

Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices, Western Australian government

2023 – 2024

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Details

The Western Australian government's Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs commenced an inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices on 22 February 2023. The impetus for this inquiry was a petition with 318 signatures, presented by Jennifer McRae and tabled in the Legislative Council on 15 November 2022.

The terms of reference for the inquiry were :

To inquire into the past adoptive policies and practices of the twentieth century, notably the years between 1939 and 1980.

In particular, the Committee will seek to:

- 1. understand the lived experiences of those affected by historical forced adoption practices*
- 2. examine the role of the State Government, health services and private institutions in these practices*
- 3. identify what measures are currently available to assist persons experiencing distress, their effectiveness, and how those persons may be supported further*
- 4. consider any other matter that arises during the course of the inquiry deemed to be relevant by the Committee.*

The committee handed down its report, [Broken bonds, fractured lives](#) on 22 August 2024.

The report explores the role of the WA government in past forced adoptions, as well as the role of private institutions and health services. A number of institutions were found to have played a significant role in past forced adoption in WA. The committee also found that private hospitals, general and private health practitioners and legal practitioners played a role in past forced adoptions.

The Committee stated that the evidence received by the inquiry included “80 clear accounts of forced adoption in WA last century”. The Committee recommended a redress scheme be established for those directly affected by

past forced adoption in WA.

More info

Related Entries

Related Organisations

- [Hillcrest Maternity Home \(1922 - 1974\)](#)
The WA inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices found that Hillcrest Maternity Home played a significant role in past forced adoptions.
- [The Alexandra Home for Mothers and Babies \(Inc\) and Mothercraft Training School \(1950 - 1956\)](#)
The WA inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices found that the Alexandra Home for Mothers and Babies (Inc) and Mothercraft Training School played a significant role in past forced adoptions.
- [Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre Inc \(1956 - 1989\)](#)
The WA inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices found that the Ngal-a Mothercraft Home and Training Centre played a significant role in past forced adoptions.
- [Alexandra Home for Women \(1916 - 1950\)](#)
The WA inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices found that the Alexandra Home for Women played a significant role in past forced adoptions.
- [St Anne's Maternity Home \(c. 1958 - 1982\)](#)
The WA inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices found that institutions operated by the Sisters of Mercy (now Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea) engaged in pressure and coercion practices which caused unmarried mothers to agree to the adoption of their children.
- [St Anne's Nursing Home \(1937 - c. 1958\)](#)
The WA inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices found that institutions operated by the Sisters of Mercy (now Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea) engaged in pressure and coercion practices which caused unmarried mothers to agree to the adoption of their children.
- [St Anne's Mercy Hospital \(1982 - 1997\)](#)
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- [St Gerard's Hospital \(1944 - c. 1972\)](#)
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- [St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage \(1901 - 1971\)](#)
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- [St Vincent's Foundling Home \(1914 - 1971\)](#)
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- [St Margaret's Hostel \(1918 - 1971\)](#)
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- [Catherine McAuley Centre \(1971 - 1991\)](#)
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Related Concepts

- [Adoption in Western Australia \(c. 1896 - current\)](#)
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