

# **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE**

## **Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria**

Melbourne—Wednesday, 16 December 2020

### **MEMBERS**

Ms Natalie Suleyman—Chair

Mr James Newbury—Deputy Chair

Ms Christine Couzens

Ms Emma Keally

Ms Michaela Settle

Mr David Southwick

Mr Meng Heang Tak

### **WITNESSES**

Ms Brenda Coughlan, Independent Regional Mothers, and

Dr Nilmini Fernando, Research Fellow, Griffith University, QLD and researcher with Independent Regional Mothers.

**The CHAIR:** Good morning. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting. I pay my respects to the elders past and present and the Aboriginal elders of other communities who may be here today.

I declare open the public hearings for the Legal and Social Issues Committee's Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria. As you have been informed, my name is Natalie Suleyman. I am the Member for St Albans and the Chair of this committee. To my left is Christine Couzens, MP, the Member for Geelong; also Michaela Settle, MP, the Member for Buninyong; David Southwick, MP, the Member for Caulfield; and Heang Meng Tak, MP, the Member for Clarinda.

All evidence taken by this committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. Therefore you are protected against any action for what you say here today, but if you go outside and repeat the same things, including on social media platforms, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard. You will also be provided with a proof version of the transcript for you to check as soon as it is available. Any transcripts, PowerPoint presentations or handouts will be placed on the committee's website as soon as possible unless they are indicated to be of confidential nature.

Please also be aware that we have Reiko Hipple with us today. Reiko is from Carfi, an external provider of psychological and other support. She is available to talk with you at any point if you like, whether it is after the hearing or even if it is during should you need to take a break. We can also put you in touch with Carfi or other services at a later time should you need or request this.

Today the committee is interested in hearing about your experiences of forced adoption, and in particular the services you have accessed and what outcomes you would like from this inquiry. I now invite Brenda Coughlan, from Independent Regional Mothers—

**Ms COUGHLAN:** I am the spokesperson.

**The CHAIR:** and the spokesperson—thank you, Brenda. And also here today is Nilmini Fernando from Independent Regional Mothers. Thank you so much. Brenda, you may begin.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Pleasure. Thank you. I will just read what I have actually written down. What I have been able to do is because I have so many women ring me, I have tried to put something together that has, you know, all their hopes. But I think, as I have said to Yuki, I will actually include my own story without me saying that it is my story, so you should be able to pick it up.

Truth stands alone and is irrevocable, and it is about human lives. Mothers, including Indigenous and young migrant girls, did not give up their babies, they were already gone—babies abducted, motherhood exterminated to make mothers dead to their own newborn babies. Tied down, not permitted to see your baby—it was illegal, and the law was breached. These were crimes against humanity, because mothers are not replaceable. We are not talking about a faraway place, we are talking about Victoria, and Dr Hoolahan said stolen babies 'like something out of the Middle Ages'. Mothers whose babies were abducted at birth have travelled through many storms and trials of life, never to be the same again—striving to regain their dignity, hiding broken hearts behind their smiles, but beneath the surface suffering indescribable grief, pain and trauma, and still being treated as the criminal.

The sacred bond of motherhood is so precious no-one had the right to destroy it. There was no justification, no legislation and no law. We are the only living witnesses to these medical crimes.

This photo says it all. It says it all, every drop of blood—with the government pushing many women of suicidal ideation to suicide. Is there no understanding what emotional triggers occur when a mother has to open again her hidden very raw emotions? Her scars bleed.

Dr Lindell breached his duties under the Hospital and Charities Commission 1958 legislation. His abuse of power and rank, with no conscience and respect for the young women, and in his own handwriting he

wrote, 'I agree' on the government document dated 28 May 1958 after receiving confirmation—from Isobel Strahan, almoner, Royal Women's Hospital, and Patricia Cox from the Queen Victoria Hospital—of the medical policies and practices to permanently separate unwed mothers and their newborn babies without consent or court order, inflicting gross violation of mothers' human rights and fundamental freedom.

The Honourable Arthur Rylah, Victoria's Attorney-General, at a conference in 1961, and also in a letter to the secretary of the commonwealth Attorney-General, stated it was necessary to introduce the uniform model adoption Act which came in about 1965. I quote:

The real purpose of the new legislation is the eradication of medical malpractice, covert baby buying, covert baby trafficking, under the 1958 adoption legislation.

Patricia Cox, who I just mentioned, was guest speaker at a Jigsaw meeting in 1978. She confirmed the crimes when she said, I quote:

The purpose of the 1958 adoption legislation was to make a complete and total separation of the child from its mother. The commonwealth Attorney-General, Mark Dreyfus, said although the national apology did not specifically mention the treatment of mothers in Victoria's hospital—and I will say the reason that happened. Victoria was not represented by a female. Victoria was only represented by two males. That is why it was not specifically mentioned. He did acknowledge the mistreatment and malpractice of any mother's experience that resulted in forced adoption practices.

My Commonwealth member said to members of my electorate:

... I simply assure them: 'You never did anything wrong ...

...

Instead of love, there was reproach;

Instead of support, rejection;

Instead of celebration, silence;

And instead of justice, there was wrongdoing.

Would any unwed pregnant girl give consent to the following torture, noting her baby would be wrenched from her womb during the birthing process: reproductive slavery, their flesh exposed to strangers, used as a lab rat for infertility resolution, body sexually violated in the most brutal manner imaginable, treated, herded and slaughtered as cattle? Babies violently extracted from the mother's womb before the placenta was removed. The amputation and dismembering part of a mother's body and her blood. Digitally raped over and over again. Bodies, minds and spirits exploited. The criminal violation of obstetric crimes. Drugged with psychoanalytic banned drugs, impairing judgement and mental capacity. Chemical restraint. Human degradation. And there are no statutes of limitations to prevent justice and accountability for mothers.

The Victorian government has fiercely condemned white-collar sexual crimes, but through their government funding recognise the human rights of priests, who created situations for young girls taken care of by the charity nuns. This is where the double standards of this government are. This government, through funding, acknowledges the human rights of rapists, those who committed incest, cowards who deserted mother and child, those who sexually exploited young girls. It is an absolute scandal of women's human rights that this government has put into place. IRM denounces the rights of these men to be referred to as fathers and honour decent fathers, with many parents marrying.

The medical monsters acted above the law under the perception that the Nuremberg code was an overreaction to the notorious Nazi criminals—and that comes from the medicals' own document—in copying the clean break theory introduced by the Nazis in 1941, separating mother and child as they were led into separate death gas chambers. Their misogynist comments after the national apology and that of the Victorian government, their standards and their funding—this is what was said:

Mothers received their apology. They are only a small percentage of the overall picture, and adopted persons are not interested in the circumstances surrounding their separation from their natural mother. It is now about the end result: adoption.

And from that moment our truth was gone.

This is persecution of women and a threat to our democracy. To conceal these unimaginable medical crimes under government funding is to attempt to disempower women. We deserve respect and the right to our dignity and our integrity. The manager, in an article on 3 June 2020, stated some criminal practices, requesting the removal of the statute of limitations so the responsible institutions can be taken to court. I put on the record IRM say thankyou for their 360-degree turnaround in support of mothers who have suffered these criminal policies and practices and the abduction of their newborn babies under the 1958 adoption legislation and covert baby trafficking. The Limitation of Actions Act 1958 and the Wrongs Act 1958 may require just small amendments so that there is no confusion when it comes to the legal right of the mothers to commence litigation against all defendants who were involved in these brutal, barbaric, sexual crimes during pregnancy, who were lulled ‘into medicated delirium’—Daniel Andrews’s words—without consent and suffered the abduction of newborn babies under 28 May 1958 illegal medical policies and practices.

IRM mothers were advised in writing by then Minister Mikakos on behalf of the health minister, Jill Hennessy, in December 2015 there was no statute of limitations for the government’s systemic neglect and failure in relation to the alleged illegal and unlawful crimes mothers endured. The government legal department advised the minister’s office after receiving several claims for compensation for mothers under the 1958 adoption Act, and he said:

The Victorian government will pay compensation on a case-by-case basis.

IRM mothers were then advised to seek legal representation so their individual compensation claims could proceed with no statute of limitations.

No matter what is finally achieved through the legal process for compensation, even \$10 million will never erase these brutal crimes and turn back the clock and lay the babies on the mothers’ chests. Mothers deserve compensation, because if not, the medical, nursing and social worker professions, state and church will repeat history. There was no statute of limitations in 2002 under Steve Bracks, under the Labor Party ministerial briefing BR1/02/094.

There is no statute of limitations for an adoptee to have an adoption order discharged without the mother’s truth being considered at the time. So if there is no statute of limitations for an adoptee, there is certainly none for the mother [for records to be discharged].

We are very proud to say, and we are very grateful, we received an apology from the Victorian Chief Commissioner of Police on 30 January 2019. Professor John Leeton stated:

Because there was a decrease in illegitimate babies available for adoption in the early 60s they needed to focus on infertility resolution, as there were no illegitimate babies born after 1960, as Victorian births, deaths and marriages legislation had been amended in line with the High Court appeal case in 1961.

Many have not survived the medical level of torture and horror. Many would have died of shock, and many are still trying to come to terms with what they illegally endured, with the only support services today for us through CASA. The more mothers that come face to face with their extermination the deeper the shock and horror, continuing to be relegated as inconsequential, and we are still disposable.

The torture, horror, pain, loss, suffering and grief of one’s baby abduction can never be erased, because when hope is lost, the trauma is unimaginable. Many young lives and babies in utero were put at risk with lack of duty of care. It is still expected under this government’s funding for mothers whose babies were abducted to still give up their self-worth and concept of herself as a valued person in our society in her own right, purely to conceal—under this government’s funding—these crimes.

The double government standards keep flowing on, including IRM regional women being accused of being a mitigating risk by staff of the Department of Premier and Cabinet on 2 October 2018, with this

Premier signing a document for \$340 000 funding for a Melbourne adoption memorial and refusing 12 months earlier to contribute \$5000 to the regional cherished mother and child memorial, which is abuse of regional women.

No matter how many words are written or spoken, no matter how many meetings and discussions are held, nothing can ever come close to expressing or understanding the grief, the pain, the trauma a mother carries in her heart following the abduction of her baby that grew inside her womb. Mothers are the ones repeatedly punished for these crimes under government funding and this government's double standards. It has been a long journey for truth to surface upon layers of condemnation and endless secrets and lies through government funding and government double standards.

In closing, it is time to look up and stop looking down. IRM has bought their own star, which is called Cherished Mother and Child. And that is what we are saying: it is time to look up and stop looking down, and we need the opportunity. It is not about the money; it is about recognition. Thanks.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Brenda. We will start with some questions. Thank you, Christine.

**Ms COUZENS:** Thank you both so much for being here today and particularly to you, Brenda, for sharing your experience of mothers around Victoria, and we do really appreciate you being here. Obviously we read your submissions, but having that personal contact is really valuable for us as a committee.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Can I just say, with IRM we have had three apologies. IRM were very proud to be part of the consultation for the national apology on 22 October. We were recognised. The medical brutality of the sexual crimes was recognised, and this government still will not recognise it. And that hurts. I know I take politicians as politicians, but we cannot even get 1 ounce of media coverage. The media coverage is about the fathers—who are demeaning mothers, but anyway—and also about the adoptees. It is not about that. It is about the crimes, and I can tell you right now I am talking from experience.

**Ms COUZENS:** Thanks, Brenda. Are you happy to continue with the questions?

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Yes.

**Ms COUZENS:** Sure.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Can I just table the apology from Victoria Police?

**Ms COUZENS:** Yes. Thank you. You talked a bit about support, and I think what you said was the support from CASA?

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Yes. It was wonderful.

**Ms COUZENS:** Have you received any other support from services prior to CASA?

**Ms COUGHLAN:** We will not go anywhere near the other services.

**Ms COUZENS:** Okay. And is there a reason for that?

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Yes, because the medical training—and it is in those documents I have given you—that this government funds is about adoption. APS in their report said some mothers felt they were sexually abused. Well, I took them on over that. I took them on: 'felt'?

They would not say this to men who have been sexually abused by white-collar priests or ministers or whatever, but to a woman—'felt'? So there are no services because there has never been any research. CASA are wonderful.

**Ms COUZENS:** So can you just elaborate a bit on what CASA are doing in terms of support? Is it counselling, group work?



**Ms COUZENS:** Thank you.

**Dr FERNANDO:** Is it okay just to let you know that I am actually an academic, a researcher, and I have been working with Brenda and Independent Regional Mothers for the last two or three years trying to gather this evidence, working with a criminologist. I suppose what I am here for is obviously to support Brenda, but I am a specialist in domestic abuse and family violence and also a gender specialist. I just want to let you know that the journey that Brenda has been on is more than just support now for historic cumulative impacts of medical abuse. What is happening here is the gradual disappearance of the mothers, and through the discourse shifting it has been replaced by the discourse of adoption and adoptees. It is a very gendered discourse. The invisibility, just erasing the women—to be honest I have seen this before. I was researching this thing in Ireland when the whole institutional abuse at the Magdalene laundries broke, when that story broke. They sometimes wait for the women to die, right? And it is a historic injustice. What has happened is the discourse has shifted and shifted and shifted. That is what Brenda is talking about too, not just the fact that she needs that support now.

Yes, I will talk about the medical profession in a minute. But the main thing is the erasure and the silencing and the total disavowal of the crimes that had been committed against mothers. We are in a post-gender world where we think it does not matter, but it matters incredibly. At the forefront of that movement to shift that discourse have been male adoptees. Now, we are not getting into the gender wars here, but it is just to say: they have more power, access to the journalism. So when Brenda says that they cannot even get an inch of column space, that is the disparity, gross disparity, in representation of this issue, and for the government to put it back in there will actually restore that sense of justice.

So yes, the money is really important, because I know the survivors have gone through cancer, and we have just talked about the incredible health problems they have coped with, the disruption to their relationships with their other children. Imagine what it is like just to be told that your baby was dead but it was actually just taken away from you, and as a child imagine that you were told your mother had died—this is the level of stuff. It is pretty hard to imagine now, but we need to imagine it. Then imagine that entire journey and what is going on now—that whole obstruction and the equivalence given. Once it is there and the discourse is framed that way, the narrative is framed that way, the dominant narrative, what happens is that everybody is given equivalence. It is not an equivalence. There is a very special category of injury that needs to be addressed and acknowledged.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Can I just say one thing. I know your time is valuable. It is something I am very strong on, and it is this document. I cannot give it to you because I have scribbled all over it [Transcript, dated 17/10/2011]—you do not really want to read what I wrote. These two males are still doing that. They are saying the mother did not put the name of the father on the original birth certificate. There is a document before the original birth certificate. It is called a form of birth registration. Under law an unwed mother could not put the name there.

What they did in the hospital was they turned it under, and the mother did not know the father had to sign it. He had to sign it—he had to sign it to get his name on the birth certificate. This constant saying that the adoptees want to know their father's name, their mother never put it on, and that is in that document there. I am so adamant on this. That is the very first document, not the original birth certificate. That is the second document. For fathers to complain—they did not sign it [REDACTED] or the baby then could have been in her name or his name or hyphenated. It is on the back of the form. There is the form.

When I looked at this document last night, just to—here it is again. Two males, off they go in Victoria, who have got control over us, control over Daniel Andrews. I am sorry, but that is the truth. Again, they go and tell lies. Then in this document, he is saying that a mother who donor conceived is the same as adoption. How can that be? The mother keeps her baby; we did not. That is where those two—I keep saying 'two males'—because that is them. One of them is a New Zealand father. He is not even a Victorian. I know your time is valuable, but what I am saying is I am absolutely adamant that that attitude has got to change. It is not the mother's fault. She did not even see the bottom part because [REDACTED]

█ that was part of their game, if you can follow what I am saying. That was part of their thing. By just simply turning up that last part—well, that is only an A4. Back then it was, what do you call it, foolscap?

**The CHAIR:** Foolscap.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Because there it is there. I will leave it there so you can see it.

**Dr FERNANDO:** I think what Brenda is saying is that because of all these it allows everything to be conflated and the absolute injury of having it in the press, in the media—having all this—allows it to go more wrong and more wrong and more wrong. That is an aggression and a violence on the mothers whose truth has been suppressed. So I think that is the important thing, and without proper research and documentation of this it will keep on going.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Yes, but I think that this document here is a perfect example. Daniel signed that document for \$340 000. Okay? I got this under freedom of information. The document that I have given to the Inquiry states that IRM are ‘mitigating risks’—because the Melbourne memorial is about adoption. Have you seen it? It is the older children; it is about adoption. That is not what we are about.

**Dr FERNANDO:** It is not about the relinquishing mother.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Their apologies. So what we did was I got in touch, and so did someone else, with Daniel’s office and what did Daniel do? Credit where credit is due, when his address was read out, he wrote it correctly: former forced adoption policies and practices. His office then ordered a new plaque. They had to remove that plaque, because it was about adoption. One of these men had turned this into past adoption practices because the government funding is for adoptees and adoptive parents and relinquishing mothers. We were so proud when Daniel changed it, and we went, ‘Yeah!’. It is simple, but that is what these two males are doing.

**Dr FERNANDO:** I think it is about power, and I think that supporting—

**Ms COUGHLAN:** But when he was opposition leader we met several times. He was fantastic—very sympathetic. As soon as he got Premier I do not know where Daniel went.

**The CHAIR:** Okay. If I could just ask a question: what would you like the outcome of this inquiry to be? And if I could get Nilmini to answer as well and Brenda, because I think it is really important that we have it clear.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** It is very simple—very simple. The Attorney-General should just simply remove the glitch to allow no statute of limitation. The Act says the sexual abuses are covered, but there is a word, I think ‘loss of a child’, and I think I have got that in one of my recommendations—‘Loss of a child’ needs to be maybe ‘abduction’. It is just as simple as changing so mothers can continue with their claims. They already have been through the whole process when you have got to go and see a doctor, and they go through all that process. They are already sitting on the doorsteps of the court, because there is that tiny glitch somewhere. That is all we want: the Attorney-General to remove the glitch. You are recognising rapists. Just remove the little glitch.

I think that a redress scheme has been suggested. I personally am, and many other mothers are, against that redress scheme. It is as simple as removing the glitch, and then—many do not want to but some do—allowing them to go through the legal process simply, whether it be for \$2 or whether it be for \$20. It is a matter of acknowledgement. That is all.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Brenda. Nilmini, did you want to add anything?

**Dr FERNANDO:** Yes, just to say that also there has been the funding discrepancy. There is a gross disparity in the funding given to the case of adopted children and adoptee children and adoptive parents.



Similar funding needs to be given to put this on the record so that that erasure will not happen—the constant re-erasure until it finally disappears. It is interesting that organisation is called VANISH.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** They have got to have their funding taken.

**Dr FERNANDO:** Well, it is a very common issue in lots of other fields too, the erasure—especially of motherhood and that whole thing. So it is very easy to apply it to that, but I think putting things on record and having a proper research project or a documentary or something—some equal funding, not just for the therapy after the damage—to keep it on record so that it is a truth-telling exercise and that people can keep returning to that truth because it is on record.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** And just a brief summing-up—that is where the hurdle is. They are getting funding upon funding upon funding upon funding. They have got funding to train medical people, and I have given Yuki the documents. You will see there is no mother there, but the two males are there. There are two males that are continuing to be about adoptee, adopted parents. It has to stop. I do not care whether he is a solicitor; I do not care whether he is a union person. We are talking about humanity here, and we deserve to be respected. And we are not the bad guys. The abuse from the adoptees—

They want to charge mothers now for abandonment. You have got no idea. I will just say before I go: one of the most disgusting things and how far this has got out of hand by these two males is that the other adoptee, who is a solicitor, said that all grandparents were evil. Yuki knows. I sent her an email. It broke my heart, because my dad fought for this country, and my dad was not evil—

My dad tried to get my daughter, his first granddaughter. They even would not let him near her.

But that is what is out there. It is just getting worse, you know. It is just getting worse, the abuse. I just think that—there is the photo shown previously—we are going to have a lot more of this and we are going to have a lot more deaths. We have adoptees saying they had a bad life. My sister is an adoptive mother. My brother-in-law is an adoptive father. My two nieces are adopted, so I have the whole perspective, which is good. It gives me a clear understanding. But the adoptive parents did not do anything wrong. My sister makes it quite clear: ‘We were not in the birthing suite. We were not in the corridor. We did not steal the baby’, and she is right. The adoptive parents, there are so many out there that are so happy. I do not like seeing adoption, the word, downgraded. It is a beautiful thing. We have got 43 000-plus children now in protection. There are a lot of people out there—like, I would take them all home! I have a big project for the orphans in Timor-Leste. We have the love. Every child must be loved. One of my things is: do not ever run down an adoptive parent. I know some made mistakes, but we as natural parents made mistakes. I have made mistakes. Adoptive parents have made mistakes, but we all make mistakes.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Thank you very much for your time. Just remember, at any time I would love to talk, if you want to just ring me or I can come back down again if there is something else. I am always available. I just hope what I have given is going to be of some help. So if there is anything else you want—but I have to say before I go: that document from the Chief Commissioner of Police, I communicated because my dad went to the Moonee Ponds police station when I was being sexually abused by the doctors and my dad was told I must have been in love with the doctors, because it was not happening. So I continued and pursued that for my dad. Sadly dad is gone, but I came to Melbourne to the Keilor cemetery and I looked at it and I thought, ‘It’s too late’. But I did read it to him. That is only a copy. That is one of the most beautiful pieces of documents I have got, because that represents my dad, and he was never evil. I will leave that. You can have that for Daniel.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Brenda. On behalf of the committee, can I thank you so very much not only for sharing your experience and taking the time and the effort to prepare your evidence, but we truly do acknowledge that revisiting the past can cause painful and confronting issues. Sometimes there are not enough words, but I do want to say that on behalf of the committee we really take your evidence seriously, and it will take part in our consideration for some very strong recommendations to governments in some way.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Sorry, can I just ask a question? What recommendations?

**The CHAIR:** Once we conclude our inquiry into the historical forced adoptions, there will be a set of recommendations—

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Can I ask that you use the right title?

**The CHAIR:** Sure.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** Do you know it is insulting? It is former forced adoption policies and practices. Forced adoption is two men—it is insulting. We did not fight for forced adoption.

**The CHAIR:** Sure. Absolutely, Brenda, we will take that on record—my apologies. I do want to assure you that your evidence will take part. The next steps will be that we will continue on with our public hearing, hearing from other witnesses that are providing evidence. At its conclusion then our committee will provide, as I said, recommendations to government in relation to this inquiry.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** You realise that we are in the minority, though, don't you?

**Dr FERNANDO:** Yes, I was going to say—

**Ms COUGHLAN:** This is a David versus Goliath, because you have got Relinquishing Mothers, you have got the two males, you have got Vanish getting all the government funding and you have got RAV, which gets funding.

**Dr FERNANDO:** I think it is really important. The slippage in the discourse is very, very dangerous, and you cannot underestimate that. Just think about Mississippi and think about charging pregnant women for drinking a glass of wine—that is where it is heading. It is very dangerous, and even though it is a minority it is a very, very marginalised discourse. It needs to be given the full weight because of its danger. The slippage in terminology is vital to this, so if nothing else, just so you understand, it should not be an us versus them; all these parties should be in that doc. That is basically it. Brenda, I would give her a PhD because of the research she has done. I am hoping that she will get an honorary, because the detail and the length of that struggle needs to be also acknowledged and her threat—she is stalked, she is attacked every time she says anything. I think all that needs to be taken into consideration too.

**Ms COUZENS:** We have had the title of this inquiry raised many, many times. We are very aware. We do not actually set the title of it; it is referred to us. So unfortunately—

**Dr FERNANDO:** But there could be a strong contestation to just disrupt that.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** So—what—are the terms of reference not going to cover us? I think that the terms of reference were never really set in stone; it was sort of more of a general thing. That is why we were hoping that this was all going to come.

**Ms COUZENS:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** As I said, if there are any other issues that you would like to raise outside of the committee, Yuki or any member of the committee will be more than happy to take any suggestions or anything that may come up. Please let us know. But we need to—

**Ms COUGHLAN:** I understand that, but I also would like—and I have given it to Yuki—each of you to take half an hour and just have a look at the unveiling of the cherished mother and child memorial. Not so much that, but I would like you just to listen to Ted Baillieu, listen to Peter Ryan. Just listen to the words of the two men that delivered it. Listen to what they said on that DVD. It is not on a DVD now; we put it onto a USB stick.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Brenda.

**Ms COUGHLAN:** I want to say thank you to Yuki. We have had many, many conversations. We have laughed, I have cried and all that. In front of your committee, my darling, thank you.

**Witnesses withdrew.**