

Deputy Premier
Treasurer
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice

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



Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP
Leader of the Tasmanian Greens
rosalie.woodruff@parliament.tas.gov.au

13 FEB 2025

Dear Dr Woodruff

I am writing in response to the Constituent Question you asked the Premier in Parliament on 17 October 2024. Your question was:

I have a question for the Premier on behalf of a number of women constituents who were victims of the forced adoption of their babies in Tasmania. Tomorrow is the 12-year anniversary of this Parliament's apology for this appalling practice, which continued until 1980.

However, despite past promises, nothing has been done to provide compensation for those who suffered lifelong trauma from the grief of having their babies stolen, and from the cruel and dehumanising treatment they received during birth.

In a remarkable show of strength, the women affected are making a renewed push for compensation. They have a simple request; that the government will not raise a statute of limitations defence in response to compensation claims. Will you please accept this request and allow these compensation claims to proceed?

The Premier has asked me to respond to your question as this issue falls within my responsibilities as Attorney-General.

Protecting the most vulnerable within our communities is a priority for the Tasmanian Government.

'Forced adoption' or 'forced family separation' are terms used to describe practices where a child's parent(s) were compelled against their will to relinquish a child for adoption. It has been acknowledged that forced adoption practices occurred in Tasmania between 1950 and 1988.

I am advised that two civil claims for damages in relation to historic adoption have been served on the State. It is expected that other claims may be made; however, the number of mothers who are alive today impacted by historic forced adoption practices in Tasmania is unknown, and therefore the number of possible claims that may be made against the State is unable to be quantified.

These claims, and any similar future claims, raise a number of important legal issues including whether the State should plead a limitation defence. I am taking advice from the State Litigation Office in relation to these matters.

As Attorney-General, it would be inappropriate for me to make any further comment in relation to any active or potential civil claims against the State.

Yours sincerely

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

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice