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Title

Lesbian mothers in twenty-first century Australia: Creating a political subject position

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Bio

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Abstract

The creation of a political subject position based on the identity 'lesbian mother' was central to the achievement of law reform regarding reproduction and family matters in Australia in the twenty-first century. Authors identifying as lesbian mothers wrote submissions to a range of public inquiries, crafting detailed self-representations and often telling intimate stories of everyday experience of discrimination and marginalisation. This article understands the submissions as constrained by the practices of political subjectivity. They are governed by the rules of the authority to which submissions are addressed, even as they make claims for change. Investigation of fifty-eight available submissions from seven inquiries points to the classed and raced limits of the normative political subject which emerges and to the presence of historically dominant discourses of the good mother and the narrowed imagination of the marriage equality movement. Diversity in the submissions, however, also challenges the boundaries of the rules and avoids universal conformity to respectability. This analysis contributes to the scant historiography of lesbian mother politics in Australia and to the international literature on queer politics and sexual citizenship. It cautions against simple liberal readings of progress based in the achievement of rights and recognition for newly normative political subjects.

Key words

Lesbian mothers, Australia, sexual citizenship, political subjectivity, submissions, reproductive justice, queer politics, twenty-first century, public inquiries.

Lesbian mothers in twenty-first century Australia: Creating a political subject position

At the end of the twentieth century and in the first two decades of the twenty-first century lesbian mothers were among those leading a shift in the focus of mainstream queer politics in Australia and many Anglophone Western countries *towards* political questions of relationships and reproduction. The demand for marriage equality is the greatest sign of this shift but the array of issues for queers as current and aspiring parents has also been prominent. Campaigns for the legal rights of lesbian mothers gathered steam in Australia in the 2000s with consistent success.¹ The issues at stake included access to Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), recognition and rights of non-biological mothers, adoption, and recognition and rights of lesbian and gay couples and families in a wide array of law and legislation. Marriage and financial matters, including entitlement to welfare and healthcare support, have been the principal issues in the federal domain. Most matters related to family, reproduction and relationships have been the jurisdiction of the states and territories. At the time of writing, the domestic queer relationship and reproductive rights agenda for law reform in Australia has been almost completed.²

This progress is represented by some as the triumphal completion of the liberal reform project, and evidence of ‘the democratization of intimate life’ through ‘individual autonomy’ and ‘the “querying/queering” of traditional institutions’.³ For others this ‘queer liberalism’ is re-shaping queer politics in complicity with the historically coincident projects of socially conservative neoliberalism and intensified nationalism and racism in the West in service of ‘the war on terror’.⁴

This article contributes to this discussion by offering an historical account of the construction of a political subject position focused on the identity ‘lesbian mother’ made in pursuit of change in Australia in the twenty-first century. In doing so it brings a historical approach to the interdisciplinary literature on sexual citizenship. Recent research in this field includes attention to ‘the potential exclusionary effects of processes of “sexual democratization” and the ways these function in the (re)production of boundaries of “good” and “bad” (sexual) citizens’. The article follows calls for an intersectional analysis to ‘provide more nuanced understandings of the interrelations between sexuality and citizenship’.⁵

Political subject positions are produced through the practices of political subjectivity. These practices involve desire for recognition and legitimacy and are pursued through relationship with authority, seeking a range of related but distinct outcomes, from belonging to cultural representation to formal legal and citizen status.⁶ This article investigates submissions written by authors who identify themselves as lesbian mothers to a range of public inquiries into the need for legislative change concerning relationships and reproduction in Australia between 2003 and 2018. It asks how the submissions represent the lesbian mother as a political subject and how they imagine the state.

Political subjectivity based in non-heterosexual experiences emerged in Australia in the very late 1960s. Graham Willett’s *Living Out Loud*, published in 2000, the key social and political history of the gay and lesbian movement to that point, pays little attention to the issues of relationships, reproduction and family which would become central in the twenty-first century.⁷ More recently Willett has claimed that with the defeat of the government of Prime Minister Howard in 2007, which had presided over eleven years of conservative approaches to gender and sexuality issues, ‘the last bastion of resistance to gay and lesbian legal equality

was swept aside!’⁸ A large oral history project conducted in the early 2010s by Robert Reynolds and Shirleene Robinson documents and reflects on change across generations in the social and political subjectivity of gay men and lesbians. Their conclusion celebrates the achievement of ‘lesbian and gay ordinariness’, embodied in young people who look forward uncomplicatedly to marriage and children.⁹ There is a rich historiography of specific queer political struggles, including the decriminalisation of homosexuality, HIV/AIDS, responses to moral panics about children and homosexuality and, recently, the legal recognition of same sex relationships and marriage equality.¹⁰ Historiographic focus on lesbian politics, and twenty-first century queer struggles over reproduction, is scant.

Rebecca Jennings’ work stands out for its contribution to a social history of lesbianism in Australia for the period from the 1930s until the end of the 1990s.¹¹ She notes the emergence in the early 1970s of lesbian mothers groups, motivated in part by mothers’ legal battles with ex-husbands over child custody.¹² In an earlier article in this journal, I analyse a shift in Australia, through the 1980s and 1990s, in the nature of lesbian mothers, which Jennings also notes. The early predominance of mothers who became lesbians when they left heterosexual relationships gave way to lesbians who became mothers often in the context of lesbian relationships. Similar changes have been apparent in the UK and the USA.¹³

This article builds on existing scholarship that historicises the identity ‘lesbian mother’ in Australia. It considers the period between 2003 and 2018, when ‘lesbian mother’, an established identity among lesbian, queer and feminist communities, was taking off in the mainstream as a recognised and legitimate basis for political claims.

The archive

The archive for this article comprises submissions by authors identifying as lesbian mothers to formal public inquiries investigating relationship, reproduction and family matters, conducted by Australian state and federal parliamentary committees, human rights bodies and law reform bodies between 2003 and 2018. Submissions sourced from seven inquiries have been read for this article. Two inquiries were conducted by national bodies and the rest by parliaments or law reform bodies of five of the country's eight states and territories (Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia). The subject matter of the inquiries varied.¹⁴ Some considered specific proposed legislation or specific issues. Others had a broad remit in relation to same sex relationships and parenting. All were orientated towards law reform. Significant reform as recommended followed nearly all the inquiries.¹⁵

In her discussion of the human rights enhancing capacity of federal parliamentary committees which consider proposed legislation, legal scholar Sarah Moulds notes that a committee's engagement with the community 'by inviting written submissions and holding public hearings' is key to 'deliberative democracy'. This model embodies the principle 'that democracies should provide for informed, reflective and cooperative decision making and policy development' and thus 'extend beyond the notion of majoritarian rule, and give life to other shared, democratic values'.¹⁶ While accepting this characterisation of submissions to public inquiries, it is also true that deliberative democracy 'often falls short of its democratic promise'.¹⁷ If submission writing is understood as a practice of political subjectivity which gives 'people or groups positions to claim rights' then Kristina Krause and Katharina Schramm's observation that such practices also involve 'being subjected to the rules and governing practices of those authorities they address' is relevant here.¹⁸ So is the observation

of US critical race theorist Dorothy Roberts that ‘the liberal reliance on seemingly neutral principles to judge equality claims actually legitimates the interests and experiences of white people.’¹⁹ I proceed with the assumption that the inquiries by Australian parliaments, law reform and human rights bodies (when the latter are part of the state) are mechanisms of a colonial nation state that is founded on ‘patriarchal white sovereignty’, as described by Aileen Moreton-Robinson, albeit one that is internally contested along lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability and so on.²⁰ The subject positions created in the submissions to these inquiries are thus ‘an effect of power relations’ produced through ‘the dynamics of opening and closure’.²¹ The notion of the state here refers to a set of institutions that manifest a patriarchal and colonial history – Moreton-Robinson singles out the law as key in this context – which are nonetheless mobile and contested. That is, while I seek to identify exclusions in the submissions, I do not suggest that these are inevitable. My analysis is informed by a recent study of lesbian mothers in the USA by Sandra Patton-Imani which centres the experiences and perspectives of lesbian mothers of colour through an intersectional reproductive justice analysis.²²

Access to submissions written to the various public inquiries into reproduction in Australia is uneven. Fifty-eight available submissions from authors identifying as lesbian mothers were located in the seven inquiries. Among submissions that offer detailed self-representation, beyond simply the identification of authors as lesbian mothers (or as gay, queer, dyke, and/or in same-sex couples), authors’ ages range from the twenties to those who are grandmothers. The majority were in relationships of ten years or longer (very few were single) and their children range from babies to adults. Among those who identify their occupation, most are professionals and para-professionals. Socio-economic disadvantage, ability or disability, racialised position or cultural background are generally not described. One submission refers

to residence in a regional location. Some submissions were made by lesbian mothers with existing public profiles, others disavowed a public or political identity. Many journeys to lesbian motherhood are represented. The use of donor sperm predominated among the women who were in their thirties and forties, and among those who were writing to the later inquiries. The submissions considered here are not a representative sampling of all stories of lesbian mothers. They do, however, offer insight into the narrative and discursive resources deployed by authors who identified as lesbian mothers in support of law reform during the period 2003 to 2018.

In this context the submissions, even those that simply began ‘I am a lesbian mother’ or similar and then outline the change that is required, can be read as a part of a political tradition that goes back to the late 1960s when Women’s and Gay Liberation Movements around the Western world crafted a ‘public intimacy’ as ‘both a new way to talk about private life and a new political strategy’.²³ Ken Plummer coins the term ‘intimate citizenship’ to describe what is sought by this talk about private life. Adjacent to ‘sexual citizenship’ his term refers to ‘worlds in which a public language of “intimate troubles” is ‘a potential bridge between the personal and the political’. He locates these worlds, fully formed, at the beginning of the twenty-first century.²⁴ As one submission stated, ‘We hope that telling our story will help to contribute to changing the current system.’²⁵

The first section of the article from here considers the wealth of information in the submissions about the difficulties faced in the everyday lives of lesbian mothers. The second identifies the ways the authors of submissions address the state, arguing that this is often done in ways that reproduce mainstream discourse about citizen status. The third section attends to submissions where these limits are exceeded. The fourth section argues that the public

intimacy that is produced in the submissions is characterised as much by silences as it is by the telling of previously untold stories. The conclusion leans towards stress on the limits of the political subject positions created while recognising the gains of law reform and of the broadening horizons of diversity and inclusion.

An archive of 'a lesbian mother everyday'

To read this collection of submissions is to encounter an archive of a lesbian mother everyday. Alongside accounts of institutional homophobia and heteronormativity, this archive collects together accounts of the 'little bits' that describe the make-up of the marginalisation of lesbian mothers.²⁶ These stories create new cultural representations as they recount quotidian experiences of marginalisation and injustice.

Becoming pregnant was a site of difficulty in many submissions. Different state and territory jurisdictions have imposed different requirements on individuals seeking ART. One submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission (VLRC) inquiry from a couple living in Victoria, where women at the time needed a male partner to lawfully access donor sperm, told of resorting to online platforms to access sperm.

It was just like Internet dating – full of trepidation and horrible sleazy men who wanted to do it the 'natural' way with a lesbian. It felt pretty unsafe, and a surreal way to try and find the future father of our children, but what options did we have?²⁷

Another Victorian couple told the VLRC inquiry that they had to travel to Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory to access medically supervised assistance with donor sperm,

where the clinic, unnecessarily from their point of view, required blood tests and vaginal ultrasound and insisted on intra-uterine insemination which the woman found painful and anxiety inducing.²⁸

The lack of recognition of a non-biological lesbian parent was a central theme up to and including the South Australian inquiry in 2011. A submission to the 2003 Tasmanian inquiry told of a woman taking her three year old son, her partner's biological child, on a trip interstate to Sydney. On their return airline staff requested proof of her status in relation to the child but she had none; 'it was an exposing situation to be in'.²⁹ Another story told to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) inquiry into discrimination against same sex couples noted institutional exclusion by Medicare, the national universal health insurance scheme:

We are not treated as a "family unit" for the purposes of the Medicare Safety Net. And, if [name of partner] takes [our daughter] to the doctor, she has to worry about being questioned because of the fact that she is not listed on the same Medicare card and, technically, she has no rights to be able to authorise treatment for [our daughter].³⁰

A South Australian couple told their state inquiry in 2010 that 'we are forced to consider birthing in Canberra so that our baby will have two recognised parents on his/her birth certificate'.³¹

These kinds of situations lead to tactics and strategies that would enable trouble-free performance of mundane everyday arrangements. One submission to the VLRC inquiry into family issues included this story:

[O]ver the years we have struggled with homophobia on a daily basis and continue to do so. Who should take our daughter to her swimming lessons? If [she] does it this time but [I do] it next time we'll have many questions to answer. Maybe [she] should go to all swimming lessons and [I] could go to all playgroup sessions. This way we'll be spared the awkward questions.³²

One submission to the South Australian inquiry described the negotiation of the forms involved in choosing schools and kindergartens. 'I would quietly cross out father, write mother and then my name.'³³ A submission to the HREOC inquiry wrote about the woman's inability to direct her superannuation (retirement pension) to her lesbian partner.

[I]t is for this reason that I do not salary sacrifice into my superannuation to provide myself and my family with greater retirement or death benefits – I have no guarantee that they will actually receive my superannuation entitlements.³⁴

The everyday could bring unexpected, sometimes painful, interactions. One submission from the early 2000s told of a couple being 'advised by the principal of our daughter's first primary school not to tell other parents that we were a couple.'³⁵ Two women gave verbal evidence at the HREOC inquiry about the stillbirth of their son. The non-birth mother was separated from her partner when doctors attended her. She only later realised this would not have happened to a male partner. Nurses gave her literature about stillbirth, it was addressed

to ‘the grieving father’, the nurses were ‘embarrassed’.³⁶ Another submission told of a couple’s uneasy relationship with their donor, Brett (their pseudonym). ‘Also we discovered after our last try with Brett that he wasn’t getting all the sperm into the cup. The first part of the ejaculate is the most concentrated with sperm.’³⁷ He was embarrassed when told; this did not help an already strained relationship.

In some cases social and legal problems with donors occurred because there was no legal framework. One submission to the VLRC inquiry reported instances

where the donor has not honoured the agreement and has made it terribly uncomfortable for all concerned. These other situations have ranged from donors visiting uninvited, to taking the lesbian couple to court for contact rights.³⁸

Many submissions refer to the added financial costs of becoming pregnant when ART was needed but not legally available. One submission to the VLRC in the early 2000s stated ‘The cost of conceiving our first child was in the order of \$20,000 as we were required to travel to interstate clinics for donor insemination.’³⁹ Many submissions referred to the costs of lawyers’ fees to establish legal frameworks that will stand in for the absence of presumed rights and responsibilities, between biological mother and co-mother, and between mothers and donors. One cited the smaller but significant cost of changing surnames so that mothers and baby would have the same names.⁴⁰ The couple who were planning to move to Canberra from South Australia for their baby’s birth worried about the costs involved and the loss of income while away from employment in South Australia.⁴¹

Some submissions commented on the contradictory nature of the world of lesbian parents. In South Australia, where access to ART was available only to women diagnosed as ‘medically infertile’, the inquiry received one submission which included reflection on a diagnosis of endometriosis. ‘We still look back with amazement at how happy we were with this otherwise devastating news.’⁴² Several submissions noted contradiction between state and federal law. Lesbian couples could be recognised at the federal level, to their financial disadvantage, while having no rights, at the state level, to their legal and social disadvantage.

What we also find appalling is that federal government has introduced legislation that means for Family Tax purposes we are deemed a family yet as far as the South Australian government are concerned we are essentially two single women living together with our children. So the federal government receives the financial benefit of us being deemed a family yet we get absolutely no legal recognition from our state government. This is completely unjust and appalling.⁴³

One submission wrote of the process towards pregnancy. ‘I would just like to say that the financial strain has been huge but nowhere near as bad as the emotional pressure.’⁴⁴ Joy, excitement and love appear throughout the submission but so does frustration, vulnerability, stress, exclusion, humiliation, fear and/or anger. Confusion and uncertainty are also mentioned, often the effect of inconsistency in law and regulation, and their implementation in institutions like Centrelink, the federal government body which provides services and payments for a range of population groups, and in private medical clinics. One submission to the South Australian hearing of the 2006 HREOC inquiry summed up, ‘We are thoroughly tired of having to fight for what others in the community are able to take for granted.’ The same sentence appeared in the couple’s submission to the South Australian inquiry four years

later.⁴⁵ As Patton-Imani observes of her research with lesbian mothers in the US, these are stories of emotional, relational and social life that depict law and policy not as abstractions, ‘but rather, arms of the state that exercise power in both personal and public ways that carry profound consequences’.⁴⁶

Addressing The State

As well as telling stories of the lesbian everyday, many submissions create self-representations of the author(s) in some detail. Some narrative features are commonly repeated. A statement about the length of time in the lesbian relationship is an almost universal feature of the submissions. One submission to the South Australian inquiry is almost entirely drawn from the template letter evident in several others, explaining the need for reform. Nonetheless it begins ‘I am in a loving and committed relationship of 17 years, with my female partner, and we have two children 2 and 11 months old.’⁴⁷

Another submission to the South Australian inquiry goes into more detail.

We own our own home, we work in the public education sector, we currently provide respite care for a 9 year old boy who is in foster care, and in the past have been long term foster carers, we do voluntary work in the community, and make regular financial contributions to charities. We believe we are contributing members of the Australian community, and yet, under current South Australian and Australian law, we as a couple, are discriminated against. We believe this is unfair.⁴⁸

Home ownership, paying taxes, paid employment, donating to charity, foster caring and volunteer work are mentioned in more than one self-representation of lesbian mothers. These are activities associated with Australian-ness and provide the ground on which the authors as political subjects have the right to complain about lack of fairness and make demands for rights denied.⁴⁹

Many submissions present the suitability of authors as parents. 'I assumed that as people in a committed relationship of long standing who are financially and emotionally ready to raise children we would not find many barriers to our becoming pregnant.'⁵⁰ This is an account of entitlement unexpectedly absent. The discourse of 'planning, preparation [and] self-analysis', as one submission put it, is common.⁵¹

These accounts of responsible lives, stable relationships, tax-paying citizenship and ideal parenting capacity can be read as responses to those who cast lesbian mothers in opposition to 'good mothers'.⁵² But some submissions go further and deploy the virtues of lesbian parenting to draw comparisons to bad parents. One submission related that 'More than one person has commented to us that our son is fortunate, and indeed, much better off than many children who are unintentionally conceived through heterosexual relationships, or born into situations of violence, abuse or neglect.'⁵³ Another invoked 'current research' which shows that children in lesbian families do 'even better than children raised in heterosexual contexts.'⁵⁴ In comparison with the unplanned, the ill-prepared and the downright unsuitable (and even with the average heterosexual), lesbian mothers shine. The history of the classed and raced politics of 'the good mother' and the ideal family can easily suggest who all these bad parents might be.⁵⁵ Implied whiteness and middle classness, consonant with the virtues of wanted, planned parenting, outweigh the baggage of lesbianism.

One submission positioned its authors as distant from any sense of stridency or political position. 'We're not activists, or even overly political – we are just normal people who love each other and want to start a family.'⁵⁶ Others write of distress caused by finding themselves on the wrong side of the law or their sense of moral integrity. One author described herself as otherwise 'a productive law-abiding citizen'.⁵⁷ Others wrote about discomfort with having to lie about the father's identity on the birth certificate, or to invent a male partner to be able to access medical care.⁵⁸ 'I am an honest person and all this did not sit well with me.'⁵⁹

The standard narrative can be read as a strategic approach that anticipates the promise of deliberative democracy. It imagines that the state will be party to a contract which exchanges the performance of exemplary citizen behaviour for recognition and justice. The submissions to public inquiries are addressed to readers who will usually be strangers and to 'the state' in the abstract. The submissions imagine, as they must, that the state is listening, or that it should. 'We would like you to know about some of the many times we have been affected by discrimination', one submission states.⁶⁰ Another is less deferential. Read at the hearing of the 2006 HREOC inquiry in Townsville in regional Queensland it adopts a tone that is informal, at times sarcastic and confrontational and assumes its audience is ignorant. Its description of discriminatory law is punctuated with assertive questions and declarations like 'Fair? I think NOT!!!!'. The submission concludes with a demand for an answer: 'Are you starting to understand now, why we "carry on"?'⁶¹

Some submissions are explicit about their investment in the power of the law to put things right. One author wrote that the VLRC's interest 'has meant a lot to me personally – to see that my family is seen as valid by (some) members of the legal profession is great.'⁶² Another

wrote as a co-parent, whose conservative family had not found it easy to accept her status as a mother. 'If the law recognised me as a legal parent I believe that behaviour would probably change. It would reinforce to people who perhaps are a little more conservative that I am [my daughter's] parent and that [my daughter] is their family too.'⁶³ Here the state has a role in building self-esteem and shifting personal relationships. The cost of this faith in the law is the endorsement of the promise of deliberative democracy to effect social change, where law reform is the way forward to justice and progress.

Beyond respectability

I would be remiss to suggest that the submissions I read are completely captive to dominant discourses of respectability. Several authors identify themselves as members of lesbian or gay or queer communities, some wrote of involvement with queer parents groups and with other lesbian families. Authors wrote of 'we, in the queer community', 'us queers' and 'us dykes'.⁶⁴ These claims to belonging are points of reference for identity, information and ideas, social structure and support, beyond the state and outside the mainstream.

Lesbian community culture is apparent in many submissions. This includes instances of humour. The description of non-normative gender roles in parenting by a thirteen year old girl in a joint submission to the New South Wales parliamentary committee with her two lesbian parents concludes comically.

She [her co-parent] does all the things that a man would do (if not more). She cooks, cleans, takes me to soccer, listens to my never-ending stories about school, jokes with

me and tells me to get out of the bathroom just as well as a man would. There is no reason why she shouldn't be able to adopt me.⁶⁵

One woman who presented in person to the New South Wales parliamentary committee was questioned about male role models. 'I think it has to be understood here that we are not anti-men. Trust me, we love them, but just not to marry them.'⁶⁶ The submission where the author represented herself as 'us dykes' included a lesbian joke in her very conversational submission to the Tasmanian committee: 'Q. What does a lesbian bring on the second date? A. Her furniture.'⁶⁷

This joke reminds us that the length and stability of lesbian relationships is not only a concern in relation to those who denigrate lesbian families and seek to deny them rights.⁶⁸ The issue also has a genealogy in lesbian cultures as a badge of membership, issue of concern, source of pride, and object of humour. In this context, the almost universal statement of the length of the relationship can be read as lesbian community discourse. It is 'the lesbian long-term'. These statements, when read together, constitute an energetic force of lesbian community. Given that some women tell of having children after being together for many years, the length of relationship also evidences non-(hetero)normative temporalities of family formation.

The way that some submissions are written also signal alternative lesbian community ways of doing things. The submission from the 'Bit Bent Buddies' to the VLRC announces itself as the outcome of 'a conversation of ten lesbian co-parenting women'.⁶⁹ It is a lengthy document devised in the feminist tradition where individual and collective voices are given

equal weight.

Not all submissions locate belonging through homeownership and taxes. The domestic and caring everyday life of the local neighbourhood is also invoked.

We are a regular family, living in a regular street. We look out for our neighbours and they for us. We borrow a cup of sugar when we need it and we look after each other's kids.⁷⁰

Another submission locates motivation in the wish to avoid the secrecy, and related suffering and shame, experienced by the author's mother, raised by a divorced mother and grandmother in the 1940s and 50s. This history explains the choice of conception through donor sperm from a friend, outside the regulatory framework of anonymous clinic-based sperm donation.

We were determined that our children would never have to live with secrets like this [her mother's situation] and if possible would know how they were conceived and who had helped in that process. We also wanted our children accepted by my mother and for her to feel happy with the way they were conceived and not anxious about their well being.⁷¹

These two stories appeal to senses of belonging and obligation to family and community that eschew the conventional model of responsible citizenship defined through the state and capitalist defined public sphere of paid work and professional occupations, tax-paying and mortgage holding.

While some submissions describe families that appear to follow conventional heteronormative forms, one mother in the workforce and one at home for example, others detail unconventional families. One submission writes that ‘Our child benefits from the love and care of a family which includes 2 mothers, 2 fathers and all of our extended family.’⁷² Arrangements with sperm donors who have ongoing relationships with children but are not fathers were more commonly mentioned. One submission describes an arrangement made when their child was born, to assist them with relationship conflicts, given that they believed that they could not rely on the Family Court (the federal court which deals with family law matters). ‘[O]ur agreement set up a tribunal of friends to decide any dispute, should we not be able to reach agreement.’⁷³ These descriptions of alternative family forms, and alternative means of governing relationships in the absence of appropriate law, signal the presence of lesbian culture and alternative publics.

Finally, the representation of her ‘angry and bitter ex-partner’ in a long submission by an author who identifies herself as a doctor, confounds the imperative to describe lesbian mothers as upstanding citizens.⁷⁴ Upon announcing her intention to leave the relationship the author’s ex-partner, the birth mother, ‘threatened that if I left I would never see the children again.’ The separation was followed by two years of legal proceedings culminating in a trial in the Family Court, where the non-birth mother had standing only as the ‘other party’, despite more than five years of co-parenting. This terminology gave the birth mother ‘ammunition in telling the children I was not their mum’. Further, the birth mother took advantage of her occupancy of ‘the family home’ to deprive her partner of income, threaten her credit rating, and refuse access to material belongings ‘like photos and my grandparent’s furniture’. It is unclear how much of this conflict would be ameliorated by the law reform

that the submission supported, but this representation of the birth mother is an outlier that offers a rare account of social and subjective complexities.

‘Whose feelings count?’

Cultural theorist Ann Cvetkovich’s work on lesbian public cultures argues for the importance of incorporating ‘affective life into our conceptions of citizenship’.⁷⁵ She reads lesbian public cultures for their capacity to re-shape public cultures through alternative ‘structures of affect’. The submissions discussed here achieve this, insisting on a place for lesbian affect in public life and for its legitimacy as the basis for legal change. Cvetkovich writes that her investigation of ‘the national public sphere’ was guided by the question ‘whose feelings count?’.⁷⁶

But putting Cvetkovich’s question to the collection of submissions considered here makes clear that the stories told to the parliamentary and law reform inquiries mostly relate the feelings of white middle class able-bodied lesbian subjects whose privilege is interrupted only by the impact of homophobia and heteronormativity, narrowly defined. Not all stories were about doctors and lawyers; several referred to struggling with bills, or worrying about money, but even these women were employed in middle class occupations, or anticipated being so. This directs us to consider the limits of the narratives and discourses that the ‘rules and governing practices’ of the inquiries impose on the practice of political subjectivity.⁷⁷ The fully storied political subject who emerges from this archive is one for whom the reform of discriminatory homophobic and heteronormative laws will make a big difference. Other laws or social structures which might shape life experience disadvantageously get scant attention, arguably because they are outside the parameters of what the inquiries invite *or*

because they cannot be imagined. The latter is Jaya Keaney's assessment of a group of white lesbian and gay parents of adopted children who are not white, as observed in the late 2010s. Referring to 'the post-racial imaginary of contemporary Australia', which casts racism into the historical past, Keaney writes 'racism is unable to be easily held alongside queerphobia, which emerges as the primary paradigm of marginality'.⁷⁸

Among the submissions I have read there is some reference to the privilege of being able to afford lawyers, expensive medical treatment and the costs of travel to access care or jurisdictions which offer recognition or better legal protection. One author wrote 'Being white, middle-class and educated has protected me against the worst excesses of homophobia out there.'⁷⁹ Among submissions which acknowledge this privilege there is however no discussion of what being without that privilege would be like, or how homophobic and heteronormative laws and social settings might have 'disproportionate effects ... on queer mothers of color and their children.'⁸⁰

A key example of this silence in the lesbian mother submissions relates to Centrelink benefits, relied upon disproportionately by Indigenous people and those with disabilities, as well as the poor in general. Reform of Centrelink benefits to recognise same sex couples could disadvantage individuals in lesbian or gay relationships who had previously been assessed as individuals but whose entitlement would henceforth be assessed in relation to their partner's income. This could result in complete loss of income if their partner earned above a certain (low) amount or diminished income if both partners were in receipt of benefits (disability pensions or single parent pension or unemployment benefit, for example). This reform happened in 2008, following the HREOC inquiry.⁸¹ To my knowledge this issue received very little discussion among queer communities who were supporting law reform,

and is mentioned only once in the submissions I read.⁸² One submission to HREOC, from an author who described herself as employed and whose partner was establishing a small business with Centrelink benefit support, rehearses the arguments in her submission, written before the 2008 reforms:

I know that there are people who don't want to lose these benefits, and there are cynics amongst us who think that this enquiry might end up with Centrelink recognizing our relationships to reduce the welfare payments they need to make, but that other areas of disadvantage won't change as quickly. But let me tell you, those small Centrelink benefits are poor compensation for the disadvantages we face in taxation, Medicare and other areas you're investigating in this enquiry. We'd rather have equality.⁸³

While Medicare entitlements disproportionately assist the poor, those who are not in paid employment are less impacted by taxation law (or workplace leave entitlements or superannuation law). For couples on low incomes where one or both are reliant on Centrelink benefits the gain in taxation benefits or workplace leave entitlements may not be relevant to, or in any way compensate for, the loss in benefit income.

Notably, this lack of attention to the interrelation of welfare entitlement and equality for lesbian and gay couples took place at a time when the Australian welfare system was being transformed and government and popular discourse about single mothers was increasingly devaluing their caring work. 'Old stereotypes of immoral single mothers and lazy unemployed people fused into the notion of single mothers who acted immorally by refusing employment, setting a poor example for their children as well as wronging the community.'⁸⁴

Popular culture played a part in intensifying class distinctions, defining working class women in terms of 'lack', 'failed femininity' and 'failed motherhood'.⁸⁵ This signalled a shift in conceptions of Australian maternal citizenship, from 'citizenship as membership to citizenship as participation ... in paid employment'⁸⁶ and to citizenship through consumption practices that are 'unavailable to many groups of women.'⁸⁷ Representations of Indigenous mothers in the context of these discourses, especially young Indigenous women, reinforced their historical construction as 'uncivilised and sexually undisciplined'.⁸⁸ No submissions from authors who identified as lesbian mothers named these class or race issues.

Obliviousness to the privilege of advantageous location was more often the case. As one author wrote:

Once I became a mother I experienced a social acceptance I had never known, I was amazed. I didn't know it existed. A camaraderie with other mothers and an understood role in the social structure. It was palpable to me - I did not understand how excluded my situation was as a lesbian, until I experienced what it was not.'⁸⁹

This experience of motherhood as antidote to social exclusion as a lesbian is underpinned by race and class privilege because mothers who are not white and middle class do not so easily achieve social approval.

The working class or 'welfare dependent' or Indigenous teen mother does however find a shadowy place in the imaginary of the submissions. These other mothers are recognisable in the heterosexual 'situations of violence, abuse or neglect'⁹⁰, in those families 'without the capacity to provide safe and nurturing environments',⁹¹ and those children conceived without 'planning, preparation [and] self-analysis'.⁹² One cost of this shaming of these mothers and families is the disavowal of the rights of lesbian mothers who may be working class or

‘welfare dependent’ or Indigenous, and those of all backgrounds who may be in violent or abusive relationships, or relationships that do not conform to normative middle class expectations.

‘Minority groups’ did feature overtly in a small number of submissions. Commenting on struggles to get books representing lesbian families into childcare centres and kindergartens, an important location for cultural representation, one submission to the South Australian Inquiry commented ‘This would not be acceptable for children who belong to other minority groups.’⁹³ Another compared the struggles of ‘the gay community’ with those of Indigenous people. ‘Imagine if the State and Federal Governments denied indigenous people the right to marry and have children?’⁹⁴ These ‘post-racial’ statements reflect ‘the emergence of queer liberalism [which] depends on the active management, repression and subsuming of race[/racism]’, as David Eng puts it.⁹⁵ They are not only based in dubious claims of fact, about diversity in childcare and school libraries,⁹⁶ and ignorance about the obstructions facing Indigenous peoples’ family lives, including those imposed by law (for example the disproportionate incarceration of Indigenous people), which impact on family life.⁹⁷ These statements fail to see the intersection of queerphobia and the oppression of other minority groups, including Indigenous people.

One group of mothers who are absent in the submissions to the inquiries, and who complicate the celebration of motherhood as the key to social acceptance, are those whose children are offered for adoption. Of the very different adoption landscape of the USA Patton-Imani notes that ‘Policy advances made in opening up adoption to same-sex parents depended upon sociopolitical narratives of poor women of color as a threat to the future of the nation’.⁹⁸ One submission relates the mothers’ story of adoption of a child from Colombia by a US citizen

and an Australian who were then living together in the US.⁹⁹ They chose Colombia because the process is quicker than in the US and ‘the children are well looked after both medically and emotionally while the adoption is being finalized.’ There is no reference to their daughter’s birth mother (or to potential racism that the child may experience). While the matter of adoption by same sex couples in Australia was discussed in the submissions mainly in relation to second-parent adoption, which was unavailable to lesbian co-parents before reform of laws, a small number of submissions mention the possibility of adopting unknown children in the future, including foster children. One submission states that a lesbian may wish to adopt ‘because there are children who need a family and you have a social conscience’.¹⁰⁰ The social conscience here is directed to the child, abstracted from the mother or family it already has. This is the child of Damien Riggs’ argument that claims for the rights of non-heterosexual people to adopt often invoke white race privilege or, at best, indifference to the (international) settings from where adoptees are sought.¹⁰¹ These views resonate with the racist Australian imagination evident in the justification of the long-standing and ongoing removal of Indigenous children from their mothers, families and communities.¹⁰²

Conclusion

The submissions are powerful stories of the presence of the state and other sources of discrimination and marginalisation in the everyday lives of lesbian mothers in the twenty-first century. They indicate reforms needed to ameliorate discrimination and injustice. I argue that the interrelationship of the discursive and institutional location of the public inquiries *with* the story-telling and political discourses that submission writers bring produces a force for change that is nonetheless constrained by the focus on legal reform. This interrelationship

produces a subject position for whom law reform will take care of a lot of problems. Even this subject position, however, involves a faith that may not be rewarded given that legal change is no guarantee of cultural change or happiness or justice in the private realm, as the story of the bitter lesbian mother and her partner testifies. Neither does legal change necessarily equate with new structures of feeling in the public realm as the ‘wave of queerphobic violence and at times vicious public debate’ in Australia in the final lead-up to the achievement of marriage equality in 2017 (*after* most of the law reforms that followed the inquiries) showed us.¹⁰³

On the one hand the dominant lesbian mother subject position that is created through the submission process colludes in a liberal narrative of progress, leaving many questions unasked and many issues unaccounted for, building on privileged class and raced based assumptions about its others. Yet the submissions bear traces of multiple political and discursive traditions and cannot be described only as complicity with mainstream discourses of gender, sexuality and family life. The approaches taken in the story telling vary and the positions from which they are told are not homogenous. The everyday spills over, blurring the divide between liberal assimilation and radical queering of the public sphere. The submissions perform an educative function in relation to the diversity of family forms, if not the incommensurability of different families.

Notwithstanding this failure of the boundaries of public inquiries to entirely contain the submissions, this article is haunted by the question that Patton-Imani’s work prompts: Does the twenty-first century success of queer reproduction and family law reform, including legislation specifically beneficial to lesbian mothers, obscure or erase the intensified oppression of black, poor, refugee, disabled, incarcerated and/or other marginalised mothers

in this period?¹⁰⁴ Writing of the success of reform to allow same sex marriage in the US Patton-Imani writes that ‘it is crucial that we understand how it is that a law purporting to create equality could actually further entrench structural oppression.’¹⁰⁵ This effect is partly built on the visibility of white middle class queers whose celebration tends to render the lives of the poor and those of colour as ‘the cultural antitheses of a stable and healthy social order’.¹⁰⁶ This article offers an argument based in empirical historical evidence to respond to Patton-Imani’s question in the Australian context.

Had self-representations of lesbian mothers whose lives do not conform to the normative subject position, including those dependent on Centrelink benefits, been told in the submissions, the limitation of the relief from the oppression and marginalisation of lesbian mothers offered by law reform would be made visible.¹⁰⁷ The privileged women who wrote may not have had the experience to imagine the lives of those less privileged (this is part of privilege) nor want to speak on behalf of others. It may be the case that the networks through which knowledge of the inquiries circulated were predominantly those of middle class women and it may be the case that poor women did not feel equipped or have time to write submissions. The absence of their stories however is not, for me, primarily a sociological phenomenon. Women who were not privileged may have been among those who wrote submissions to the inquiries but decided not to include detailed descriptions of intimate reproductive and family life or feelings that suggested marginalisation or impoverishment.

There may be advantages in keeping some stories out of the public eye and sticking with the simple demand for legal change. ‘Public intimacy’ is not a strategy that is equally advantageous to all. Submissions which do not provide intimate details might also be interpreted as a refusal to accede to an expectation that the cost of justice is the provision of

personal stories. Their authors may not have a benign view of the state. These submissions could be a refusal to find a place in ‘the good mother’ discourse or to subscribe to the ‘privatized and depoliticized family values’ produced by the campaigns for marriage equality.¹⁰⁸

The committees are convened to address specific discriminatory laws that impact same sex couples *as same sex couples* and *lesbian mothers as lesbian mothers*, not to address the complex webs of laws and policies and institutional practices and cultural norms which will inflect the ways that laws and policies about reproduction and family life are experienced. The centrality of the white middle class able-bodied lesbian mother position does not only reflect the experience and the politics that the submissions bring to this public space. It is also a product of the space that public inquiries make available. It evidences the limits of deliberative democracy as it operates through public inquiries.

The address to the state will always be strategic, tailored to the opportunities made available in this instance by the combination of lesbian mother political discourse and willingness on the part of the state to engage with lesbian mothers’ demands. It is not that lesbian mothers who are not white or middle class or able-bodied have nothing to gain from law reform, but that their subjective absence from the process reveals their distance from the normative lesbian mother subject position, and the rights and privileges increasingly accruing to it, in the early twenty-first century. This distance also reveals the limits of the state’s opening to diversity and inclusion.

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- ¹Jenni Millbank, 'Recognition of Lesbian and Gay Families in Australian Law—Part Two: Children', *Federal Law Review* 34, no. 2 (2006): 205-59.
- ²Francisco Perales et al., 'The Family Lives of Australian Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People: A Review of the Literature and a Research Agenda' *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 17, no. 1 (2020): 43-44. The situation of queer asylum seekers and refugees in Australia needs noting because their needs for family and relationship recognition are not simply addressed through domestic relationship recognition law. See Migration Council of Australia and Forcibly Displaced Network, *Gender Responsive Settlement: Broader Learnings from LGBTIQ+ Refugees*, nd. (https://migrationcouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MCAReport_GenderResponsiveLGBTIQ_v2.1.pdf). (accessed August 19, 2022).
- ³Jeffrey Weeks, *The World We Have Won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life* (London: Routledge, 2007), x, xii; Graham Willett, 'Howard and the Homos' *Social Movement Studies* 9, no. 2 (2010): 187.
- ⁴David L. Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); see also Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012); Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, expanded edition (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).
- ⁵Diane Richardson, 'Sexuality and Citizenship', *Sexualities* 21, no. 8 (2018): 1257, 1259.
- ⁶Kristina Krause and Katharina Schramm, 'Thinking Through Political Subjectivity', *African Diapora* 4 (2011): 115.
- ⁷Graham Willett, *Living Out Loud: A History of Gay and Lesbian Activism in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000); see also Clive Moore, *Sunshine and Rainbows: The Development of Gay and Lesbian Culture in Queensland* (Brisbane: Queensland University Press, 2001).
- ⁸Willett, 'Howard and the Homos', 189.
- ⁹Robert Reynolds and Shirleene Robinson, *Gay and Lesbian, Then and Now: Australian Stories from a Social Revolution* (Sydney: Black Inc., 2016), 255-270.
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- ¹⁴The inquiries are identified here by their reports. All are available online, as are the submissions. Joint Standing Committee on Community Development, *Report on Amendments to the Relationships (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2003*, (Hobart: Parliament of Tasmania, 2004); Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Same-Sex: Same Entitlements: National Inquiry into Discrimination against People in Same-Sex*

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¹⁶ Sarah Moulds, *Committees of Influence: Parliamentary Rights Scrutiny and Counter-Terrorism Lawmaking in Australia* (Singapore: Springer, 2020), 44-45.

¹⁷ Sarah Marie Wiebe, 'Toxic Matters: Vital and Material Struggles for Environmental Reproductive Justice' in *Abortion: History, Politics, and Reproductive Justice after Morgentaler*, ed. Shannon Stettner, Kristin Burnett and Travis Hay (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 313-333.

¹⁸ Krause and Schramm, 'Thinking Through Political Subjectivity', 130.

¹⁹ Dorothy Roberts (1996, 367) in Sandra Patton-Imani, *Queering Family Trees: Race, Reproductive Justice, and Lesbian Motherhood* (New York: NYU Press, 2020), 133. In relation to same sex marriage in Australia see Tanja Dreher, 'The "Uncanny Doubles" of Queer Politics: Sexual Citizenship in the Era of Same-Sex Marriage Victories' *Sexualities* 20, no. 1-2 (2017): 176-95.

²⁰ Aileen Moreton-Robinson, 'The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty: The High Court and the Yorta Yorta Decision', *Borderlands e-journal* 3, no. 2 (2004): 5.

²¹ Krause and Schramm, 'Thinking Through Political Subjectivity', 127, 130.

²² Patton-Imani, *Queering Family Trees*.

²³ Michelle Arrow, *The Seventies: The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2019), 3.

²⁴ Ken Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2003), 13, 15.

²⁵ L and A, Submission 110, Victorian Law Reform Commission (VLRC).

²⁶ Damien W. Riggs and Indigo Willing, "'They're All Just Little Bits, Aren't They": South Australian Lesbian Mothers' Experiences of Marginalisation in Primary Schools', *Journal of Australian Studies* 37, no. 3 (2013): 364.

²⁷ F and S, Prospective Lesbian Parents, Submission 149, VLRC, 35.

²⁸ Couple B, Prospective Lesbian Parents, Submission 149, VLRC, 26.

²⁹ MD, Submission 9, Parliament of Tasmania.

³⁰ SE and MV, Submission 247, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). The square brackets here indicate that the name has been removed from the published submission.

³¹ GP and SP, Submission 244, Parliament of South Australia (SA).

³² Story No. 5, Bit Bent Buddies, Submission 62, VLRC, 9.

³³ GS, Parliament of SA.

³⁴ LM, Submission 38, HREOC. Salary sacrifice refers to an employee's exchange of income for increased contribution from their employer to their superannuation, in some case with taxation advantage.

³⁵ Story No. 5, Bit Bent Buddies, Submission 62, VLRC, 9-11.

³⁶ L and N, Audio Recording, Adelaide Evening Forum, HREOC .

³⁷ Prospective Lesbian Parents, Submission 149, VLRC, 34.

³⁸ Story No. 5, Bit Bent Buddies, Submission 62, VLRC, 9-11.

³⁹ Prospective Lesbian Parents, Submission 149, VLRC, 27.

⁴⁰ L and N, Audio Recording, Adelaide Evening Forum, HREOC.

⁴¹ GP and SP, Submission db244, Parliament of SA.

⁴² RN & KN, Parliament of SA.

⁴³ KT, Submission db637, Parliament of SA.

⁴⁴ Couple B, Prospective Lesbian Parents, Submission 149, VLRC, 16.

⁴⁵ SM and LN, Submission 298, HREOC; SM and LN, Submission db425, Parliament of SA.

⁴⁶ Patton-Imani, *Queering Family Trees*, 40.

⁴⁷ NH, Submission db71, Parliament of SA.

⁴⁸ SM and LN, Submission 298, HREOC.

⁴⁹ Fiona R. Allon, *Renovation Nation: Our Obsession with Home* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008); Carol Johnson, 'John Howard's "Values" and Australian Identity', *Australian Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 2 (2007): 195.

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- ⁵⁰ SK, Submission 99, VLRC.
- ⁵¹ Name Withheld, Submission db479, Parliament of SA.
- ⁵² Margot Rawsthorne, 'Mother Impossible: The Experiences of Lesbian Parents', in *The Good Mother: Contemporary Motherhoods in Australia* ed.. Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppertz (Sydney: Sydney University Press 2010): 195-213.
- ⁵³ BM, Submission db457, Parliament of SA.
- ⁵⁴ AN, Submission db115, Parliament of SA.
- ⁵⁵ Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppertz, 'The Good Mother in Theory and Research: An Overview', in *The Good Mother: Contemporary Motherhoods in Australia*, ed.. Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppertz (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2010), 1-24.
- ⁵⁶ AD, Submission 64, VLRC.
- ⁵⁷ Story 3, Bit Bent Buddies, Submission 62, VLRC, 7-8.
- ⁵⁸ Stories 1 and 2, Bit Bent Buddies, Submission 62, VLRC, 4-7.
- ⁵⁹ Bit Bent Buddies, Story 1, Submission 62, VLRC, 4-6.
- ⁶⁰ Bit Bent Buddies, Story No. 5, Submission 62, VLRC, 9-11.
- ⁶¹ SW and SW, Community Forum Townsville, October 12, 2006, HREOC. This submission was read to the committee on behalf of the authors who were unable to attend. The capitalisation and expressive punctuation appears in the HREOC record.
- ⁶² CO, Submission 241, VLRC.
- ⁶³ JRB, Transcript of Submission to public hearing 24 February 2009, Parliament of New South Wales (NSW), 61.
- ⁶⁴ GS, Parliament of SA; Prospective Lesbian Parents, Submission 149, VLRC; LG, Submission 31, Parliament of Tasmania.
- ⁶⁵ VJH, JRB and BAH, Submission 64, Parliament of NSW.
- ⁶⁶ TES, Transcript of Submission to public hearing 25 February 2009, Parliament of NSW, 63-71.
- ⁶⁷ LG, Submission 31, Parliament of Tasmania.
- ⁶⁸ Luke Gahan, 'Separated Same-Sex Parents: Troubling the Same-Sex Parented Family', *Sociological Research Online* 23, no.1 (2018): 245-261.
- ⁶⁹ Bit Bent Buddies, Submission 62, VLRC, 1.
- ⁷⁰ WN, Parliament of SA.
- ⁷¹ CO, Submission 241, VLRC.
- ⁷² BM, Submission db457, Parliament of SA.
- ⁷³ Story 1, Bit Bent Buddies, Submission 62, VLRC, 4-6.
- ⁷⁴ GS, Parliament of SA; see Gahan, 'Separated Same Sex Parents', 251-2.
- ⁷⁵ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality and Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 11.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 278.
- ⁷⁷ Krause and Schramm, 'Thinking Through Political Subjectivity', 130.
- ⁷⁸ Jaya Keaney, 'The Queer Multiracial Family', in *The Reproductive Industry: Intimate Experience and Global Processes*, ed. Vera Mackie, Nicola J Marks and Sarah Ferber (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2019), 90-91.
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- ⁸⁰ Patton-Imani, *Queering Family Trees*, 20. Australian social science research into lesbian and gay parents is described as 'largely silent about the role of intersectionality'. Francisco Perales et al., 'The Family Lives of Australian Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People', 43, 55.
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- ⁸⁴ Megan Blaxland, 'Mothers and Mutual Obligation: Policy Reforming the Good Mother', in *The Good Mother: Contemporary Motherhoods in Australia*, ed. Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppertz (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2010), 144.
- ⁸⁵ Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppertz 'Mothers Making Class Distinctions: The Aesthetics of Maternity' *The Good Mother: Contemporary Motherhoods in Australia*, ed.. Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppertz (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2010), 85, 80.
- ⁸⁶ Blaxland, 'Mothers and Mutual Obligation', 146.
- ⁸⁷ Goodwin and Huppertz, 'Mothers Making Class Distinctions', 78.

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- ⁸⁸ Leanne Cutcher and Talila Milroy, 'Misrepresenting Indigenous Mothers: Maternity Allowances in the Media', in *The Good Mother: Contemporary Motherhoods in Australia* ed. Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppertz (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2010), 167.
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- ⁹⁰ BM, Submission db457, Parliament of SA.
- ⁹¹ Name Withheld, Submission db479, Parliament of SA.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ SM and LN, Submission db425, Parliament of SA.
- ⁹⁴ Name Withheld, Submission db479, Parliament of SA.
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- ¹⁰⁴ Patton-Imani, *Queering Family Trees*.
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- ¹⁰⁶ Ferguson (2005, 65) in Patton-Imani, *Queering Family Trees*, 134.
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