

**Submission to Qld Gov Mental Health Select Committee**

Date: 31/1/2022

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I am an adoptee, who is a victim of forced adoptions in Queensland, 1964.

As a direct result of my adoption, the forced relinquishment by Government actors between my birth family and me, I have recently been diagnosed by Psychologist Clarissa Mosely of Calm Mind Psychology of having:

- A chronic, severe range of psychological distress
- Elevated levels of Stress and Anxiety
- Anhedonia (inability to experience pleasure in life)
- Depression
- Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder due to the forced separation between my natural mother and myself as a baby
- Associated insomnia, nightmares
- Complicated grief
- Suicidal ideation
- Psychological splitting
- Significant rumination of obsessive thoughts
- Sensitivity to shock and flashbacks
- Dry mouth, gastro-intestinal issues, elevated heart rate
- Feeling constantly 'on edge'.
- Fear of abandonment.
- Inability to hold long term relationships.

I attach her report for your information.

I also had childhood trauma in my adoptive family, including physical and sexual abuse. After my adoption, my circumstances and health in my adoptive family went unmonitored by the Queensland state, which was contrary to law that expresses my 'best interests' would be served by the adoption.

I was not informed by government I was adopted, and it was left to me to uncover this, which I did when I was around 14 years old during puberty, which had considerable negative impact on me. I then was denied access to my birth information by Queensland Government until I was 30 years old, when laws changed and allowed me identifying information.

- I discovered my birth mother died when I was 10, so I never was able to meet her.
- I discovered by birth mother had married my birth father, whilst I was still in foster care before my adoption, yet the Queensland Government did not notify them I was available to them to retrieve.

- I discovered I had two full brothers I missed a childhood with, growing up as an only child in my adoptive family.

Due to my mental health issues, caused by Government policy, I have been unable to marry or have children.

Contrary to laws at the time, the Queensland government did not act in my best interests by making the adoption order. Even though I had a legally married, legitimate mother and father, the government continued with my adoption into a stranger family, again contrary to my best interests, and contrary to human rights charter which Australia was a signatory to at the time of my birth.

Although the Federal and the Queensland Government, and other actors such as the Salvation Army, have each apologised for their roles in Forced Adoption, approximately 9 years ago, no compensation has been offered to the victims of Forced Adoptions (also called the 'White Stolen Generation'). Unlike those victims of the 'Aboriginal (black) Stolen Generation' or the 'Forgotten Australians' (victims of pain and suffering whilst held in government-backed institutions) which each have redress schemes.

I call for governmental recognition of the lifelong pain and suffering and negative mental health outcomes caused to victims of forced adoptions, by way of financial compensation for the loss of a lived life, and a redress scheme, like the other groups mentioned above have had.

Only through this type of redress scheme will governments really acknowledge the mental health issues they have created, and avoid future similar circumstances, such as the forced removal of children from their birth families, instead of support.

Only through the continued tracking of adopted children and adults of their mental health outcomes throughout their life, would we have a complete and accurate picture of the mess this government has created in many lives.

Only if we have a free and uncomplicated, no-fault, legal way an adult adoptee can discharge (annul/divorce) their adoption, can we start to address the ongoing pain and suffering some adoptees feel in their lives.

Only if we can have governments inform children and adults they have been adopted, and share information, without the secrecy and privacy walls governments have built in laws and processes, can we start the healing journey to a truthful identity.

- Darryl Nelson

(formerly Shane Allen Wallace, Darryl Lindsay Anderson).

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