



**Celebrating 50 years of
championing Single Mothers & their
Children.**

Annual Report 2023

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About US

Single Mother Families Australia (SMFA) was conceived in 1973 as a lead national voice with policy insight and expertise. We commenced life as the National Council of Single Mothers & their Children Inc. SMFA is an organisation dedicated to single mother families.

Ambition

SMFA works to reframe the dialogue and ensure that single mothers' strengths, their voices, and their lived reality are central to policy determinations. The ambition is undertaken knowing that single mothers are disproportionately harmed by entrenched financial distress, poverty, and gendered violence. Moreover, single mothers encounter systems and assumptions that have unconscious and conscious biases, too often steeped in prejudice whilst ignoring the gendered dynamic.

SMFA also provides a 'soft entry ~ light-touch' online platform through a public Facebook page. Creating a safe and affordable online community for single mothers. The Facebook page disseminates information and responds to single mothers' requests.

One of our greatest strengths is our expertise and commitment to working with and for the advancement of single-mother families harmed by poverty, hardship, and gendered violence.

Governance

Single Mother Families Australia (SMFA) is a not-for-profit organisation.

- Governed by an elected Board
- Incorporated in South Australia
- Upholds the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.
- DGR status
- ABN 78844531318

Chairperson

Fiona Cheminant

Single Mother Families Australia (SMFA) was instrumental in many of the gains highlighted in our report. Reflecting years, sometimes decades, of an unrelenting quest and commitment to seek safer lives with agency, control and economic certainty for single mother families. Amongst the highlights was a gathering in Melbourne on 5th May 2023. We celebrated and marked 50 years of work. A distinguished panel including two founding members, Rosemary West OAM and Tricia Harper AM, shared the spotlight with Brian Howe AO. People critical to our organisation attended, as did Senator Jane Rice. The panel reflected on Whitlam's 50 years of the Supporting Mothers Benefit (1973), as authored in the chapter *Out of Wedlock Out of Luck* from *Women and Whitlam: Revising the Revolution* Book.

Treasurer

Petra Hilton

SMFA would like to thank the Paul Ramsey Foundation, which provided a donation enabling women who live in poverty, who are at risk or who are homeless to attend and be part of the critical debates and delegations in Parliament House. Key events were held on the 22nd and 29th March 2023. Importantly, single mothers had full and direct engagement and could speak to the rules and laws that influence, diminish, or shape their lives. We thank the resolve of Toni Wren, who leads the Antipoverty Week and Economic Security 4 Women, as it takes many voices to become a chorus for change.

SMFA is hopeful that contractual arrangements with the Government can be reflective of providing a voice for single mothers; it is cognisant of our established policy expertise and recognises the many roles and requests initiated by the Government. The Finance Statement is on page 8; our finances are Independently Audited by PCS Accountants & Business Advisors and prepared by our industrious bookkeeper, Jen Taylor. We trust that you will share the amazement of what was achieved with such small resources.

CEO

Terese Edwards

I have so many people to thank. I start with women who gave their time and wisdom to advance change. The authenticity and power of 'telling it like it is' is compelling. It also exposes women on a deep and personal level, a task that takes enormous strength. This year, women spoke to and with Members of Parliament from all persuasions, who listened and acted. Real and trusted connections were formed.

I thank the Government for reigniting the spark of respect and hope. The tone was set by our Prime Minister, and it was the first time in many years that I was not afraid of going into a Federal Budget. I thank Minister Gallagher for the appointment to the Women Economic Equality Taskforce, Taskforce members and Sam Mostyn AO, an outstanding Chair. I thank Dr Anne Summers AO, Dr Verity Frith AM, and Professor Kay Cook. So many inspiring women and their work strengthened our voice and enabled us to stand taller. We were not alone as we sought critical advances for single mother families.

Parenting Payment Single



1973, The Supporting Mothers Benefit gave single mothers economic justice and dramatically interrupted the practice of forced adoption.

2023, the Parenting Payment Single Australia was enhanced. Increasing access for families whose youngest child is 14 years from 8 years.

70,000+ families regained access to the Parenting Payment Single on 20 Sept 23.

A full understanding of this intergenerational investment is still to unfold.

Safety First in Family Law



**The best
interests of
children are at
the centre of all
parenting
decisions.**

Family Law Bill (2023)

19.10.2023

~~The Presumption of Equal Shared Care~~

ParentsNext Abolished

**The cruel and punitive ParentsNext program ends in June 2024.
Forced attendance ceased on 5 May 2023.**

A harmful program that had lost its way and ignored findings from three political examinations.



Child Support



SMFA welcomes and is a member of the Child Support Stakeholder Consultation Group.

Check out our research, our findings and our recommendations. Available online.

**Financial Abuse:
The Weaponisation of
Child Support in Australia**

2023

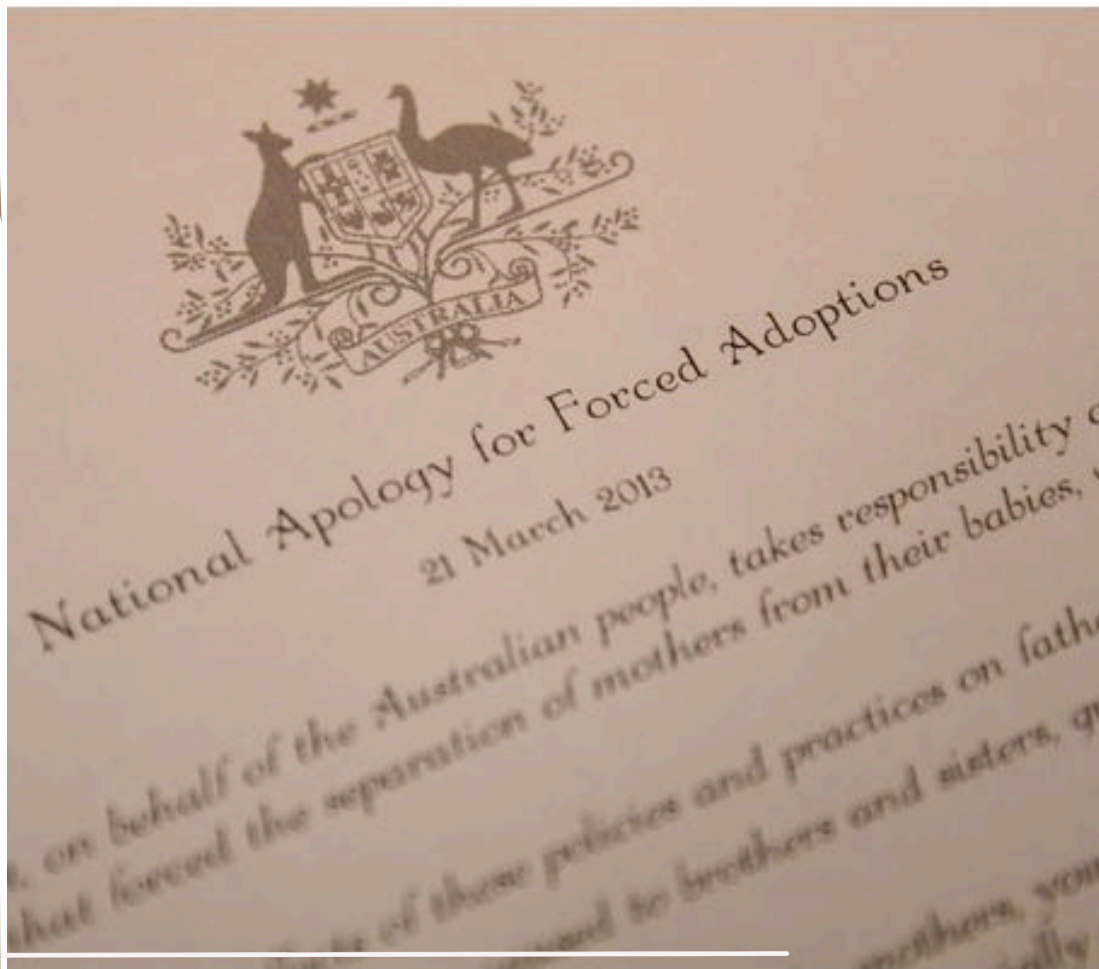
**DEBTS AND
DISAPPOINTMENT:
MOTHERS' EXPERIENCES OF
THE CHILD SUPPORT
SYSTEM**

2019

Forced Adoption



Never Forgotten Forever Loved



2023, 10 Year Apology Anniversary.

Financial Statements

SMFA full audited Financial Statements are tabled at the 2023 AGM, provided to the ACNC and acquitted to the Department of Social Services.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Income | Grant | 174,005.25 | | |
| | Other | \$15,141.48 | | |
| Total Income | | | \$189,146.73 | |
| Operating Expenses | | | \$189,974.41 | |
| Net Profit | | | | (\$827) |

**As of 30th June 2023,
SMFA retained equity is
\$70,009.46.**



**PCS ACCOUNTANTS
AND BUSINESS ADVISORS**

We thank PCS Accounts for thier service.



**years of determination and
ambition.**

**Powered by authenticity, legitimacy,
and an unwavering commitment to
respect and enable single mother
families to flourish.**

**Our profound thanks to all who have
contributed to our 50-year journey.**



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