

From: Cathrin Cassarchis [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 21 April 2005 7:14 PM
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)
Subject: Inquiry into Adoption of children from overseas

Dear Sir/Madam

As a single applicant half-way through the process of adopting a child from China I would like to make some personal observations of my experience to date:

* While I have not felt the impact of variations in policy interstate to date I have concerns about issues that relate to long wait times, high costs, treatment of single applicants and lack of Government support. There should be consistency across states to ensure, for example, that relocating Australians are not penalised.

* While I appreciate that the process of adoption must necessarily be thorough, my experience has not been that adoptive parents are properly nurtured through the process. This I find discriminatory. As a professional person I am offended when a process of such a personal nature is dealt with impersonally and insensitively, with lack of due care to the needs and feelings of applicants. If adoption were classified as a medical condition the treatment of 'patients' could be likened to that of 50 years ago! This is unacceptable. I ask myself who within the system is championing the rights of adoptive parents?

* The process of adopting is an expensive business. This should be recognised by Government who should treat adoptive parents in every respect in the same way as biological parents. Not to do so expressly discriminates against the adopted child. Adoptive parents should therefore be entitled to comparable parental benefits in relation to tax relief, child bonuses etc.

* In approving families for adoption Government recognises applicants as persons of good standing able to lovingly care for and raise a child. In Australia today Government is increasingly looking to immigrants to bolster communities and fill critical job shortages. Adoption supports this need in a much more dynamic way, by bringing new Australian citizens to Australia when they are still very young, giving them the opportunity to grow up as Australians, feeling Australian and recognising Australia as their home. Government should recognise this as an additional service that adoptive parents perform for their country. Such recognition should translate to tax incentives/financial bonuses that support a family during the difficult and often lengthy adjustment period

when families are getting to know each other and attach to each other, striving to become a close family unit.

As a single applicant I would like to add the following:

* I have some concerns about discriminatory practice against single applicants. While single applicants are eligible in Western Australia they are not always treated with the same respect and afforded the same rights - a clear dichotomy. In today's society where the nuclear family is but one type of family unit, single adoptive applicants should be welcomed as long as they meet all the criteria applicable to couples.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views.

Yours sincerely

Cathrin Cassarchis

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Applying as a single parent for a child from China