

Question on Notice

No. 1154

Asked on 12 October 2021

MRS L GERBER asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise what steps has the Queensland Government taken to assist in the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Report, *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices* (2012)?

ANSWER

The Palaszczuk Government recognises the profound impact of past forced adoption policies and practices on mothers and children in Queensland.

The Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Report *Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices* made a total of 20 recommendations. The majority of recommendations were directed specifically at the Commonwealth Government or require the Commonwealth Government to take a leadership role in the national implementation of those recommendations.

In respect of Queensland, a bipartisan apology was made on behalf of the whole Queensland Parliament in 2012. The Parliament apologised for past forced and illegal adoption policies and practices and committed to continuing to listen to, work with and support people to heal and ensure past policies and practices of forced adoption are not forgotten or repeated.

This bipartisan apology reflected key recommendations (3, 4, 5 and 7) made in the 2012 Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Report.

Recommendation 8 called on the Commonwealth Government, states and territories to establish specialised professional support and counselling services for people impacted by past forced adoption policies and practices. The Queensland Government has acted to provide funding for a number of post-adoption services as well as specific services for people impacted by forced adoption. These services include:

- Post Adoption Support Queensland, provided by The Benevolent Society Queensland, which provides individual, family and group counselling and support to people affected by adoption;
- Jigsaw Queensland, that now includes additional Commonwealth funding to deliver the Forced Adoption Support Services to support people affected by forced adoption, including information, referrals, emotional support and assistance with searching for and contacting relatives; and
- Link-Up Queensland Aboriginal Corporation, which provides services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who wish to reunite with family from whom they have been separated or removed.

Recommendations 14 and 15 called on all jurisdictions to adopt a process for allowing the names of fathers to be added to original birth certificates where not originally recorded and for the adoption of new principles relating to post-adoption information and contact. These recommendations were already consistent with Queensland legislation and remain in place.

Adoption and Permanent Care Services of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs has been meeting with the Post Adoption Stakeholder Group on a quarterly basis in recent years and the meetings have included updates from the respective groups around research and service delivery changes, discussion about policy and legislative changes or service implementation around, for example, forced adoption.

The Post Adoption Stakeholder Group consists of the following stakeholder organisations:

- Origins;
- Association of Adoptees Inc.;
- Jigsaw;
- ALAS AUS Inc.; and
- You Gave Me A Voice.

Adoption and Permanent Care Services has also met with the CEO of Origins and the Queensland Coordinator of Origins SPSA.

In addition to the ongoing consultation my Department has with stakeholders, I can advise the Member, the Palaszczuk Government has invested \$4.1M in ongoing adoption and forced adoption support services since coming to Government in 2015.