



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services

MEDIA RELEASE

28 November 2005

Australia lags rest of world in international adoptions

The Chairman of the House of Representatives Family and Human Services Committee, Bronwyn Bishop, is today launching the Committee's report: *Overseas Adoption in Australia*.

Everyone who provided a submission to the inquiry is invited to the launch. The media are also invited to attend.

In 2003-04, 370 children were adopted into Australian families from overseas. Key countries of origin include China, South Korea, Ethiopia and Thailand.

The key findings of the report include:

- Australia's per capita rate of adoptions from overseas is less than one third the rate of most first world economies (page 15).
- Many adoptive families cannot access important benefits and entitlements such as the maternity payment, parental leave, and the immunisation allowance (pages 70-78).
- Non-government agencies have a limited role in processing adoption applications, which has reduced the number of children being placed with families (pages 93-106).
- The Commonwealth, rather than the states and territories, should establish and manage new programs with overseas countries (pages 106-109).

The Committee received 274 submissions and took evidence from 100 witnesses and 50 community statements in 12 hearings. The Chairman said, "The quality of this report reflects the great contribution made by adoptive parents who bravely donated their time and knowledge to the inquiry. Adoption officials in government departments have a great deal of power over adoptive parents. Some parents declined to give evidence because they were afraid it might jeopardise their chances of a successful application."

Mrs Bishop said, "In the area of intercountry adoption, ministers and their departments have been unaccountable for too long. The Committee is pleased to redress the balance."

Launch details

11 am today, Parliament House, Canberra – Committee Room 2R2.

For media interview: Contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** at the electorate office of the Hon Bronwyn Bishop MP.

For copies of the report: contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or email fhs.reps@aph.gov.au or visit: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs/adoption/index.htm>