT. AGAIN AS ABOVE, (NO LATER RESPONSE FROM RANZCP)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SENATE INQUIRY'S RECOMMENDATIONS AS PER THEIR REPORT OF 2012,

ESPECIALLY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATION 12

MORE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF OUR HISTORY

A FEW YEARS AGO A CONFERENCE WAS HELD REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS OR ABUSE (UNSURE). NOTABLE PERSONS LIKE COMMISSIONER GILLIAN TRIGGS AND THE AUSTRALIAN HUMANIST OF THE YEAR PERSON WERE IN ATTENDANCE. THIS CONFERENCE WAS OPENED BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS, CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIMS AND OTHERS. NO MENTION OF US MOTHERS WAS FORTHCOMING.

THIS HURTS A GREAT DEAL BECAUSE THE EVIDENCE SEEMS TO INDICATE TO US MOTHERS THAT ALL POLITICIANS AND SOCIETY STILL SEE OUR PAST ABUSE AND THE ABDUCTION OF OUR CHILDREN AS OVERWHELMINGLY INSIGNIFICANT

THE NEED TO EDUCATE SOCIETY OF THE HARM DONE TO MOTHERS IS ALSO PARAMOUNT.

AS PART OF THIS AWARENESS, MY SUGGESTION IS FOR A BABY BLUE & PINK RIBBON DAY, TO BE HELD ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE VICTORIAN APOLOGY TO MOTHERS - 25TH OCTOBER EACH YEAR.

DISMISSAL OF THE USE OF THE MYTHS, FALSEHOODS, AND TITLES THAT PERSONS LIKE TO USE TO QUALIFY OUR MOTHERHOOD, AND OFTEN USED BY ACADEMICS

AN APOLOGY FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH'S FOR THEIR FAILURE TO HONOUR AND RESPECT OUR MOTHERHOOD AND THEIR RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS.

AND PERSONALLY - I WANT MY SON TO KNOW THAT I LOVED HIM.

june (no title)

june smith

