

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for the Environment and Climate Change

Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone: 03 6165 7678
Email: barnett.correspondence@dpac.tas.gov.au



Kristy Johnston MP
Member for Clarke

By email: haprocedure@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Johnston,

Constituency Question – Forced Adoption Redress Scheme

Thank you for your question in Parliament on 1 September 2026. I provide the following information:

Question

Tasmania's forced adoption redress scheme covers mothers whose babies were forcibly removed but excludes the children themselves, now adults, who carry the lifelong trauma of that separation. I've been contacted by a constituent, a forced adopted person born in Launceston in 1977, who has been unable to get an explanation from your department as to why forced adopted people are excluded and said they received essentially a form letter from you. Your own department points to Western Australian parliamentary reporters informing this scheme's design but that report, recommendation 20, explicitly proposes a redress scheme covering mothers, forcibly removed children and, in some cases, fathers. So, why has Tasmania departed from the very recommendation it says informed this scheme and will you provide my constituent and the wider forced adoption community with a substantive answer rather than a form letter?

Response

Firstly, I want to be clear that the Tasmanian Government recognises that historical forced adoption practices caused profound and lifelong impacts, not only for mothers, but also for many adopted people, fathers and other family members. The grief, loss of identity, disconnection from family and unanswered questions that some adopted people continue to carry are real and should not be diminished.

As announced in October 2025, the Forced Adoption Redress Scheme was established to recognise and respond to the specific and direct harms experienced by mothers who were subjected to forced adoption practices. Establishing a redress scheme supporting mothers affected by forced adoption practice involved extensive, discrete consultation and design work. A redress scheme for adopted children would require a new scheme with different scope, parameters and eligibility.

The Member refers to work undertaken in other jurisdictions. As part of the Scheme's development, my Department reviewed reports and policy approaches from around Australia, including the Western Australian parliamentary inquiry. That work was undertaken to inform the Government's understanding of emerging approaches to acknowledgement and redress. However, Western Australia has not established a redress scheme of this nature and has not adopted the recommendation referred to by the Member. In designing Tasmania's approach, the Government also had regard to Victoria's scheme, which likewise does not provide redress payments to adopted persons.

While adopted people are not eligible under the current Scheme, that should not be interpreted as a dismissal of their experiences or the very real impacts they may have suffered throughout their lives. The Government acknowledges those experiences and the important contribution adopted people have made, and continue to make, to discussions about forced adoption practices in Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Barnett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Deputy Premier
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