

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2014, we hope that you have safe and happy Xmas period. Well another year has begun and from first impressions it is going to be an interesting year.

Firstly we would like to thank those mums and adoptees who attended our Xmas party at the office, I received a letter from one of our adopted members who thanked us and said that it was like having Xmas dinner with her family, that comment was why we are here to support each other, Origins members are part of a global family suffering the adoption anxiety and damage as those in other parts of the world

2014 Started off with a lot of controversial statements made by state and federal politicians to make adoption easier and faster in Australia, a movement of adopters led by celebrities such as Debra Lee Furness and Hugh Jackman, some of the media statement have been included further in this news letter.

Since January, Origins Coordinators have been in meetings with state a federal department heads to discuss the government's response to the Senate Inquiry into Forced Adoption. In mid January senior advisor to Minister Kevin Andres met with me in Sydney to discuss funding etc and was later contacted by Tony Abbotts department, I also had meeting in our office with representatives from the Department of Human Services to discuss funding, the outcome of the apology etc, and in Canberra a week ago I have met briefly with Tony Abbott and was later contacted by his assistant who has given me her contact details for consultation.

With the release of Philomena and Love Child we have been inundated with calls for information, re contact etc from those interested and affected by the forced adoption issue

The office continues to operate with help from University students and a young woman (Shrey) from Mission Australia on work experience; we have students 2 days a week, one of our mothers comes in on a regular basis, and our work experience helper two days a week, we would like encourage our mums and adoptees to come along for a day at the office

The office will celebrate an official opening on the Friday 21st March the invitation is included in this

newsletter, also please be reminded we now have a new phone number and have included it on a fridge magnet also enclosed in this newsletter, the office opening is being left to coincide with the first anniversary of the apology, to date we have not heard what the federal government has planned in relation to this anniversary, the general mood is that the apology has not delivered what was hoped from it

A number of our mothers taking legal action have now settled this, and those considering going down the legal route can contact us for more information etc

In light of the response by State and Federal Governments to the Senate Inquiry recommendations Origins is thinking of taking an action to the United Nations and would appreciate any feedback that our members would like to give so if you feel strongly about it let us know

Insight has also contacted us on a program that is soon to be aired on whether adoption should be made easier, it will be interesting to see on what perspective they will follow on the show

In recent months we have been contacted by mothers and families who have had children taken from them and placed or about to be placed for foster care, this is a growing problem and one we are being drawn into with adoption against the parents' wishes as a final outcome, once again we are going backwards and wonder what the apologies were for if they are going to once again provide children for those demanding them, please let us know your thoughts on this

We are considering a survey on the abortion v adoption debate, given the damage caused by adoption and having knowledge of that, would you have considered abortion knowing the outcome of adoption? This is going to be an issue that is going to spark debate, do you have a view on this if so are you interested in doing a non-identifying survey on this issue, please let us know

I have been contacted by a number of doctors who have received an email from the Federal government in relations to specialized counseling for forced adoption, to access these service you have to go to your local GP and ask them to provide a referral to see a psychologist ,or psychiatrist, if you do not specifically ask them for forced adoption counseling

they will not refer you, a flyer is attached to this newsletter, for more information contact us on 02 9725 7723

Finally please make us your favorite charity and help us to continue our advocacy for those affected by adoption, please make sure that you are financial as we will be culling the un-financial members from the newsletter list

Lily Arthur

Library

We have the largest library on adoption issues, and have been said to be a national asset, while we are happy to loan books, please return books promptly to make sure that we do not lose these valuable assets



New laws will see babies taken from addicted or abused mothers who refuse to seek help

- by: *Yoni Bashan State Political Reporter*
- From: [The Sunday Telegraph](#)
- 1 day ago November 16, 2013 10:00PM



Babies will be taken away at birth from drug-addicted or abused mothers who refuse to seek help. *Source: Getty Images*

BABIES will be taken away at birth from drug-addicted or abused mothers who refuse to seek help, under new state laws that will kick in while the child is still in the womb.

Pregnant women who abuse drugs or alcohol will be made to sign a Parental Responsibility Contract ordering them to undergo treatment for the sake of their baby.

If they refuse or show no intention of complying, the government will be able to remove the child the moment it is born and use the broken PRC to immediately start formal proceedings to place the baby in the Minister's care.

The new legislation will also extend to pregnant woman who suffer domestic violence. In those cases, the women will be asked to sign a PRC ordering them to either leave their partner, move in with a relative or seek help through domestic violence counselling.

HOW THE NEW LAWS WILL WORK

While the PRC process has been operating for several years, current laws state they can only be applied to a parent after their child is born rather than while it is still in the womb. This means expectant mothers with a drug addiction can continue feeding their habit up until birth.

It is hoped that under the new scheme that will no longer happen and, in best case scenarios, the pregnant women will seek treatment and immediately cease their drug habit.

Babies born with a substance addictions cry in pain for hours, suffer tremors, respiratory problems and have low birth weight.

Family and Community Services Minister Pru Goward said the changes were designed to put the child first and provide the strongest possible incentive for troubled mothers to turn their lives around.

"I make no apologies for taking this bold new approach to child protection, which ensures we are putting the best interests of the child at the centre of every decision we make," Ms Goward said.

Symptoms of a drug-addicted baby:

The new laws are awaiting final approval from Cabinet before they are submitted to parliament.

"Whether it is raising the stakes on early intervention or improving access to open adoption, these reforms are about providing families and caseworkers with the support and tools they need to ensure vulnerable children have a safe home for life," Ms Goward said.

While it will be a magistrate's decision on whether to place the child in the minister's care, the legislation will state that a broken contract should be viewed as a strong case for a child to be placed in foster care.

NSW Health does not record the number of babies born with drug addictions, however in the three years to 2011 John Hunter Hospital on the Central Coast recorded 238 babies born with an addiction to substances including heroin, cannabis and amphetamines.

One case The Sunday Telegraph is aware of is a drug-dependent baby, Holly, aged 1, who was removed from her mother, a long-term drug user.

Despite undergoing a medicated withdrawal she suffered life-threatening complications and required 24-hour supervision.

Reports since May suggest she is now recovering as a direct result of the work by her foster carer and management by caseworkers with Community services.

In August a court ordered that she be placed into long-term adoption, though she will continue to have contact with her siblings, who are also in the state's care.



Jodie is a foster mother with Barnardos and has cared for 27 drug-addicted babies. *Source: News Limited*

DEFENCELESS TINY ADDICTS, NURTURED WITH LOVE:

IT is the sound of their cry, a piercing, distinctive scream that can only come from a baby withdrawing from drug-addiction.

"It's a different cry, it's a heartbreaking cry, you can't describe it but when you hear it you can tell it's not a normal baby cry," Jodie, 46, a Barnardos foster carer who has cared for 27 addict-babies, said.

"Their little knees are up into their stomach and they're screaming. You can walk the floor for six or seven hours with the baby crying continuously - they're in pain."

When she first started fostering newborns 12 years ago, babies with an addiction were almost non-existent.

Today, they are routinely in her care. Her last seven babies were all withdrawing from drugs spanning from methamphetamines to heroin to cannabis.

She picks them up from hospital, takes them home and immediately begins administering doses of morphine, which they need every four hours. That can continue for up to four months.

"I've had cases where they've got infections in their toes, under their armpits from the withdrawals," she said.

"They're not like your normal cuddly baby, they're very stiff and in a fair bit of pain."

Jodie says the happy side to fostering is that children leave her and live happy and healthy lives. *Source: News Limited*

One baby in particular sticks out in her memory. He was suffering terribly.

The hospital had kept him under observation for six weeks - much longer than usual.

He was withdrawing heavily and they could not stabilise him with medication.

Due to privacy reasons, the child and the hospital cannot be identified but, she said, nurses said it was the worst case they had seen.

"It was hard work dealing with that, my husband and me didn't get much sleep for the first three months," Jodie, who also has two children aged 16 and 18, said.

"But to see him now, he ended up going to his aunty, he's three now and he's a happy healthy little boy."

If there is a plus side to their story it's that each one leaves her care as a happy, healthy baby.

"Once they're off (their addiction), all of them (have) become like a normal child. It's very rewarding to see them at the end of it."

She used to hate their mothers, couldn't stand them. Then she met them and heard their side of the story.

Not surprisingly, many had their own stories of childhood pain that, while not an excuse, explained their decline into addiction, she said.

"Originally I hated them, I thought how could you do that to a child.

"But it's an illness. You can see they love them and the drugs get in the way."



These are the people promoting adoption!

Hugh Jackman & Wife Upset by Family Tragedy

March 14th, 2006 10:18am
EST

[Hugh Jackman](#) and his wife, Deborra-Lee Furness, are in shock after learning that the birth mother of their adopted son Oscar has killed herself. Amber Sanders, 28, had an ongoing battle with drugs and depression after giving her child away to the Australian actors. The celebrity couple adopted Oscar soon after he was born in May 2000. Sanders had two other children who were taken away by social services.



According to her father Tom Lanhem, "She was very distraught over never being able to see her son Oscar. She was upset over losing her other two children and ended up as a homeless person. And there were drugs."

Jackman and Furness are now reportedly trying to decide whether or not to tell their five-year-old son the news about his mother or wait until he is older. The couple also adopted a newborn daughter, Ava, last July.

Tony Abbott announces reform of overseas adoption laws

Date December 19, 2013



The presence of Hugh Jackman can improve many things. His presence in a movie will augment its takings. His presence in a well-cut suit will make the suit more elegant. And the Prime Minister Tony Abbott knows his presence at a press conference will, at the very least, ensure the conference gets a higher billing on the nightly news than Mr Abbott would have achieved on his ownsies.

On Thursday, the Prime Minister [announced](#) his government would deliver reform on overseas adoption, which at present is made very difficult by thorny bureaucracy and a lack of inter-government participation.

Actress Deborah-Lee Furness has long campaigned on the issue. She has two adopted children with her husband - who looks good in a suit and, as a professional action-man, must surely be in the Prime Minister's list of Top Five Bromance-Targets.

In a marquee at the back of the Prime Ministerial residence, Abbott stood before a crowd of tireless adoption campaigners, adoptive parents, film stars, children, journalists and the cyclist Cadel Evans (who, together with his wife Chiara Passerini, has adopted an Ethiopian boy whose cuteness is so dangerous it should be licensed.)

"To be born in Australia is to win the lottery of life," Mr Abbott said.

"And we would like to see more people winning the lottery of life by becoming Australians."

Flanked by Lee-Furness, Premier Barry O'Farrell and Family and Community Services Minister Pru Goward, Mr Abbott said adoption policy had been a no-go zone for too long.

"Just because we have made mistakes in the past is no reason to conclude we can't do it better in the future."

It would not be the first time a Prime Minister has shamelessly harnessed the charisma of a movie star to add sparkle to a cause (see Cate Blanchett and the carbon tax), but the cause being such a good one, it was hard to quibble.

And if the timing of the announcement was serendipitous, coming at the end of a decidedly rough period for the fresh-ish government, well, what of it?

As delightful children of all races gambolled on the lawn of Kirribilli House, against the back-drop of Sydney Harbour in its gladdest summer rags, and the sound of tinkling glasses inter-mingled with Hugh Jackman's laughter ... well, it was flat-out impossible think anything other than Christmassy thoughts.



Don't forget support meetings are held at the Sydney office on the 3rd Saturday of the month 12noon to 200pm come along and have a yarn and a cuppa

Are you a Financial Member?

Find out by the code on the address label on the envelope **F** = financial, **D** = membership is due, **U** = un-financial, **C** = complimentary

NEITHER ABORTION NOR ADOPTION IS AN EASY WAY OUT February 20, 2014 - 11:59PM

Clementine Ford



Jessia Marais and Mandy McElhinney star in Nine's *Love Child*.

One of the prevailing falsehoods pedalled by anti-choicers is that abortion is easy. Indeed, our own Prime Minister (and self appointed Minister for Women) once said, "Abortion is the easy way out. It's hardly surprising that people should choose the most convenient exit from awkward situations."

As someone who's had two abortions (and, for political reasons, been very open in discussing them), I can say that an unwanted pregnancy is more than merely 'awkward', and abortion is anything but convenient. While I don't subscribe to the self-flagellating explanation that abortion is the hardest choice anyone will ever have to make, I do think the process of waiting for it to be over is anything but easy. Writer Kathrine Ley* perhaps summed it up best when she explained earlier this week, "I don't want to be pregnant, but I don't want to have an abortion either. I crave an easy out, for the decision to be out of my hands."

These are the thoughts of anyone who's found themselves looking to terminate a pregnancy: that they will wake up to find that the shadow of fear cast across them will have disappeared in the sunlight of a new day.

The honesty with which I've always talked about my choices has naturally been met with hostility. People who call themselves 'pro-life' and yet have little to no respect for the lives of women (and only marginally more for the lives of unwanted born children from poor families) have accused me of lacking in humanity. There's a delicious irony in watching as people denigrate your character as less than human while in the same breath demanding you be charged with the responsibility of caring for a child.

I am by turns a murderer, a broken woman, a slut and a whore. I should have learned to keep my legs shut. My selfishness knows no bounds. Don't I know how many infertile

couples out there would love to have a child? How could I have killed my 'precious children' when there are people who would have happily taken them on?

This last one has always perplexed me. I've watched numerous friends of mine struggle with IVF and infertility, and it's heartbreaking. I would love nothing more than for them to be able to have the child they've desired so desperately, and for it to be done without the traumatic cycle of disappointment and hurt. But unfortunately, the fact of my fertility (or anyone's) has nothing to do with them. It may seem like a cruel joke that some people can become pregnant when they don't want to be while others will struggle for years with no success - but this isn't anybody's fault. It's certainly not the job of women to act as baby farms for the benefit of other people.

And then there is a more serious point, one which carries a legacy of shame that cannot be washed away with inventive retelling. I've often been told that the 'horrendous' abortion rate (for which there are actually no solid national figures, and even where the ones we do have are skewed by the inclusion of miscarriages and stillbirths) is responsible for the lack of adoption opportunities in Australia. I find this a gross and deeply offensive misreading of history.

While abortion has undoubtedly given women more choice in regards to when and how they give birth, the lowered opportunities for adoption are due in large part to the fact that our society no longer forces single, Indigenous and teenage women to give up their children.

From the early 1950s to the 1970s, at least 150,000 young and unmarried mothers had their newborn babies stolen from them and placed with adoptive families. Many of these women never saw their children again, with both mother and child experiencing irreversible psychological trauma. In 2013,

then Prime Minister Julia Gillard issued a government apology to the victims of our shameful forced adoption practices.

Prior to this (and continuing through this period), Indigenous families faced the same government abuse and oppression. In among the already horrific practice of dehumanisation and discrimination forced on Australia's original inhabitants, a policy was borne that saw generations of Aboriginal children stolen from their families. The effects of this are still felt today, with many Aboriginal women carrying a legacy of fear that their kids will be taken from them against their will.

Watching Channel Nine's traumatising but well executed *Love Child* with my sister the other night, I mused that I could 'never let anyone take my child from me' - as if it's as easy as simply deciding that. Of course, this is a thoughtless throwaway line from someone who wants to believe these kinds of policies are 'in the past'. But the women forced to give birth with pillows on their bellies to stop them from seeing babies they weren't allowed to hold were given no support to fight for their rights. Likewise, the women whose children were taken from them and their communities had no recourse to get them back. It's easy to say you'll never let someone overpower you when your rights seem inviolable. When alternative policies become enshrined in law, you might as well be screaming at a hurricane.

The fact is, government legislation in this country has, at various times, held the autonomy of women and our bodies in utter contempt. And frighteningly, there are people sitting in Australia's Federal and State Parliaments now who would like to gain more control over us once again.

We are almost certainly facing a fight in Australia's state legislatures, with greater numbers of anti-choice zealots using US

style subterfuge to mount attacks on our reproductive rights. Whether we choose to continue a pregnancy or not is nobody's else's business but our own. The decisions made regarding our bodies and our reproduction are for us to make alone, and we must maintain constant vigilance in the face of attempts to undermine this irrefutable fact.

It's too easy to become complacent about our rights. Unfortunately, history shows that where women's bodies are concerned, everyone wants to have a say - but the only people denied a seat at the discussion table are the ones carrying the extra baggage.

Updates from Origins Queensland

With the slower pace and the very hot temperatures over the Christmas period most of us here in Qld had a well earned break .

The announcement by the PM that he was going to legislate to make adoptions easier and faster brought a flurry of emails and phone calls from upset adopted people and mothers many very angry and sad and asking if after the Apology to victims of Forced Adoption had he and the Federal Government learned nothing. Our wonderful compassionate counselor and team leader at PASQ, Susan Kelly , handed in her resignation and has left the Benevolent Society . She will be very much missed by all her friends and clients.

Once again we have had a meeting with Professor Nahum Mushin from the working Group and Megan Shipley from DSS in Brisbane to hear an update on any progress in deciding where the funding announced by Julia Gillard at the Apology is going to go

at the end of the financial year.

The Scoping study by AIFS will report in March and will underpin any decision by Minister Andrews distribution of funding. We consulted on this study here late last year.

The next meeting and apparently the last with the National Archives to consult with Origins members will be held on the 5th March at 10 :30 am at 100 Creek Street 2nd Floor Brisbane

{the corner of Adelaide and Creek }
If you wish to attend this meeting please email me at originsqld@hotmail.com and confirm

Victorian Support Meetings

There is a support group in Victoria they meet at the Queen Vic Centre 12-3pm 210 Lonsdale St on the last Saturday of the month, on the 1st floor see the sign at the front of the lift Phone 03 9812 0215 for more information



NSW Support meetings

**Support meetings will be held
on the
3rd Saturday of the Month
at 12 noon till 2pm at the office.
Please let us know if you will be
attending**

SUBSCRIPTION TO MEMBERSHIP

If you wish to become a financial member or renew your membership please send application form provided along with subscription fee to:

'ORIGINS SPSA Inc'

P.O. Box W 18

Fairfield West N.S.W. 2165

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Annual Membership:

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To ensure you receive your newsletter please
inform us of any change of address.

**SMILE AND LET
EVERYONE KNOW
THAT TODAY,
YOU'RE A LOT
STRONGER THAN
YOU WERE
YESTERDAY.**