



We're for Childhood
SINCE 1877

Berry Street Apology for Forced Adoption of Children

Berry Street acknowledges and apologises unreservedly for any pain, trauma, unresolved grief or suffering experienced by mothers, children, fathers, adoptive parents and families as a result of any past adoption practices of the Berry Street Foundling Hospital and Infants' Home. We acknowledge and deeply regret any forced adoption practices that took place during a particular period (the mid 1950s to the early 1970s) in our long history as an adoption agency.

We recognise the harm and damage forced adoption has caused to the mothers, children, fathers, adoptive and extended families. We acknowledge the truth – that many young women were not supported to freely decide what was in their child's best interests. We face with great regret and considerable shame any involvement of this agency in forced adoptions and we resolve to never allow such a thing to happen again.

To the mothers we say sorry. These events were not your fault. Many of you have exposed the lies that had been told about you. We believe you and we deeply regret that these practices of forced adoption ever took place. We are deeply sorry for the untruths told about you and for the trauma, pain and suffering you have endured in being denied the right to stay with and to raise your child.

We apologise to the fathers who, if given the chance, might have cared for, protected, loved and nurtured your child.

To the children denied from infancy the natural bond of mother and family, we apologise and say sorry. We acknowledge that your rightful childhood was replaced with another. We acknowledge the impact of this loss and grief, which is often passed on to next generations as you struggle to find out to whom and where you belong.

To the adoptive parents who offered love, care and support towards the children you adopted, we acknowledge your acts of kindness and the pain and distress the events surrounding forced adoption may have caused.

We acknowledge the partners, children, grandchildren and all who have supported and nurtured the women and their families as they faced the decades of grief and trauma caused by these wrongs. We know that such trauma places great strain on relationships and continues to impact on families.

We deeply regret this period in our history.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Wappett".

Paul Wappett
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandie de Wolf".

Sandie de Wolf AM
Chief Executive Officer

21 March 2013