

# Jigsaw fits pieces together

The adoption process is a heartbreaking and traumatic experience for any mother and child.

But the real heartbreak may come should the mother or the child attempt to locate each other after the years have passed.

In simple terms, the battle is an uphill one.

Adoptees attempting to discover their origins can experience a merry-go-round of frustrations and dead-ends.

It can also be a puzzle for relinquishing parents.

In many Australian States, access to original birth certificates and medical records is limited.

That makes the simplest of tasks, such as filing forms requesting details of a medical history, impossible.

But there is a solution to the puzzle.

Jigsaw, an Australia-wide self-help group for adoptees, adoptive and relinquishing parents, was established in 1976.

Since then, hundreds of parents, sons and daughters have benefited from the group's essential purpose - to help adult adoptees learn more about their natural families and, if desired, help them locate and meet them.

The group also offers support and guidance to parents who have relinquished their children for adoption.

Without Jigsaw, the battle to locate natural relatives can be long and difficult.

Jigsaw's Territory representative, Mrs Jan Horvath, said the search for natural relatives was often a tiresome and costly experience.

By CHRIS TAYLOR



Mrs Horvath... finding information can be difficult

"The first thing many adoptees find out is that access to a lot of material is just not yours," she said.

"Therefore, finding information which may identify your parents, such as their age, can be difficult.

"One of our aims is to persuade various State Governments to amend laws and make it legal for adoptees to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate once they reach 18.

"The current adoption legislation was good when it was passed but there is room for change."

Mrs Horvath said Jigsaw offered emotional support and assistance with adoptee's searches.

"We can open gateways for people as far as medical histories and the identifying details of their parents are concerned," she said.

Mrs Horvath's involvement with Jigsaw stems from her

personal history.

She was adopted out as baby spent three years and some \$4000 searching for her mother.

Eventually, she located not only her mother, but her natural sister.

"No matter what happens, we are all subject to hereditary," Mrs Horvath said.

"A name change does not change a person's biology."

The adoption process has come a long way in the past 30 years or so.

In days gone by, single mothers were frowned on and, with no welfare support scheme, were given no choice other than to put their child up for adoption.

Many were lied to and cheated - most were forced into adoption.

"Many of the elderly people who contact Jigsaw looking for children they gave up, say they can never forget the day they let their child go," Mrs Horvath said.

"There is a lot of grief and bitterness associated with it.

"Looking now, it's ridiculous to imagine some of the things they were led to believe.

"Many were forced to believe they had no right to the child.

"Some were even told they would be taken to jail if they attempted to find their child once they had given it up.

"It's difficult to imagine the guilt these women have carried over the years.

"By the same token, it's difficult to imagine the confusion adoptees face, continually wondering about their natural families."

Adult adoptees or relinquishing parents interested in locating their natural relatives, can contact Jigsaw on 85 4269.

# Privacy fear in adoption review

**SOME adoptive parents have attacked new State adoption legislation for failing to protect their families' privacy rights.**

And a spokesperson for an adoptive families group says some people are now reconsidering adoption because of the legal changes.

Under the new laws a birth mother who wants to track down a child she gave up for adoption will be given identifying information, even if the adopted person objects to contact.

Adult adopted children also will have access to the name and often original addresses of their mothers, despite any objection.

## Objection

Family Services Minister Anne Warner has warned that stiff penalties would be enforced if people ignored the wishes of those who wanted to be left alone.

But some Queensland adoptive parents believe the objection to contact clauses in the legislation are useless.

From March 1 next year, people over the age of 18 who were

By  
KAY DIBBEN

adopted in Queensland will have the right to get information about their birth history.

They will be given the name and age of the birth parent who signed the adoption consent form, and they will be able to obtain a copy of the birth certificate.

The birth parent also will be given the name of the child who was given up for adoption and the names of the adoptive parents, if the person is over 18.

Ms Warner said the changes ended a period of unnecessary secrecy.

The Department of Family Services has announced anyone who does not want to be contacted must lodge an objection within six months.

However that objection only will last for five years, and will have to be renewed.

A fee of \$50 will be



Anne Warner: secrecy.

not harass people when there is an objection," Ms Twomey said.

She said the penalties of up to \$6000 or two charged to lodge an objection to contact.

The department's Adoption Services manager Mary Twomey admitted both sides could get all identifying information, whether or not there was an objection.

There have been about 50,000 adoptions in Queensland since 1900, but the department's research has indicated only about 2100 are likely to object.

"I'm quite sure the majority of people will

years' jail would apply to anyone who made contact by telephone, letter, through an another person or face to face, when there had been an objection.

Ms Twomey admitted often birth certificates contained an address.

She said the department was prepared to pass on additional details about current names, addresses or medical history if it was asked to, and the persons involved wanted to accept the information.

## Mandatory

Ms Twomey said quite often people merely wanted to know if the other person was alive and well.

She said legislation was drawn up after talks with many groups including Jigsaw and adoptive families' groups.

Some are concerned there will be no mandatory counselling for those making contact.

The department also may charge a fee for counselling.

For information call 008 177174.

## YOUR VIEWS

☐ Letters for publication for verification Box 8899, Brisbane

### No outsiders, please

DESPITE what we read, I wish to point out that not every adopted child walks around feeling only half a person or that something is amiss in one's life.

My sister and I were adoptees and we feel very privileged to have been given to parents who wanted us so badly. My mum and dad are the ones who have nurtured and raised me all these years, not some absentee adult. They are the ones who have physically provided love and affection and the expense of my upbringing.

I am well satisfied with my real parents and relatives and I do not want what I consider outsiders knocking on my door satisfying their curiosity.

Therefore, on what grounds has Family Services Minister Anne Warner the right to pass an act on behalf of all adoptees.

It will now cost me \$50 to protect my privacy from persons who mean nothing to me. And from the way I interpret the act, my money still won't give me full protection.

This change is grossly unfair and the act unnecessary.  
Shona Millman, Emu Street, Sheldon.

### Silent majority

THERE is a silent majority of natural mothers like myself

## Love and kindness

Dear Children,

This year of 1990 we are having what is called a recession. That means that everyone is short of money.

Toys, even in Santaland, cost money so this Christmas we must all try to give each other more loving help even if we have to give less in the way of presents.

I have to write this letter to the newspaper as a way of telling you all that I cannot bring big gifts this year.

Please understand that does not mean you have been bad, or that I don't love you all as much as ever. I do — and so do your family and friends.

Christmas can be even happier if we



give each other more thought and love to make times.

Let's try it, shall we? Happy Christmas

who are being labelled nearly every time there is an article in the paper about adoption.

We adopted out our baby for entirely selfless reasons. We knew our child would stand a much better chance with complete strangers than if we kept him. The fact that so many children speak up in the paper to say they are perfectly happy and don't need to meet their natural mother attests to the fact that their natural mother's wishes were successful.

I would like to know my son's name and know where he grew up. I would like to see his face so I can stop searching faces.

To the natural children who fear finding your mother:

don't, you may be pleasantly surprised.

Name and address supplied.

### Inquiry a farce

WHAT a farce the inquiry into management of Fraser Island has become.

As representative of a local bushwalking club I have received an invitation to a conference being held at the Sheraton Hotel in February. With registration fee of \$235 and overnight accommodation \$110 (without breakfast), to say nothing of the cost of travel to Brisbane, I get the distinct impression that "ordinary people" are not welcome.

Surely this important conference should have been held in Maryborough.



**The Sunday Mail** COMMENT

**DEAR Ms Warner,**

A little over 17 years ago, my wife and I adopted a baby boy. With that act, we undertook to love him, to care for him, to nurture him, to guide him, to educate him and to prepare him for adult life.

Two years later, we adopted a baby girl. The same undertakings applied. We thought that our family was complete; we knew our joy had only just begun.

At the time of the adoptions, we were given some brief details of their natural mothers and fathers — there was some doubt in one case — details sufficient for the purpose.

Over those 17 years, we have occasionally wondered about the background of the birth parents but never to the point of being obsessed with finding them. Perhaps that attitude has rubbed off on our son and daughter. Neither has shown much interest in locating their birth parents.

"Why should we?" they say. "We are your children." And so they are, in all except biology. Arguments about heredity aside, they are our children, loved, respected and admired by us as individuals. We have been totally responsible for their upbringing.

We have rejoiced in their triumphs, commiserated with their disappointments. We have sat up all night with them when they were ill, we have waited by hospital beds and outside headmaster's studies. We have stood on football and hockey fields in wind and rain and spent nights shifting uncomfortably from buttock to buttock during meetings of swimming clubs.

We have been through measles and mumps, chickenpox and colds. We are now enduring the agony of waiting for TE scores. We are a family and there was a comfortable certainty about our lives — until recently.

Now, as a result of your legislation, that certainty has been removed. Now, our children have started to think of themselves as "adopted" children — somehow second-class and inferior. As a family, we have been forced to confront a possible invasion of our privacy, a privacy that is as important to us as parents as it is to our children.

We believe that our son will sign the register saying that he does not want contact with his birth mother. If he does — and it is his decision — we will pay the \$50 administrative fee for him.

In five years' time, if that is still

# A family pleads for its privacy

**An open letter to the Minister for Family and Community Services, Ms Warner**

his decision, then he can pay. In the meantime, however, we have to live with the possibility of someone knocking on our door and disturbing our lives.

It would be an unwanted and blatant disturbance for our son, for our daughter and for ourselves. Your legislation cannot guarantee that it will not occur. You cannot guarantee that it will not occur.

As a family, do we not have a right to privacy? Are the undertakings we were given about privacy 17 and 15 years ago respectively now worthless? Do we have to live with the awful uncertainty that your legislation has caused?

Sure, there have been many reports of children being reunited with their birth parents and of everyone living happily ever after. That process of reuniting was available through the contact registers which had been set up. Perhaps you should ask yourself why the previous procedures, which required consent on the part of both adoptee and relinquishing parent, did not work to the satisfaction of some?

You might discover that, despite the clamoring of the pressure group which appears to have your ear, there was little real interest in adopted children seeking their birth parents.

You say you consulted widely and have received few objections.

I'm not sure who you asked, but you certainly did not ask my son, my daughter — although you would say they are merely my "adopted" son and my "adopted" daughter. Nor did you ask my wife. And you certainly didn't ask me. We, all of us, might be thought to have some interest in the subject.

Your departmental officers, judging by the telephone conversations I've had, seem apologetic about your legislation. Or is it Jigsaw's legislation?

You say that your legislation brings Queensland into line with other States. In one important respect — that of preventing unwanted access — this is simply not true. South Australia has greater protections than you are prepared to provide.

Neither the ACT nor the Northern Territory is considering such legislation.

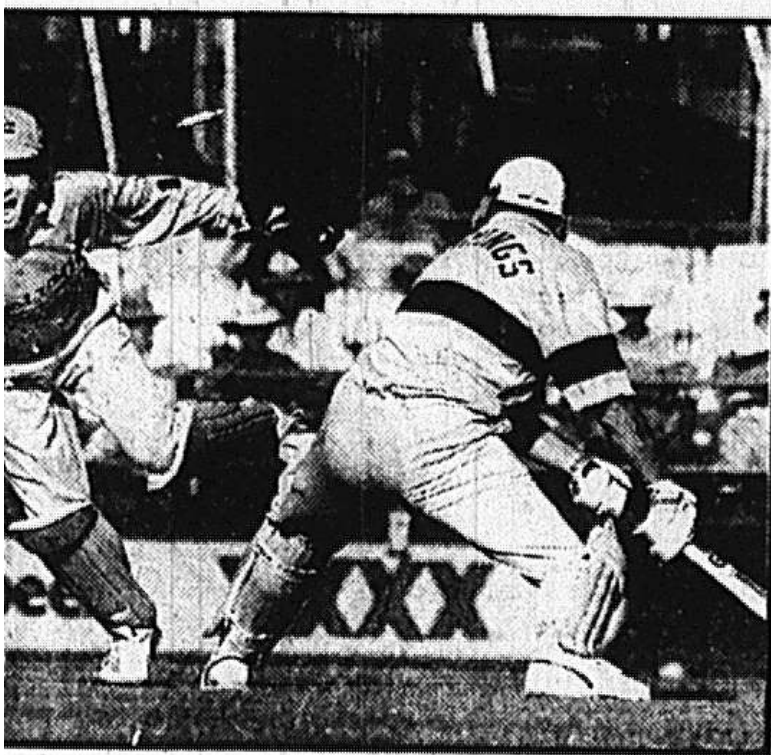
You say you have the interests of all groups at heart, but you have not bothered to reply to the many adoptive parents who have written expressing their concern. You have refused to meet such groups which have been formed solely because of your legislation.

There were few "adoptive parent support groups" before your Bill became public. Why? Because the need never existed. Parents of adopted children lived normal, family lives.

They did not need "support", whether grouped or otherwise. If they were wise, they told the children as soon as possible and offered what help they could provide. In other words, they simply got on with the business of being a family, whole, complete, comfortable even. Your legislation now threatens each and every one of these families.

Finally, you seem not to have considered the positions of adoptive parents in your legislation. We could be excused for thinking that, despite our efforts for nearly two decades, despite the sacrifices we have made, despite the love and support we have offered, that we just do not count. Mrs Warner, that hurts.

Yours in sorrow,  
**An adoptive father.**



**CKET** . . . capturing the headlines.

## Adoption protest

I WISH to protest about the new adoption legislation, which discriminates against a section of our society.

The adoptees, the adoptive parents and the birth mothers are being denied the right to privacy as no other group in our so-called democracy.

What other group in Australia must pay \$10 a year so they may not be

contacted, but still have information given out against their will?— **Greta Graham, Champagne St, Carlseldine.**

## • Again

I OFFER some suggestions why people are not flocking to register a veto on adoptive contact (C-M, December 12).

Perhaps people see the veto as a joke. Its success depends on the presumed integrity of the other party.

In a situation as emotive as this, to be so presumptuous is a little unrealistic.

Is it possible that people do not know they have to register? The Government's advertising campaign has been anything but comprehensive.

Possibly it is just a matter of principle, with people rejecting the fact that one has to literally purchase their privacy, which should be a basic human right.

I believe that most people are stunned by this legislation and do not really believe that it will go ahead.

It appears to have been rushed through Parliament without time for people to object.

Let us keep in mind that no Green Paper was issued on this, which limited pre-legislation discussion.

Perhaps Queenslanders are waiting for Premier Goss to intervene to ensure that responsible government is maintained in our state. — **Mrs Glenda Hodge, Brodick St, Carlsdale.**

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Letters should be no longer than 300 words and may be edited. They must give the writer's name and address and a telephone contact number for verification. Letters which are concise and topical will receive preference.

## YOUR VIEWS

Letters for publication should carry the writer's name and address for verification. Short letters receive preference. Mail to: Your View Box 8899, Brisbane 4001.

### So what's new?

IN REPLY to your article "Uglies in Your Food" (Dec 16).

So what's new?

I have been involved in the catering industry for many, many years and it never ceases to amaze me how low the standard of health and hygiene is in certain catering operations in Australia.

Let us look at just one health hazard — hair.

In this day and age, it is not unusual to see food handlers, cooks, chefs or whatever sporting very long hair.

A majority never wear any sort of headgear.

Just take a look at some of our cafes, takeaways and cake and bread shops, to name a few.

It's small wonder that we

## Who do you look like, my son?

DEAR SON,



If you are reading this then I finally get to say hello to you.

How do I say hello 23 years later to a son I never saw, whose face I can't even picture.

I wonder who you look like. Do you have clear blue

eyes like I have or do you have light golden brown eyes like your father.

Perhaps you resemble your grandfather; after all you were born on his birthday. You didn't know that did you? How could you?

You also don't know what time you were born as it wasn't recorded on your birth certificate.

Well, I am the only one who knows; it was five minutes to midnight, the bewitching hour, on, of all nights, Halloween.

Don't ever let anyone tell you that I didn't love you; that just isn't true. I loved you so much it hurt, and I loved you much more than I loved myself; that was why I was prepared to sacrifice my happiness for yours.

I remember very clearly the last week we were together. I went to bed and just felt you kick and move inside me. I wanted to share those last few days with you alone, as I knew that once I gave birth we would be parted, perhaps forever.

Well, my son, if you don't wish to contact me that's all right. I'll still be there with you, for it is my blood that courses through your veins and that can never be erased or denied. Thousands of years of

blending, created the special composite that you are.

One day you will have a little daughter; somehow I even feel you may have one now. And when that little daughter looks up at you with her clear blue eyes, they will be my blue eyes looking up at you.

When your little daughter begins to weave her magic spell with her creative hands, she will only be doing what her grandmother and my grandmother did before me and you will admire her skill and think she is unique.

When you smile down at her with love in your eyes and heart, part of that love will be for me, for heredity is strong and lives on through generation after generation.

All my love forever. — Mother.  
Name and address supplied.

## Phone runs hot

THE adoption issue is causing great concern to many people personally affected and, I venture to say, people unaffected by the new legislation.

Many view the changes as a serious threat to the people's privacy. Young women who relinquished a child and never divulged this information to their subsequent families are required to face up to this earlier indiscretion.

If they do not wish to have contact with the child, they must, before March 1, register an objection to contact. The department will then write to them asking for their reasons. How unfortunate if their unsuspecting husband opened the letter. The same law applies to the adopted child.

However, an objection to contact does not protect either party from personal information about them being given out.

People who would rather get on with their lives — relinquishing mothers with their husbands and children and adoptees with their "real" parents (real parents are those who have done the nurturing for 18 years or more) — have to pay a fee of \$50 to object to contact.

Ms Warner apparently believes that these two sets of people should continue to pay the fee every five years if they still do not wish their privacy to be invaded.

Ms Warner has said that only 124 adoptees and relinquishing parents have bothered to register an objection to contact, implying that very few are making an issue of the amendments. This is misleading.

My telephone and the telephones of many folk who are members of the Adoption Privacy Protection Group are never silent, as concerned women (and some men) voice

their fears about this new legislation.

Ms Warner may be forgiven for thinking that the views expressed by the hard-working Jigsaw group represent the views of the majority, but how wrong she is. — **Dorothy Stringer, Munro St, Auchenflower.**

## From the roots up

IN REPLY to the Mayor of Redcliffe's letter (C-M, December 17), I should point out the difference between a community-driven attempt to overcome problems and the traditional methods whereby councils tell the people what is good for them.

The Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce has engaged in a process of involving all levels of the community in identifying problems and is now ready to proceed with the next step — community participation in the solutions.

There is a fundamental difference between grassroots or "bottom up" decision-making and the old-style "we know best" attitude tried unsuccessfully for so many years by councils.

What happens now in Redcliffe will truly be decided by the people who live, work and play here. — **Nick Tzimas, president, Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Redcliffe.**



# LETTERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, LOCKED BAG 8888, GP

## Powell sincere

AS much as I love Judi Cox's incisive wit, her comments about Senator Janet Powell's performance during the special sitting of Parliament on the Gulf war (C-M, January 30) demand a reply.

The leader of the Democrats was the most sincere and reasonable of all speakers I listened to, arguing her case with articulate logic. Absent was the contrived rhetoric of those bent on licking American boots with sickening sycophancy and prepared to send other people's sons to war in an outpouring of gung-ho garbage.

Janet Powell's performance was memorable. So, too, were the actions of Margaret Reynolds and Elaine Darling. What a pity there are so few women in our parliaments.— **Dan O'Donnell, Wilgarning St, Stafford Heights.**

## Empathy lacking

LAST May, Family Services Minister Ann Warner, speaking in Parliament, paralleled the giving of a child for adoption to "throwing the child away" or "a life sentence".

If 1063 or 2.1 percent of adopted people and 1402 or 2.8 percent of relinquishing mothers have put their names on the Contact Register since May 1987, it does not appear that the majority of

people are eager to free themselves from the life sentence or pick themselves up from where they were dumped.

It never ceases to amaze me that some politicians can make derogatory statements and appear to be accountable to no one.

I thought that all members of Parliament were supposed to be unbiased and open-minded in their representation of all people in Queensland. I also thought that the Minister concerned with the adoption amendment would have shown equal respect and empathy to the three parties concerned.— **Mrs Glenda Hodge, Brodick St, Carindale.**

## Name was known

I ENJOYED Kavanagh's nostalgic recollections of his youthful visits to Surfers Paradise (C-M, January 31). I'm glad he still likes the place. So do I after 35 years.

There's one small point of fact I'd like to correct. Jim Cavill never called his hotel the Elston Hotel. It opened on November 26, 1925 as the Surfers Paradise Hotel and the name stayed until the site was redeveloped to include today's Ramada Hotel.

To select his hotel's name, Jim Cavill didn't need to overhear a visitor in the late 1920s refer to the area as a surfers' paradise. In 1918, the Surfers Paradise Estate subdivision was put on the market by two Brisbane developers, so the



# Adoption laws to change

QUEENSLAND'S controversial adoption legislation will be amended later this month.

The legislation, which provided that adopted children and relinquishing parents would have unrestricted access to information previously kept secret, has provoked a strong criticism and controversy.

The amendments will mean that information about the names and addresses of adopted children or relinquishing parents will not be revealed without the consent of both parties.

Cabinet considered the new laws last Monday after having heard a submission from the Premier, Mr Goss, and the Family Services Minister, Mrs Warner.

Mrs Warner was asked to return with amendments that would protect the privacy of all parties to adoptions in Queensland.

The Cabinet decision follows heavy lobbying among backbenchers of all parties by

By PETER CHARLTON

Adoption Privacy Protection Groups, which were formed in last year after details of the legislation became widely known.

The proposed legislation, called the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Bill, is due to come into effect on March 1.

Under this law, adoptive children would have been entitled to know the names and addresses of their birth parents. Relinquishing parents would have been equally entitled to know the same information about their children.

Adult adoptees would have been entitled to "original birth certificates", which would have included names and addresses and the names of any adopted siblings.

For those adoptive children or relinquishing parents, overwhelmingly mothers, who did not want contact, the legislation provided for a fee of \$50.

This fee would not have guaranteed no contact. It would have merely indicated to the inquiring party that no contact was desired. That fee had to be renewed every five years.

The legislation, sponsored by Mrs Warner, was known to have the strong support of Jigsaw, the organisation which aims at reuniting adoptive children with their birth parents.

Mr Goss' office said the privacy rights of adopted children, relinquishing parents and adoptive parents will be respected.

The amendments will provide greater protection and privacy for both adopted children and relinquishing parents.

Mrs Warner has been asked to produce amendments to the legislation, in time for presentation to Parliament this month.

The Liberal leader, Mr Beanland, yesterday called on the Government to change the laws.

# LET

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Further injustice

**DISCRIMINATION** against women will be inscribed in Queensland's legislation under the Amendments to the Adoption Act 1990 and the proposed revision (C-M, February 4).

Birth mothers will still be required to disclose their present identity to a government department and lodge an objection to protect their privacy. They have already paid their price. This legislation compounds a social injustice of the past.—  
**D.D. Law, Buena Vista  
Av, Coorparoo.**

## Adopting a different stance on an emotive issue

**R**ATHER than appease the critics, the planned changes to Queensland's nine-month-old adoption laws have rearm'd an emotional minefield.

The battle between the right to the truth and the right to privacy threatens to blow up again in the face of the State Government, with lobby groups on each side of the debate dissatisfied with the compromise introduced to State Parliament last week.

The amendments are essentially designed to protect the rights of each. According to both — the Adoption Privacy Protection Group (APPG), and Zigzag, which helps reunite adoptees and their natural parents — it fails.

While APPG believes it simply does not go far enough to protect the privacy of those among Queensland's estimated 50,000 adoptees who do not

**The State Government is changing its adoption legislation only nine months after it was passed in Parliament.**  
**Mark Voisey reports.**

want to revisit their past and those natural parents with the same view. Zigzag says the changes could leave those who seek the truth forever in the dark.

The issue has become something of a legislative nightmare.

When the Adoption of Children Amendment Act was passed last May, it allowed unqualified access to identifying information for natural parents

and adult adoptees — much to the concern of those who wanted their privacy protected.

The subsequent outcry pressured the Government into introducing changes last week, just nine months later.

The Family Services Minister, Mrs Warner, acknowledged in State Parliament that many people had expressed fear and distress over the possible disruption to their lives.

"While overseas and interstate experience leads me to believe these fears are baseless, the Government cannot ignore them and must respond to the distress that is being experienced," Mrs Warner said.

Her solution would allow for adopted people and natural parents to lodge two types of objections.

Firstly, they would be able to object to contact and the disclosure of identifying information to their birth relative. Secondly,

they would be able to object to contact only.

An objection would stand indefinitely, unless revoked by the person who lodged it.

At the expressed wishes of those lodging objections, the Family Services Department would be prepared to pass on any non-identifying information, including the reasons an objection was lodged.

The department would also be prepared to advise people when their birth relatives applied for identifying information.

Mrs Warner foreshadowed these amendments would be followed by the axing of the controversial requirement for objectors to pay a \$50 fee — described by opponents as a tax on adoptees or those who have adopted out children.

Otherwise, from June 1, adopted people will be able to apply for information about themselves, including the name

and date of birth of their birth parent and, under certain circumstances, the names and dates of birth of relatives.

The information will be disclosed to the adopted person unless their birth parent has objected.

Natural parents will be able to seek the new name of the adopted son or daughter and the name at the time of adoption of the adoptive parents.

Again, it will be released unless the adopted person has objected to it.

As a safeguard, the new law imposes a fine of \$6000 or two years' jail for anyone who knowingly breaches an objection to contact.

But while the changes go some way to protecting individual rights, they still do not satisfy the APPG which is now calling for the entire package to be scrapped.

Its concerns are for people

who do not know they are adopted, and therefore cannot object, and for women who have never revealed they have adopted out a child.

They are also concerned people could face unwelcome reunions purely because they are unaware of the changes, such as having moved overseas.

Group spokeswoman, Mrs Mary Smith, said the Government had simply gone about reform the wrong way.

"Surely everyone has a basic right to privacy," Mrs Smith said.

"How we individually exercise that right is our affair."

She said the only way to protect privacy properly would be for adoptees and birth mothers to enrol on a register and, once there was a match, provide the information.

"While the changes might be going a long way to protecting people's privacy, they do not go

the whole way," Mrs Smith said.

"Just think of the heartache for a birth mother who is 50 or 60 years of age and has to come and object to protect her right to privacy."

"Why can't people be left alone?"

APPG has also taken exception to Mrs Warner's reference in Parliament last week to birth parents and "their adult adopted sons and daughters".

"Once the adoption took place, they ceased by law to be the parents of the child. They are not their sons and daughters in the eyes of the law," Mrs Smith said.

Jigsaw, which claims to reunite about 200 adoptees and their birth parents each year and is seen by APPG as something of its nemesis, is flatly opposed to the changes before Parliament.

It believes allowing objections to stand indefinitely will leave

people seeking information of their past in the dark for ever.

Registrar Mrs Lorraine Cummings said the big problem was if an adoptee or natural parent who objected died.

"The objection goes to the grave with them. The person looking for information then may never get the opportunity," Mrs Cummings said.

Mrs Cummings, who has been unable to find her own child, now 26, said she felt sorry for those who sought to protect their own privacy.

She said there had never been any guarantee of privacy before the current legislation was brought in.

"It's very sad because they might be depriving themselves of a lot of happiness — or a bit of trauma that can be sorted out," Mrs Cummings said. "It doesn't work out every time. But nothing is better than knowing. The truth can set you free."

was "dropped". He confirmed that so many things could have happened to her and further acknowledged that no story could be agreed upon.

What will happen to Eve's new charge? All we can do is to wait and see.

— Miss Bronwen Shepherd, Flinders Pde, Sandgate North.

## Injustice corrected

I AM disappointed that D.D. Law (C-M, February 18), feels that she can speak on behalf of relinquishing mothers.

The amendments to the Adoption of Children Act came about after the Government consulted with all three parties to adoption.

This was done over some years because for more than 10 years adoptees and natural mothers had been writing and telling their stories to Ministers and members of Parliament.

To give away one's baby — a part of one's self — was an expectation that pushed a mother and very often a father to the

boundary of human sacrifice.

Society has at last recognised that its past demand on a mother to relinquish her baby has been one of its greatest sins against nature.

It is for this reason that the changes to the law have been made as open as possible, so that the injustices done to so many people can now be reconciled. — Sally P. Robson, Pearson St, Kangaroo Point.

## Hear, hear

IT WAS pleasant on Sunday (February 17) to hear:

(a) David Taylor of the ABC pronounce the name of Queensland's northern city as Cairns and not, as is the fashion of some, the irritating Canns.

(b) Sir Michael Hordern stressing the absolute necessity for actors to say the consonants clearly.

In the interests of fruitful listening, any plays or other spoken entertainment with actors (even if great names) not obeying this precept should have