

Affiliation

c. 1896 –

Details

Affiliation is a word used to describe the process of identifying the father of a child born to a single mother. Single mothers were obliged to name the father of their child if they wished to access government payments. They were also forced to ask the father for maintenance or child support. If her request was unsuccessful, the government could bring affiliation proceedings in a Children's Court to demand maintenance. If the case against the putative father was proven, an affiliation order was made. Proving the father was affiliated to the child did not change the child's legal situation, or provide the child with any rights to inheritance.

The 'Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices' report (2012) described how a mother was required to make an affiliation statement identifying the father of her child before she could qualify for social welfare allowances in New South Wales.

The requirement to name the putative father was a significant disincentive for a woman who might otherwise qualify because she might not want to name him. If the woman was less than 16 years of age, the young woman might not want to expose the putative father to a prosecution for carnal knowledge

... many women found affiliation proceedings extremely humiliating because they had to provide extensive details of their sexual relationships to a district officer and then in court. If they qualified for this allowance, further embarrassment was likely as they were required to collect their cheques in person from local church or community halls, rather than receive a payment in the mail like many other recipients (p.111).

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More info

Resources

- Department of Justice, [History](#), Children's Court of New South Wales, 2012

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