

30 March 2023

Dear _____,

We wish to express our unreserved support for those impacted by forced adoptions in Australia, and our recognition of the immense courage, determination, energy, and grief entailed in coming forward and sharing their experiences. We commend the Australian Government's recognition of past harms and abuses, and the offerings of formal apologies to communities who bear the lifelong impacts of forced family separation. Gillard's formal apology in 2013 and Australia's commitment to increased openness of records and provision of support services was closely watched by adoptee communities overseas and in Australia and is viewed by many as an example to which governments around the world should aspire.

Concerns were raised in the lead up to the 2013 National Apology, regarding the lack of acknowledgement of intercountry adoption and adoptees. Ten years later, we urge you to consider whether it is possible to justify viewing intercountry adoption as exempt from the issues identified in domestic adoption practices. Like domestic adoption and its impacts, which were so poignantly articulated in Gillard's Apology, issues of consent, coercion, mistreatment, and stigma surrounding single motherhood are also embedded in intercountry adoption practices.

While there are some safeguards in place, such as the Hague Convention, there are no guarantees that intercountry adoption practices are exempt from the harms identified by the Senate Community Affairs References Committee in 2012. For example, child trafficking has been identified in the case of Australian intercountry adoptions from Taiwan, India, and Ethiopia. The [UN's Joint Statement on Illegal Intercountry Adoptions in 2022](#) is testament to ongoing concerns around vulnerabilities in the intercountry adoption system and human rights violations.

Responding on behalf of the Australian Prime Minister, a recent letter to Ms Lynelle Long of Intercountry Adoptee Voices, was sent from Tim Crosier (Branch Manager of Children's Policy Branch, Department of Social Services), advising that the government is prioritising a focus on preventing and responding to illegal and illicit adoption practices, expatriate adoption and concerns about past ICA practices. This is a welcome and critical development in acknowledging intercountry adoption practices and their impacts. However, Australia has been historically slow in appropriately responding to the victims of these past practices in intercountry adoption and we would like to see Australia commit to investigating intercountry adoption practices with the intention of providing a formal apology and including appropriate remedies, particularly around support to our human right to identity and origins.

Our concerns are not limited to a handful of intercountry adoptees. In the years since the 2013 Apology, numerous receiving countries have launched investigations into intercountry adoption including Switzerland, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, and France – with Norway commencing an investigation in 2023.

Since the 10th anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions, we request that:

- Intercountry adoption no longer be considered separate from Australian adoption more broadly;
- Intercountry adoptees be recognised as facing, along with their domestically adopted peers, struggles with identity, belonging, uncertainty, and loss, which can be painful and lifelong; and
- The Australian government commits to an investigation into intercountry adoption practices within its borders, given Australia's legal and ethical commitment to ensuring intercountry adoption respects fundamental human rights under the Hague Convention for Intercountry Adoption and the United Nations Conventions: specifically the conventions on the Rights of the Child, Enforced Disappearances, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, and All forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Where it has been proven an adoptee was stolen from their country of origin, a redress must be considered as has been done after the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We ask that you also consider what it means to continue to exclude intercountry adoption from a broader acknowledgment of forced adoptions and the message this sends: that overseas born adoptees and their original families do not face similar challenges, and that our experiences and the community-based knowledge we have patiently and painfully amassed over the years does not matter. We ask you to consider the impacts of this double standard on us, our siblings, families, partners, and our children, who also inherit the legacy of family separation.

Kind regards,

Australian Intercountry Adoptees (52)

1. Leah Hamilton, adopted from South Korea, residing in Queensland
2. Julie Colbert, adopted from Korea to QLD

3. Dr Indigo Willing, adopted from Vietnam and residing in QLD, Australia. Adjunct Research Fellow, Griffith University. Founder, Adopted Vietnamese International (AVI).
4. Benjamin Kelleher, adopted from Brazil, residing in Queensland
5. Kim Faulkner, adopted from Indonesia, residing in NSW
6. Brooke Arcia, adopted from Sri Lanka to NSW
7. Kisharni Eggleton, adopted from Sri Lanka, NSW, Australia. Founder of Sri Lankan Adoptees in Australia
8. Emma Pham, fostered from Vietnam to NSW in 1973, adopted at 1990
9. Meg O'Shea, adopted from South Korea and residing in NSW, Australia US Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG)
10. Kisani Hayes. Adopted from Sri Lanka, NSW Australia **
11. Samara James, adopted from South Korea, living in Sydney, Australia.
12. Michelle Piper, adopted from Korea, residing in NSW, Australia. Committee member of Australia US Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG).
13. Damian Rocco, adopted from Vietnam to NSW
14. Linzi Ibrahim, adopted from Sri Lanka, NSW, Australia. Sri Lankan Adoptees Australia group
15. Sara Vidler, adopted from Sri Lanka, Parkes, NSW, Australia
16. Jaya Mather, adopted from Sri Lanka 1983, living in New South Wales Australia
17. Dr Liz Goode, adopted from South Korea, residing in NSW
18. Paula Park, adopted from South Korea to NSW **
19. Joel de Carteret, adopted from the Philippines, residing in NSW
20. Dominic Golding, adopted from VietNam, residing in ACT
21. Hannah Brugman, adopted from South Korea, living in ACT, Australia **
22. Jai Jaru, adopted from Thailand to South Australia 1981
23. Roopali Gulab Meshram (Paula Karvouniaris) - illicit adoption from Preet Mandir, India, adopted to Adelaide South Australia
24. Lalitha Robinson adopted from Sri Lanka to South Australia

25. Sumana Filmer adopted from Sri Lanka to South Australia **
26. Kimbra Smith, illegally adopted from Taiwan, living in South Australia, Australia
27. Hilina Winkenweder, adopted from Ethiopia 2001, living in South Australia
28. Theodora Sullivan, adopted from Greece to SA, founder of Adopted from Greece
29. Kai Hambour, adopted from India to SA
30. Thomas Philp, adopted from Thailand to South Australia. Adelaide.
31. Min Mednis, adopted from Thailand to South Australia
32. Lynelle Long adopted from Vietnam to VIC
33. Ebony Hickey illegally adopted from Haiti to Australia, Victoria.
34. Catherine Robinson, adopted from Malaysia to Victoria Australia
35. Dr Jessica Walton, adopted from South Korea, residing in VIC, committee member of Australia US Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG)
36. Dr Ryan Gustafsson, South Korea, residing in VIC, member of Ibyangin International Network & Australia US Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG)
37. Geetha Keogh, adopted from Sri Lanka, Black Rock VIC, Australia
38. A.Gale, adopted from Vietnam, living in Victoria
39. Jack Hamilton, adopted from South Korea, living in Victoria
40. Mya Ballin, adopted from China to the US, residing in VIC **
41. Ché Stevenson, adopted from South Korea to US, residing in Victoria
42. Tia Brown, adopted from South Korea, Perth Western Australia. **
43. Carly Reid, adopted from South Korea to Australia, residing in Perth, Western Australia
44. Meseret Cohen, adopted from Ethiopia, WA, Founder of Buna Chat
45. Chae Ryan, adopted from South Korea and living in WA, Australia US Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG)
46. Jasmine Eberhardt, adopted from South Korea to Tasmania **
47. Jason Hardy, adopted from Vietnam to NSW, residing in NT

48. David Hopkins, adopted from Sri Lanka to NSW, living in Sydney
49. Leanne Tololeski, adopted from Sth Korea to WA
50. Kim Catford, adopted from Vietnam to SA
51. Simon Keogh, adopted from Vietnam, residing in VIC
52. Renee Hanton, adopted from Haiti to VIC
53. Chamila Thrum, adopted from Sri Lanka to WA
54. Mallika Macleod, sold by the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka to WA, 1977
55. Jonas Rasmussen adopted from Haiti to Ballarat Victoria 1989, age of 6
56. Aimee Butler, adopted from Taiwan to TAS
57. Alycia Gawthorne, adopted from South Korea to NSW, residing in Victoria

InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV) - Australia-wide & International
www.intercountryadopteevoices.com



Ibyangin International Network: Adopted Overseas Koreans Creating Change.
Steering committee in Seoul, Melbourne, Montreal, Oregon, Idaho, and
Copenhagen (<https://www.ibyangin.org/>)



Australian Domestic Adoptees (15)

58. Sean Winter, adopted in NSW in 1971
59. Peter Capomolla Moore, domestic adoptee, President Adoptee Rights Australia Inc., NSW.
60. Kyleigh Skeffington adopted in NSW in 1968
61. Pauline Ley, adopted within Australia in 1945
62. Sarah Armstrong, adoptee from the UK, Consultant in Out-of-Home Care, Child Protection and Permanency Planning for children in NSW
63. Michael Grenfell, domestic Australian Adoptee, Member of the Australian Adoption Literary Festival Working Group, Committee member Adoptee Rights Australia, Individual member NSW Committee on Adoption and Permanent Care, NSW Forced Adoption Apology Memorial Consultative Committee
64. Alison Ingram, Adoptee Rights Australia (ARA) Inc., domestic closed record "adoptee", NSW
65. Mato (Erik Spinney) Mixed First Nations, US, Canada. Vietnam war era/60's Scoop sold to Australia for adoption
66. Helen Martin, adopted in SA
67. Dr Penny Zagarelou-Mackieson, adopted in Victoria, Australia in 1963
68. Judy Glover, domestic adoptee Australia, QLD
69. Jane Sliwka, domestic adoptee, adopted within Queensland in 1987, Former Practitioner for Queensland's Forced Adoption Support Service with Jigsaw Queensland & Management Committee Member for Jigsaw Queensland, Former Counsellor and Team Leader for Queensland's State Funded Adoption Support Service
70. Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow, President of Jigsaw Queensland
71. Isabel Andrews for Adoption Jigsaw, Western Australia
72. Ryan Dee, adoptee, Perth Western Australia
73. Mark Boulton, domestic adoptee and intercountry adoptive father, Western Australia
74. Jennifer McRae, adoptee in Western Australia, 1972

75. Sharon Pendreigh, adoptee in Western Australia, 1977
76. Teresa Tholstrup, adoptee in Western Australia, 1960
77. Beverley Dixon, adoptee in VIC 1947



Intercountry Adoptees and Other Adoptees Worldwide (27)

78. Boon Young Han, co-founder Danish Korean Rights Group (DKRG) and member of Ibyangin International Network, adopted from South Korea, residing in South Korea
79. Mary Bowers, adopted from South Korea to the United States, living in South Korea, Australia US Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG)
80. Peter Møller, co-founder, Danish Korean Rights Group (DKRG), adopted from South Korea, residing in Denmark
81. Sanne Mogensen, 민 들 레, adopted from Seoul, South Korea. Residing in Copenhagen, Denmark
82. Jane Mejdahl, Danish Korean Rights Group, adopted from South Korea, residing in Denmark
83. Nia Kyung Ja Lee Koh, adoptee from Jeju, South Korea, Living in Soeborg, Denmark
84. Professor Eva Ran Hoffmann, Danish Korean Rights Group, adopted from South Korea, residing in Denmark
85. Anja Eun Jin Svenningsen, adopted from South Korea, living in Denmark.

86. Mia Lee Sørensen, adopted from South Korea. Residing in Denmark.
87. kimura byol lemoine, adopted from South Korea to Belgium, Tiohtià:e/KANATA, IbyangIN, Aborigene/Autochones/Afro-descendent/Asian Queer Adoptees, Adoptee Cultural Archives
88. Yung Fierens, co-founder and chairwoman Critical Adoptees Front Europe (CAFE), adopted from South-Korea, residing in Belgium.
89. Salima Kankindi, board member Critical Adoptees Front Europe (CAFE), adopted from Burundi, residing in Belgium.
90. Anke Nirmala Schwertz, board member Critical Adoptees Front Europe (CAFE), adopted from India, residing in Belgium.
91. Renate Aera Van Geel, displaced from South-Korea to Belgium
92. Charlotte Paauwe, board member Critical Adoptees Front Europe (CAFE), adopted from Brazil, residing in The Netherlands.
93. Seung Yup Flikweert, adopted from South Korea, living in The Netherlands, Netherlands Korean Rights Group (NLKRG)
94. Soony Lauf, adopted from South Korea to the Netherlands.
95. Tobias Hübinette, adopted from South Korea, Sweden
96. Pål Nikolai Hagen, adopted from South Korea, Norway (NKRK)
97. Kim Stoker, adopted from South Korea to the US, activist and poet, member of Ibyangin International Network.
98. Cree M. Stevenson, adopted from South Korea residing in US
99. Chaelee Dalton, adopted from South Korea, residing in the United States
100. Tori Grace Nichols, adopted from the Philippines, separated from twin, to United States military bases
101. Mary Ha Eun Bradbury, adopted from South Korea, residing in the United States
102. Linda Carol Trotter, Greek-born adoptee, adopted to the USA, President and Founder, The Eftychia Project
103. Alice Diver, adoptee (Quebec), Lecturer in Law, Queen's University Belfast
104. Gabby Malpas. Transracial adoptee NZ. Artist.

105. Alice MiAe Kim, adopted from South Korea, residing in The Netherlands, secretary of the Netherlands Korean Rights Group (NLKRG)
106. Gregory D Luce, executive director of Adoptees United Inc. (NGO), attorney and founder of Adoptee Rights Law Centre PLLC (USA)
107. Emannelle Hebert, RAIF www.associationraif.com/
108. Michaela Dietz, adopted from Sth Korea to UA, residing in USA, committee member of Australia US Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG)
109. Robyn Joy Park, adopted from Sth Korea to USA, AUSKRG
110. Dr Hanna Sofia Jung Johansson, adopted from Sth Korea to Sweden, Swedish Korean Adoptees Network (SKAN)
111. Hanna Skagerstrom, adopted from Sth Korea to Sweden
112. Benjamin Coz, member of Ibyangin International Network, member of Minnesota Arrowhead Region Transracial Adoptees, adopted from South Korea, residing in South Korea

Netherlands Korean Rights Group (NLKRG) www.nlkrg.nl



Danish Korean Rights Group (DKRG) www.danishkorean.dk



Critical Adoptees Front Europe www.c-a-f-e.be



The Eftychia Project: “Helping Greek Adoptees Find their Roots”



Norwegian Korean Rights Group (NKRK)



In solidarity, we also support this letter (24):

113. Megan Grigg, psychologist, domestic adoptive mother, VIC
114. Soo Jung Elisha Lee, VIC, Australia
115. Sangwon Lee, VIC, Australia
116. Khristine Ryan, intercountry adoptive mother, Perth, Western Australia
117. Mala Kennedy, WA, Australia
118. Patricia Fronek, Griffith University, Australia (academic/ researcher), QLD
119. Annita and Richard Pring, intercountry adoptive parents, NSW, Australia
120. Fiona Cameron, Sydney NSW - Post Adoption Counsellor and past service manager of a state funded post adoption support service working primarily with adults impacted by adoption

121. Sarah Burn, specialist adoption counsellor, Sydney Australia - previously worked within the Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service (ICAFSS) and the intercountry adoption Tracing Service at ISS Australia.
122. Lenore Marshall, intercountry adoptive mother, Sydney, Australia
123. Graeme Marshall, intercountry adoptive father, Sydney, Australia
124. Emily McKenna, partner of an intercountry adoptee, Social Worker, VIC, Australia
125. Shurlee Swain, historian of adoption, VIC
126. Gianna Mazzone, Gestalt Psychotherapist, former National Coordinator ICAFSS, VIC
127. Surangika Jayarathne, University of Bern, Switzerland
128. David Smolin, Cumberland Law School, Samford University, United States (academic/researcher and adoptive parent)
129. Ertan Ibrahim, NSW, Australia, Sri Lankan adoptee spouse
130. Adoption Support for Families and Children Inc WA
131. Damon Martin, Deputy CEO (former Manager of ICAFSS and ICA Tracing Service), International Social Service (ISS) Australia
132. Dr Betty Luu, Chairperson of the NSW Committee on Adoption and Permanent Care (COAPC), NSW, Australia
133. Melanie Boulton, intercountry adoptive mother, Western Australia
134. Mia Krasenstein, University of Western Australia (International Relations, Law and Politics), friend of adoptee, Western Australia
135. Deborah Vertessy, intercountry adoptive mother, Co-founder of Kimchi Club, Clinical Psychologist, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner, Victoria
136. Beteseb Felega - Ethiopian Adoption Connection (USA)
www.ethiopianadoptionconnection.org/
137. Tzu-Wei (Zack) Chen, former intercountry adoption worker
138. Sandi Petersen, former adoption counsellor and intercountry adoption tracing and reunion worker, Adelaide Australia
139. Amy Conley Wright, academic researcher

140. Laura Sofia Mora, translations and accompaniment for intercountry adoptees from Colombia
141. Julia Rollings, adoptive mother to illegally adopted children from India to Aust, ACT
142. Teresa Bolton, adoptive mother, Adelaide SA
143. Allison Lowden, NSW, Australia
144. Robert Cassidy, partner of adoptee who has been illegally adopted, TAS

