

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 20 April 2005 9:17 PM
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)
Subject: Intercountry Adoption

Attn: Secretary of the Committee

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a single woman living in Sydney beginning the process to adopt a child from overseas. I am currently facing nearly \$10,000 for NSW fees, plus possibly over \$20,000 in addition, for other costs. This increase in costs for people in NSW was apparently to help make the department more efficient, faster etc. However, from my personal experiences with the Department this increase in efficiency is not forthcoming.

For example, although my Expression of Interest Form was received in the Department at the end of February, they did not check the envelope for the cheque and consequently held up the beginning processes of my application by a month, although I was told that this would not hold up progress through the adoption process, I have still to be contacted about attendance at a Seminar, and when I phoned this week I was politely told to wait to be contacted about the Seminar. I was quite disappointed by this introduction into the Adoption process, and am somewhat unsettled to think how the rest of the process will proceed - and given this introduction to the efficiency of the Department, I cannot see a justification of the increase in NSW fees up to nearly \$10,000.

I have been speaking with other applicants from other States of Australia and am quite dismayed at the stark differences in requirements to adopt - surely we are all Australians, and it is the best interest of Australians to be treated equably. Recent articles on the news stating the decline in birth numbers in Australia, and the need for families to have children are in contrast to the Department's providing inequitable and often inappropriate blocks to Australian who are trying to adopt. For example... The inequitable difference in fees due for people in NSW compared to other States can surely have no justification. The inappropriate restrictions on the body-mass of individuals in Queensland has no medical or moral backing and the restrictions on single applications for Queenslanders can have no moral grounds.

I ask that you provide a Nation wide guideline that irons out these inequities, not by sharing around those restrictions that have no solid basis, but by lifting the criteria-restrictions which are unreasonable and negating the very unreasonable fee-increases in NSW.

I also ask that the bias shown to birth-parents in Australia compared with Adoptive-parents in regards to benefits and entitlements is remedied.

Lastly, I must ask that you seriously consider the unfairness in the time that a single person must wait to be able to bring their child home - this is neither fair nor justified,

there are other countries willing for Australia to adopt from them, but the Government has not acted on completing these negotiations, and single people are left waiting for years, as we are only able to adopt from a very limited number of countries currently with agreements for single people to adopt.

I beg that you consider these issues carefully, and act upon them as is fair.

Yours truly

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