

Name:	
Address:	
Email:	
Phone:	

Dear Committee Secretary,

I would like to make the following submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs for approaches to a nationally consistent framework for local adoption in Australia. I will make specific reference to appropriate guiding principles for a national framework or code for local adoptions within Australia.

My husband and I applied to adopt locally at the end of 2017. Not all of the 41, 448 children in out-of-home care (Parliamentary media release 28/3/18) are available for adoption. We were told by adoption officers at Adoption Services in Queensland that despite the number of children in care there were less than ten local adoptions in Queensland every year and we faced barriers to successful adoption. They indicated that our ages (45 and 47) would likely prevent young parents from choosing us to adopt their child. We have now pursued international adoption which is expensive, a bureaucratic nightmare and very slow.

In order to move more children from out-of-home care and into local adoption placements there needs to be:

1. Less 'second chances' for parents or guardians who neglect or mistreat their children
2. Aboriginal children in need adopted by non-indigenous families where a kinship carer is not appropriate or the environment where the child is cared for is not safe (culture, language and ties can be maintained, just like through international adoption)
3. More funding for adoption services employees to process applications locally and internationally. It currently takes months just to get your case to a panel who decide if you can go on a waiting list
4. A decentralised system for local adoptions with privately run agencies doing the processing of applications and post adoption support under government guidelines
5. Long term foster care needs to be reduced by making children in foster care for more than a specified time (eg. 1 year) available for adoption
6. A 'foster care to adoption' process where foster carers can adopt after caring for a child for a specified time (eg. 1 year)
7. Large sibling groups with wide age spans split (eg. 3 or more children) and placed in open adoption circumstances with families in the same geographical location to maintain familial ties

In summary, I ask that you consider the best interests of the child – which is adoption, not long term or on-and-off care, or remaining in a family situation that is detrimental.

Sincerely,