

From: David and Clarissa [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 21 April 2005 9:39 PM
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)
Subject: Federal inquiry into Intercountry Adoptions

Dear Secretary,

I am a Qld adoptive mother of a Filipino child. We have been home with our son for exactly one year now. Addressing the terms of reference:

1. Any inconsistencies between state and territory approval process for overseas adoption

The inconsistencies are many. Each state runs a separate program. The number of files processed in each state is very different as is the waiting time from application to processing. Processing time also varies between states as do the requirements for couples to prove worthy adoptive parents. Perhaps their needs to be a federal body overseeing intercountry adoptions to make the process equal to all.

2. Any inconsistencies between the benefits and entitlements provided to families with their own birth children and those provided to families who have adopted children from overseas.

The main inconsistency is the federal maternity payment. Most adoptive families are unable to access this payment as their adopted child is older than 26 weeks. This seems rather unfair. We had to pay for government workers to assess us as suitable parents, adoption costs to our countries, travel costs, immigration costs and then the normal cost of setting up for a new child. If this payment is to help families with the costs of a new child then we have many more costs than birth families. We should also be entitled to this payment. I also think it should be backdated to the first available payments.

We, as new parents, elected to fully immunise our new child. As he was two when he came home with us we were not entitled to the immunisation bonus either. We had to pay for some of the immunisations as they did not fall under the free categories. Our son had not had Hep B vaccinations as part of his regime and we had to pay for this. If adoptive couples choose to immunise their new children then I feel they should also be entitled to this money even if their new child was older than 18 months as is the cutoff. Our son was fully immunised 6 months after he arrived in Australia. Perhaps adoptive couples could be given a time frame after arriving home to finalise full immunisations and then be entitled to this money.

Our sincere thanks for the time you have spent addressing these issues.

Yours sincerely
Clarissa Stuart