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Yvonne Barbara Wickham

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19 April 2005

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission to Inquiry into Adoption of Children from Overseas

I wish to comment on Items 1 and 2 under "Terms of Reference".

1. *Any inconsistencies between State and Territory approval processes for overseas adoptions.*

Comment

Here in Queensland the Department of Family Services conducts 3 monthly checks on the child for 12 months after placement before the child's adoption can be become legal. These checks occur even when some overseas countries have already legalised the adoption and when adopted parents have already undergone intense checking.

2. *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.*

Argument for:

1. The existing 26 weeks time limit is too short because overseas adoption can take up to 18 months to finalise.
2. The cost of overseas adoption is high (between \$20,000 - \$30,000) so the baby bonus (\$3,000) would be a welcome contribution to parents expenses.
3. The Australian medical system does not incur costs of child birth when children are adopted from overseas.

The Minister for Family & Community Services, Kay Paterson, stated on radio in early March that she is aware of the situation.

I request that the Standing Committee advises Federal Government to amend the present legislation to allow parents of adopted children from overseas access to the baby bonus beyond the existing 26 weeks age limit.

Submitted by: Yvonne Barbara Wickham