

**Submission to Commonwealth Parliamentary Inquiry into Adoption of Children from Overseas**

Dear Committee Members

On behalf of Adoption NT (ANT), a registered network for Northern Territory Families and their adopted children, we would like to draw your attention to the following issues that we believe the committee should consider as part of its inquiry.

1. Inconsistencies between state and territory approval processes for overseas adoptions

Our association is aware of the following inconsistencies:

- **Adoption processing fees in Australia** (varies significantly between States and Territories).
- **Time frame for the adoption process within Australia** (varies significantly between States and Territories as evidenced by a Queensland couple who felt the need to relocate to the Northern Territory because the Queensland timeframe would have taken so long that they would have become ineligible due to age limits).
- Age limits on adoptive couples (varies significantly between States and Territories).
- Eligibility of singles to adopt (varies significantly between States and Territories).

2. 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

- **In the Northern Territory adopted children do not receive a full birth certificate.** This will significantly impact on our children as they get older – particularly as a full birth certificate is essential in obtaining drivers' licences, passports, credit ratings etc. Most other States e.g. ACT and NSW do provide full birth certificates. The situation in the Northern Territory is a legacy of old Commonwealth Legislation that was in place before self-government was achieved.
- There is a cut-off age limit for the \$3000 baby bonus
  - All families who adopt a child of any age are faced with new expenses.

- Age limits restrict many people to adopting older children who consequently miss out on the baby bonus.

Other Issues Members asked us to raise

There is a question about the fairness in age limits in that it discriminates against older parents and effectively limits them to adopting older children who can find it much harder to adjust to a new family and culture. These parents would argue that they are just as capable of raising young children and in some ways would argue that this would be easier.

Thank you for giving this submission consideration.

Yours sincerely

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Secretary  
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