

Issue 123

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**Association Representing Mothers Separated From their Children
by Adoption Western Australia Incorporated,
Post Office Box 60 Tuart Hill, 6939**



A Day of Celebration

Was held at Read Park, Albany Hwy Victoria Park on Thursday 21-3-19

Telephone ARMS on 0468-444-995 Email: Support@armswa.org.au

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Support Group meetings are held every 3rd Monday of the month at 10.30am

Find & Connect WA

165 Great Eastern Hwy Belmont

Please contact the number below for details

Carmel (08) 9332 8945



Julia Gillard shares a compassionate message for our day of celebration

Dear Ms Devine and members of the ARMS,

Thank you for your kind email inviting me to attend the unveiling of the memorial to commemorate the National Apology on Forced Adoptions.

I write to convey my deep regret that I will be unable to attend due to work and travel commitments on that date.

However, should you wish, I would be honoured if this message could be shared with those attending the memorial.

The National Apology was an incredibly significant day for survivors, and I was deeply privileged to share it with them.

I hope it continues to stand as an important milestone on the journey of healing and reflects our acknowledgement as a country of the lifelong legacy of pain and suffering created by forced adoption.

I was very moved to learn of your persistent work to establish a memorial in recognition both of that legacy, and of our commitment as a nation to do all in our power to make sure these practices are never repeated.

My thoughts will be with all those affected by the practice of forced adoption as we commemorate the National Apology on 21 March 2019.

Julia Gillard



ARMS – BROKEN LIVES – THURSDAY, 21ST MARCH, 2019

A deeply moving speech by a founding member of ARMS, Michelle Davies

ARMS, stands for Association Representing Mothers Separated from their Children by Adoption. We wanted laws changed. Our families were all eager to meet this, now grown-up, person – the adopted child. The Inaugural meeting of ARMS was held at Fairway House, Fairway, Nedlands on Monday, 25th October, 1982. Its aims were to provide emotional support to women who had relinquished a child for adoption, and educate the public about the life-long effects, and work to change the Adoption laws and policy.

We wanted to offer support and counselling. I, personally, am forever grateful for the support, advice and comfort that ARMS have given to me. I acknowledge their hard work and dedication given over the years. The myth was that our babies were 'unwanted babies', and mothers 'did not want the child'.

This is an ideological untruth. We did not 'give away' or "relinquish our children. We were considered 'unfit' because we didn't have a husband and we were coerced by our families and hospital staff.

We were so vulnerable, under covert pressure and duress by the Medical Profession, Adoption Agencies and Social Workers.

We were told, "If you love your baby, you will let him go to a real family." There was lack of support, both emotional and financial. Churches, Doctors, Solicitors, Social Workers all had long lists of 'respectable married couples' just waiting to find infants available for adoption.

We were left with no other choice. We were not informed of our rights, including the capacity to revoke our consent within thirty days. After a land mark enquiry by the Australian Federal Senate who found that up to 250,000 babies were forcibly taken from their mothers, in 2013 a formal apology was given by our Prime Minister. Our sincere thanks go to Julia Gillard PM.

In the hospital there was often bullying, and judgmental comments directed at unwed Mothers by medical staff and social workers, such as 'you got yourself into trouble, so you don't deserve to keep the baby'. We were considered 'unfit', 'unworthy', and not entitled to our own children.

All of us who lost our babies in this way, will grieve for a life time. I received no counselling, no information, or reassurance, and I just walked out the door of Hillcrest Maternity Hospital with no goodbyes.

I then had to pretend to live a normal life, and bury my pain. Anger, guilt, depression, and the ultimate grief is unresolvable when the mourning process is prevented or arrested. Intrapsychic mechanisms such as dissociation take place, and whole blocks of memory or even personality are seemingly lost too.

My name is Michelle. I am 91 years' old. It is hard for me to stand here and re-live the pain and distress of losing my child so long ago.

I did meet my twenty-eight year old son. He was looking for me, and we met through the Contact Register. In my mind, I knew I would meet my little baby and hug him, but I met a grown-up man. While meeting him relieved the constant stress of never knowing his name, if he was being well treated, or was he still alive – he wasn't my baby! Psychologically, in my mind, he was still a baby.

I had lost all those years.

Humanity has lost it's future, for the heart of any race is destroyed, and it's will to survive is utterly broken, when it's children are taken from it.

The shame of having an 'illegitimate' child was such that I could not share my pain with anyone. You care and have compassion. You show that you understand.

This memorial will do much to alleviate some of the pain. Even after so many years, and having met my son, I still have that sense of loss. I lost the baby, the toddler, the teenage, and the young adult. I met a man – a grown up. No way could I hold my baby.

I realised just what I had lost – and could never get back. "Don't be bitter" was my only advice, as I signed away my child. I walked out of Hillcrest – just walked out – alone no counselling, no Goodbye, just walked out, through the door. No words of comfort.

Michelle Davies



Thank you Wendy Brown (Chairperson for Jigsaw) for your inspiring comments

I want to congratulate all the ladies of ARMS for their consistent and successful efforts to have a memorial here in WA for those affected by adoption.

The memorial, which is placed in a small but widely used park in the Town of Victoria Park, evokes the anguish of a childless mother whose baby is held in another's hand.

The unveiling of these two sculptures and the plaque explaining their significance was attended by many people – none of whom could fail to have been moved by Michelle's and Lynne's stories in particular.

The energy and enthusiasm that went into this project is testament to the determination of these mothers to leave a permanent marker in the community of past adoption practices, and their eventual acknowledgement through the state and national apologies.

Once again my congratulations.

Wendy Brown. Chairperson for JIGSAW



Thank you to Mary for sharing your inner feelings and generous contribution...

Dear Carmel

I was given your name by Maria who went to the launch of the sculpture that your organisation has built for women who have lost children by adoption. She invited me to go with her. Because of work commitments I was not able to go to the launch but visited the sculpture later on that day. So sad, so important and so awesome. I could not stop crying which is probably a good thing for me because I have hidden those tears for all my life. It is 48 years since I gave away my baby boy and I have spent those years running away from the awful thing I did. He is in my mind all the time. I have to come to terms with my guilt and my shame and sadness.

My baby was not forced from me. I gave him away to what I hoped would be two good parents because I had no faith in myself or my ability to care for him and bring him up well. I was so young, so stupid and so scared and there was no-one to help.

Recently, I found him by googling his name on the birth certificate I got. He is a successful professional man in Melbourne. Perhaps I did do the right thing by him. It seems he does not want to meet me. Perhaps that means he is happy with the family he has. Or, he resents what I did?

No one apart from a couple of close friends know of my son and I will continue to grieve for him in silence but happy that other women are travelling this journey in shared understanding.

I wanted to give something to your organisation for what you are doing. Please accept this small gift of \$200. Such thanks. Mary

Thank you Lorna for your great comments about the Memorial in Vic Park...

A short note and acknowledgement to say how impressed I am with both the memorial statue and its beautiful parkland setting. I was overseas when the unveiling occurred but was delighted



to see the occasion so well attended by so many of us who have been affected by the adoption practices of the past.

With the advantage of modern technology I was able to see a small part of the ceremony live. How lucky was that! Facebook became my great friend as I was able to see the beautiful photos that were shared by those who took the time to send me their pictures and share their feelings on the day to them, I say, thank you.

On Mother's Day we ventured over to Victoria Park so I could see it for the first time in all its beauty.

It was just so lovely and serene. Someone had been and left flowers there and when speaking to a lady

who was working in the community garden there, she commented that people often leave flowers there. To those people I hope that it has a healing effect on their story. It was so comforting to see people visiting and walking thru the park and read the inscription on the plaques, children playing on the play ground and people just enjoying the wonderful open space and trees that mother nature provides. A huge congratulations to the girls who worked tirelessly to get this project underway and source the best location that they could for its placement.



The choice of the broken hearted Mum and the empty hand was inspired, and the artist did a marvellous job of that portrayal.

I'm sure many of us relate to the emotions that it invoked and although the pain of our loss will never go away, this memorial and

reminder to the community that it did happen will out last us all. *Lorna*



Thank you Frederika Davies for these much appreciated words from Relationships Australia.

Good morning everyone. In my role as Manager of Clinical Training at Relationships Australia WA, and on behalf of Susan Visser, our Executive Director and Reg Casley the Senior Manager of Relationships Australia WA's Forced Adoption Support Service, I want to thank ARMS and the Town of Victoria Park for this invitation to celebrate the unveiling of the Empty Arms – Broken Lives memorial sculptures.



Through our Forced Adoption Support Service, based at Lanterns House in Belmont, Relationships Australia WA has been able to provide a grant to ARMS to fund these memorial sculptures. I want to warmly congratulate the group for the successful completion of this endeavour.

In paying tribute to what these memorial sculptures mean to the mothers whose children were taken from them, we need to think about the trauma that was experienced by them.

Psychiatrist and trauma specialist, Lou Cozolina tells us that trauma "is a state of high arousal in which normal coping mechanisms are overwhelmed in response to the perception of threat" (Cozolino, 2002).

Mothers I have spoken to who had their children taken from them talk about the context in which this was done to them. For some mothers, the context was one where they were shamed, not listened to, in some cases deprived of the physical care that they needed, their bodies violated through cruel and demeaning treatment, and isolated from friends, families and partners who could have supported them. It is this context along with the act of the taking of their child which creates the darkness and emotional and psychological pain which many struggle with for the rest of their lives.

Such trauma has an impact on the person's developing sense of identity (Am I a good and worthy person?

Am I able to deal with the normal challenges of life and feel in control of myself and what I have to deal with?) It can also impact on how other people are viewed. Are they safe, are they trustworthy, are they going to take away my control in a situation? These become crucial, if not consciously thought, concerns in interacting in the world.

Although some mothers have gone on in life to experience strong and supportive relationships, for others their experience of forced adoption and a resulting distrust of others have created increased challenges in establishing and maintaining an intimate and supportive relationship.

In some cases this can ripple out to their relationships with their children, both the child that was taken, and any other children they have.

For some it also leaves a legacy in the body. From the experience of their life and body no longer being in their realm of control, but in the control of others, their nervous systems can be in a permanently switched on state of hyperarousal to watch for anything that could be a threat. (continued next page)



This state of hyperarousal, which is aimed at being self protective, can ultimately take its toll, having an impact on mental and physical wellbeing.

Whereas those of us who haven't had their experience manage things in our lives, such as undergoing a medical or dental procedure, signing a formal paper of some kind with a manageable level of stress, a mother who has had her child taken in such a situation may be triggered back into the earlier experience of



powerlessness and being demeaned and dismissed as a person. In this instance they can be seen by others as over-reacting, or as being 'difficult'.

A mother may find that certain language triggers the early experience of being dismissed, ill treated, and having their feelings, needs and wants de-legitimised.

What does all this mean for those of us who work with the mothers, or who are part of their lives in some way?

Research both nationally and internationally

has identified that people with trauma histories make up a significant number of the people who access health and community services. This has raised the call to create a trauma informed culture within services.

The core principles of a trauma informed care model are:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment

If we think about the trauma that the mothers who had their children taken have experienced - We can hear from their stories that they didn't feel safe, they couldn't trust the people who were in control of their lives through the pregnancy and birth, they had no choice in the final act of their child being taken, it wasn't a collaborative decision but an imposed one, and they felt powerless in response to all of the above.

We cannot change this history, but we can listen and acknowledge their experience and how it has impacted on them. We can ask them what language feels respectful of their experience. We can work collaboratively with them in matters that affect them.

We can also salute and celebrate their resilience and courage in finding ways to empower themselves to live a life of meaning for themselves and others.

The sculptures of Empty Arms – Broken Lives give us an image to acknowledge the anguish many have suffered and to celebrate their courage in telling their stories.



On behalf of Reg Casley, our Manager of the FASS program, and his team, and Susan Visser and all the Executive Team at Relationships Australia WA, I wish to again congratulate the members of ARMS for staying committed to having your stories heard and this memorial created.

Thank you. Frederika Davies

Thank you “Nance” for your emotional comments ...

What the memorial meant for me: This memorial is a very visible notice to the community that adoption brought great grief and trauma to thousands of women who lost children in a most inhumane way and that these women are no longer hidden and suffering in silence.

Adoption was a cruel practice driven by the strong social forces of the day and it regrettably sometimes resulted in unethical and cruel practices. Up to 250,000 adoptions have occurred since the late 1920s and in consequence many lives have been deeply affected.

I like the wording of the National Apology because it “acknowledged the lifelong impact of this separation: the grief, loss, trauma, disconnection and unwarranted shame, guilt and secrecy.” From “Nance”



Thank you Cindy for your warming comments ...

I am so glad that I could be a part of the Memorial. It was very well done and I especially loved the comment written on the plaque. ‘To our children...you were loved’. That brings tears to my eyes. Thank you so much for saying that. Love, Cindy

Thank you Helen for sharing your feelings about the celebration day and the sculptures.

I was overwhelmed with the statue at the memorial. I had the same emotion that I felt when I finally received the birth certificate of my daughter. (I REALLY DID HAVE A BABY !!!)

I found the beautiful sculpture of the memorial very moving. I liked the setting where it is placed in a small park in an old central suburb of Perth where people will walk past it every day.

The ceremony of the unveiling had many good speakers.

It was very nice to catchup with many people connected to ARMS over the years that have helped our cause to change the secrecy laws and adoption practices of the past. I look forward to seeing it again whenever I can.
Helen Waldeck

Empty Arms – Broken Lives

Thank you to the wonderful ConnectGroups team for your comments

ConnectGroups was honoured to attend the unveiling of the EMPTY ARMS – BROKEN LIVES memorial sculptures on the 21st of March 2019 at Read Park in Victoria Park in commemoration of the 6th Anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions given by State and Federal parliaments.

The sculptures were dedicated to those who endured immense trauma due to past adoption practices and policies, and to those who did not survive this experience.

Heartfelt speeches were delivered by the Town of Victoria Park Mayor, Mr Trevor Vaughan, Frederika Davies, the Hon. David Templeman MLA, Sue McDonald,



Michele and ConnectGroups member, Lynne Devine from ARMS (Association Representing Mothers Separated from their children by Adoption). ConnectGroups commends the state government and the arduous work of ARMS to reach this significant milestone.

Extract from Hansard – (Assembly – Thursday, 4th April, 2019. p2075d – p2075d)

Mr David Templeman.

FORCED ADOPTIONS MEMORIAL – TOWN OF VICTORIA PARK

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

Mr D.A. Templeman (Mandurah - Minister for Culture and the Arts) 9-04am: I would like to inform the house of a recent event I was honoured to be invited to –

The unveiling of an important memorial that recognises the apologies of state and federal governments for the forced adoption of children. The memorial consists of two sculptures, titled “Empty Arms – Broken Lives”, and was commissioned by the Association Representing Mothers Separated from their children by Adoption, known as ARMS. It was unveiled in the town of Victoria Park on Thursday, 21st of March 2019, to mark the 6th anniversary of the National Apology offered by then Prime Minister Julia Gillard on behalf of the Australian government on 21 March 2013.

On 19 October 2010, Western Australia became the first state in Australia to apologise to mothers who had been subjected to forced adoption. The Western Australian government apologised to the mothers, their children and families who were adversely affected by these past adoption practices. In fact, the Western Australian Parliament was the first in the world to offer an apology for past forced adoption practices and was supported by both sides of the house.

The apology was heard by a large number of those mothers and families in the public gallery. Acknowledging and validating the trauma was a critical step in the healing process, and it enabled some closure. These sculptures are a symbolic acknowledgement of the pain and trauma suffered by all people separated by forced adoption. The unveiling of this memorial marks an important milestone for those people whose lives were impacted by these past practices and policies.

ARMS donated the sculptures to the Town of Victoria Park, which has embraced their significance and found a home for them in READ PARK, reflecting the inclusive and caring approach of the Victoria Park Community.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of Mayor Trevor Vaughan, Anthony Vuleta, CEO, and the entire team at the Town of Victoria Park for their support and assistance in adopting this important memorial.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of ARMS coordinator Lynne Devine in making this memorial a reality, and to Sue McDonald, my constituent, for first introducing me to this history by sharing her story. These sculptures are a poignant reminder and acknowledgement of a deeply traumatic and sad time in our history. It is hoped that the memorial will provide a place for quiet reflection.

And, in a hand written note David Templeman also wrote...

Dear Lynne, Committee and Members of ARMS.

Sincerest congratulations to you and all members and supporters of ARMS on the very significant events that commemorated the unveiling of the ARMS’ memorial in Victoria Park. I was so honoured to attend and speak at this event and acknowledge all of the hard work, over a long period of time, that culminated in us finding a home for this very special memorial.

Sincerely, David Templeman.



Lynne Devine offered heartfelt insight about 'EMPTY ARMS – BROKEN LIVES'

Good morning everyone. I want to begin by thanking as many people as I can right at the start. I have to do that first because I am getting on in years and my memory is not as good as it should be. First of all, on behalf of ARMS I want to thank Mayor Trevor Vaughan, his councilors, and the Town of Victoria Park for accepting our donation of 'empty arms - broken lives' and allowing us to place our tableau here in this beautiful place. I want to thank Brigitte who has worked hard to make today possible. I thank Minister Templeman and his staff who worked so hard to bring about the first apology *in the world* for past adoption practices in 2010. I thank Dr Christine Cole and Sue MacDonald for their efforts as part of the Apology Alliance to bring to public scrutiny the atrocities that were committed against



vulnerable mothers and their deeply loved sons and daughters. Included in that are thanks to all members who have worked so hard over the years to right the wrongs of the past. There are hundreds of you and each has made a contribution: be it a letter to your local MP; your presence in parliament at adoption debates; maybe a phone call or two; submissions to standing committees; each small task contributes to the whole and brings us here today for the unveiling of this memorial in the hope that what was done in the past to mothers, fathers, our sons and daughters, will not be repeated in the future.



Thank you also to the Department of Social Services that made this funding available through the Forced Adoption Support Service which is run by Relationships Australia and thank you to Frederika Davies from Relationships Australia for her informative speech about trauma. A special thank you to Eric Ripper. He was supportive of ARMS right from the early years. Shirley Moulds, a long-serving president of ARMS would like to be remembered to you. She is too frail to attend today but she remembers well the contribution of yourself and Jackie Watkins as she was then. I want to thank Carmel Ipock who kept ARMS together as president for so many years,

who made our sun-flower badges and made the covers you see for the unveiling of our sculptures. Thank you also to Carmel for your many contributions over so many years. ARMS was formed 30 years' ago by a group of mothers who needed to find out about the welfare of their babies. Australia-wide, around 250,000 babies were routinely torn from their mothers in hospital labour wards under the mistaken belief that mothers who were not married were unfit to raise their children. For those of you who are very observant you will see that we put a figure of 200,000 on the plaque. We did not want to be accused of exaggerating but, in fact, the figure of a quarter of a million is closer to the mark. Records of adoptions were not available for some years – why I don't know – so the figure cannot be accurately pinned down. At that time, closed adoption dictated that only the adoptive parents had access to identifying information about the child in their care. In this era of closed, forced adoption, secrecy and denial of knowledge to natural families were encouraged by government departments. This resulted in a sanitized view of adoption practice being presented to the public and the truth remained hidden.

For those condemned to live with closed, secret adoption policy they were dark years indeed. I have always found it odd that there is so much recognition of the shock and pain felt by parents whose children disappeared for unknown reasons.

We were supposed to go away and forget AND YET OUR CHILDREN DISSAPEARED TOO. We were blamed and pilloried for having the audacity to question what had been done to us and for wanting to find out about the welfare of our children. (continued next page)

De-humanized and de-babied, we were left to cope with the lifelong impacts of trauma, untenable loss, and the legacy of having to navigate the damaging ripple effects within our families, our personal relationships and subsequent generations. I know that for me, the day I found out my daughter's new surname, my mental anguish dropped by half - just because I had a surname. I had no address, I had nothing else, but I had a name which validated the reality of the existence of my daughter, my beautiful daughter - whom I had held fleetingly just once. Eventually under the presidency of Kath Smith access to identifying information was granted. Reunions began to happen more and more.

Sometimes a good relationship was established between both parties and sometimes there wasn't but overall it was better for people to learn the truth about how and why adoption had happened. The reality about the aftermath of adoption started to be exposed. In so many instances adoption was not the wonderful fairytale ending it had been meant to be, and along with that truth came another truth: that the wholesale removal of babies from vulnerable mothers should never have been allowed to happen in the first place. The methods used to take the children had its foundation in lies, duress, cruelty and downright illegal practices.

We all owe a debt to Dr Christine Cole who wrote her PhD thesis about adoption and adoption practices.

It was only because of her painstaking research that the truth of how and why so many children were taken was established. Some mothers found that their children had died in early childhood, for others their children had committed suicide, and for some their children had been abused in some way, physically, psychologically or sexually.

Many of our children displayed attachment disorders, identity issues, feelings of abandonment, anxiety and depression. Some had been returned by their adoptive parents to the department because they decided that adoption did not work for them, some children had not even been adopted and had spent their lives in care. AND WE WERE NEVER TOLD.

I will never forget the anguished cry of a mother after she had found her daughter, "They told me my daughter needed a father and they gave her to a pedophile."



Many of our adopted sons and daughters were so angry at their perceived abandonment that they refused to have anything to do with their natural families at all. Some mothers were so deeply traumatised that they were unable to cope with the re-emerging trauma symptoms which often resurface during a re-union with their adult child. Many mothers killed themselves because they were unable to reconcile the trauma and loss which adoption had inflicted on their lives. Sadly, because of the barbaric practices, lies, and secrecy of closed adoption the level of unaddressed trauma grows over the years and leaves separated families with so much pain that they are unable to heal the wounds caused by forced separation. Shamed and silenced by their traumatic

experiences, the mental health damage, low self esteem and a law that continues to encourage adoption, many parties find it safer to keep it all buried. While we would all like to think this is all ancient history, I will point out that our youngest member is 37 years of age. Her child was taken for open adoption in 1997.

She has never recovered from the trauma of that separation. It is incumbent on all of us to see that the practice of adoption is properly scrutinized now and in the future and that proper safeguards are written into the laws to make sure that the true after-effects of adoption are acknowledged. In closing: another thank you to the community centre who are helping to make this unveiling happen and thank you to everyone for being here and sharing our special day.

Lynne Devine



National Apology for Forced Adoptions

21 March 2013

Today, this Parliament, on behalf of the Australian people, takes responsibility and apologises for the policies and practices that forced the separation of mothers from their babies, which created a lifelong legacy of pain and suffering.

We acknowledge the profound effects of these policies and practices on fathers.

And we recognise the hurt these actions caused to brothers and sisters, grandparents, partners and extended family members.

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 were yourselves 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.

We know you have suffered enduring effects from these practices forced upon you by others. For the loss, the grief, the disempowerment, the stigmatisation and the guilt, we say sorry.

To each of you who were adopted or removed, who were led to believe your mother had rejected you and who were denied the opportunity to grow up with your family and community of origin and to connect with your culture, we say sorry.

We apologise to the sons and daughters who grew up not knowing how much you were wanted and loved.

We acknowledge that many of you still experience a constant struggle with identity, uncertainty and loss, and feel a persistent tension between loyalty to one family and yearning for another.

To you, the fathers, who were excluded from the lives of your children and deprived of the dignity of recognition on your children's birth records, we say sorry. We acknowledge your loss and grief.

We recognise that the consequences of forced adoption practices continue to resonate through many, many lives. To you, the siblings, grandparents, partners and other family members who have shared in the pain and suffering of your loved ones or who were unable to share their lives, we say sorry.

Many are still grieving. Some families will be lost to one another forever. To those of you who face the difficulties of reconnecting with family and establishing ongoing relationships, we say sorry.

We offer this apology in the hope that it will assist your healing and in order to shine a light on a dark period of our nation's history.

To those who have fought for the truth to be heard, we hear you now. We acknowledge that many of you have suffered in silence for far too long.

We are saddened that many others are no longer here to share this moment. In particular, we remember those affected by these practices who took their own lives. Our profound sympathies go to their families.

To redress the shameful mistakes of the past, we are committed to ensuring that all those affected get the help they need, including access to specialist counselling services and support, the ability to find the truth in freely available records and assistance in reconnecting with lost family.

We resolve, as a nation, to do all in our power to make sure these practices are never repeated. In facing future challenges, we will remember the lessons of family separation. Our focus will be on protecting the fundamental rights of children and on the importance of the child's right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

With profound sadness and remorse, we offer you all our unreserved apology.

The Hon Julia Gillard MP

Prime Minister