



Hon Simone McGurk MLA
Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests;
Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services

Our ref: 74-25690

The Hon Peter Foster MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005
env@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear The Hon Peter Foster

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

You may be aware of recent media attention and questions in Parliament regarding historical forced adoption practices in Western Australia (WA). An e-Petition was tabled in the Legislative Council on 4 May 2022 'requesting to Parliament to hold an inquiry into past adoptive policies and practices'. I understand the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs (Committee) is currently reviewing this petition.

Over the last 18 months, my office has been approached by a number of people affected by historical forced adoption practices, outlining their experiences and the ongoing impact that these practices have had on their lives, and the lives of their families.

Several policy issues relating to this matter have been previously examined in the 2012 *Senate Community Affairs References Committee report on the Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices* and the 2021 *Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria* and have informed the Department of Communities' work on this matter to date. I believe there would be benefit for a more detailed examination of practices that occurred in WA, and in particular, those directly affected have relayed strongly their desire to place on the public record their experience and the effect this practice had on their lives.

After consulting with the Minister for Health and Mental Health and the Attorney General, I am requesting that the Committee inquire into historical forced adoption practices in WA.

I propose that the inquiry's terms of reference are for the Committee to:

1. understand the lived experiences of those affected by historical forced adoption practices;
2. inquire into the role, if any, of the State Government, private institutions, and health services, its policies and practices in contributing to historical forced adoptions during the late 1940s to the 1980s;
3. examine adoption policy and legislative frameworks to ensure past practices are not repeated in the future; and
4. identify what appropriate and practical measures might be put in place to assist persons experiencing distress due to these historical practices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simone McGurk', written in a cursive style.

HON SIMONE MCGURK MLA

MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION; WOMEN'S INTERESTS;

PREVENTION OF FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; COMMUNITY SERVICES

13 DEC 2022