



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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Bishop Launches New Inquiry into Adoption of Children from Overseas

Chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family & Human Services, Bronwyn Bishop, today announced a Parliamentary Inquiry into the adoption of children from overseas.

Mrs Bishop said that the public inquiry would examine a range of issues relevant to many Australians who for various reasons do not have their own children, or wish to adopt children from overseas.

“Adoption in Australia has changed dramatically over the past 30 years, with a huge drop in the number of children being adopted in Australia each year. In 2003-04 there were 502 adoptions in Australia, compared with 9,798 in Australian in 1970-71”, Mrs Bishop said.

It is worth noting that Australians wishing to adopt have turned their attention to overseas countries, and the processes which the states and territories undertake in this changed environment. ‘Inter-country’ child adoption is the term used for the adoption of children from countries other than Australia. In 2003-04 there were 370 inter-country adoptions, with about one-third from China and decreasing totals from South Korea, Ethiopia, Thailand, Philippines, India, Colombia and Sri Lanka.

Following the Tsunami disaster last Boxing Day, some Australians speculated there could be greater orphan adoption opportunities. However, the Adoptive Families Association publicly announced in January 2005 that it is not appropriate for children affected by war and natural disaster to be adopted overseas: “Inter-country adoption is only appropriate for children who can’t be placed in a suitable family within the country of origin.”

Mrs Bishop said that the Committee will explore how the Australian Government can better assist Australians who are adopting or have adopted children from overseas countries (inter-country placement adoptions). The Committee invites public submissions on:

- Any inconsistencies between state and territory approval processes for overseas adoptions; and
- 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.

For media interview: Please contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** at the electorate office of the Committee chairman the Hon Mrs Bronwyn Bishop MP.

For further information on making a submission: contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or email fhs.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs