Month, day, Year (DATE)

Recipient Name8th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street

West Perth WA 6005

Minister.McGurk@dpc.wa.gov.au

**RE: Forced adoption Era – request for a West Australian inquiry**

To the Hon. Simone McGurk

I am writing to request that the West Australian government instigate a parliamentary inquiry into the policies and practices of the Forced Adoption Era (FAE).

The states forced adoption policies and practices affected the lives of a staggering number of West Australians. An estimated 12,000 - 20,000 West Australian newborns were illegally removed from their unwed mothers during the period of 1937 – 1987 However, a clear statistical picture has been made difficult due to a decade of missing and incomplete data from the 1960’s. Despite this, we do know that within WA, the FAE peaked during the 1973-43 reporting period and approximately 783 West Australian newborns and 10,000 nationally were permanently separated from their Mothers and family’s (2012 Senate Inquiry p.322-333).

I was born at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_hospital in INSERT YEAR, to my Mother \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(name – but don’t include if you don’t want to) who had resided for LENGTH of TIME at NAME OF HOME leading up to the time of my birth. (Include your father’s name too, if you wish). Many of our states’ former forced adoption institutions operate today and have failed to offer survivors public acknowledgment via formalised apologies for their role in their separations via traumatising coercive tactics. Many mothers were incarcerated within their unwed mothers ‘homes’ for the duration of their pregnancy, isolated from family and required to work as domestic throughout their pregnancy. They were unpaid for this work and also expected to pay for their stay and their newborns until they were collected by their adoptive parents. This double dipping over many decades underpins the significant wealth these former institutions enjoy today.

INSERT a personal recollection if you wish here…Your mother was not allowed to hold you, feed you, you lived at the babies home for? time)…..Write anything of your experiences as an adoptee or as a Mother. (try to keep the letter less than 3 pages. Show the reader what you were rightfully denied, how did it effect you and your life ?.

As an adoptee, a survivor of the forced adoption era (FAE) my life has been irreversibly shaped by the historical government policies and practices which denied my birth right to remain with my biological family. As a distinct group, adoptee’s, also known as the ‘Other Stolen Generation’ or the ‘Forgotten Australians’ are increasingly concerned by the silence that has followed the various governmental apologies and the 2012 senate committee inquiry. <https://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/senate/community_affairs/completed_inquiries/2010-13/commcontribformerforcedadoption/report/index> Despite the numerous recommendations tabled in the senate inquiry (see above) it appears that the West Australian parliament has failed to implement any.

One such recommendation, the ‘integrated birth certificate’ would be highly beneficial for WA adoptees, as it provides us the opportunity to publicly document our two families and to rightly dignify our dual identities. South Australia (2016) and NSW (2020) have now implemented this strategy and have also facilitated the capacity for an adoptee to legally apply for a dissolvement of their adoption. While not all adoptees will choose these pathways, the availability to do so is a corrective action government can make for FAE survivors. Currently, should a WA adoptee wish to add their natural father’s name to their first birth certificate, they require his permission. However, if this individual is deceased, the adoptee must provide a DNA test and permission from a living child of this parent. This current scenario is heavily reliant on a functional reunion between adoptee and their biological family, which despite what we see in the media, is rarely the case. I am sure you would agree this is unnecessarily complicated, problematic and stressful for the adopted adult applicant.

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/adoption/introducing-integrated-birth-certificates>

<https://www.rasa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Adoption_Bill_2016_FAQ_Final15Sept.pdf>

<https://www.lawreform.vic.gov.au/content/6-birth-certificates-adopted-people>

IN 2021, the state of Victoria tabled its own inquiry into their experience of forced adoption. The response from both Mothers and Adoptees has been considerable, with more than one hundred submissions, some are written from the West Australia perspective. I have attached the link below and where you can read the many survivor testimonies. The government will provide a reply in early 2022. It is expected that redress mechanisms will be included in the many recommendations endorsed by the government.

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lsic-la/inquiries/article/4253>

The Western Australian state government was the first jurisdiction to formally apologise to survivors and was a significant catalyst for other state apologies, the senate inquiry and PM Julia Gillard’s national apology. I would like to take this opportunity to request that the current West Australian government joins Victoria, Tasmania (1999), NSW (2000) in conducting an inquiry into our states policies and practices of the FAE. A WA specific inquiry will offer survivors the opportunity to participate in truth telling, achieve relevant governmental policy change and to investigate the historical nature of the policies and practices of forced adoption unique to our state. <https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard.nsf/0/fff526da4cf39505482577c900279425/$FILE/A38+S1+20101019+p7881a-7889a.pdf>

I look forward to meeting/speaking with your further at your earliest convenience to further discuss the issues facing WA forced adoption survivors and my request for a WA inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

NAME

EMAIL

PHONE No.

ADDRESS