

SUBMISSION NO. 162AUTHORISED: 1-6-05 *IndDWH*

Qld

May 6, 2005

Submission to the Parliamentary enquiry into Intercountry Adoption

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The following are urgently needed for intercountry adoption in Australia.

1. A central regulating body.
2. An accreditation system
3. An alternative accredited body to that run by the State Governments

Our major concerns are

1. A lack of accountability
2. Inability to process adoption applications at the rate in which applications are being made.
3. Inability to meet a sufficiently high standard of understanding of adoption issues.
4. Convoluted administration system.
5. Inability to maintain and build relationships with foreign adoption agencies.

The Hague Convention has a two tiered system of Central Authorities and accredited bodies. In Queensland and in all States and Territories except South Australia until 30th June 2005 the role of Central Authority and accredited body is fulfilled by the various State Government relevant departments. (The South Australian State Government is withdrawing its accreditation from that point).

The result of this is the effect of having an accredited body that makes up its own rules. In turn a number of things happen the most significant being that they become a law unto themselves. In Queensland this has resulted in a significant lowering of standards.

Under the Hague Convention it reads in Article 11 "An accredited body shall - b be directed and staffed by persons qualified by their ethical standards and by training or experience to work in Intercountry adoption." In Queensland because there is no regulating body there are no guide lines as to how that is to be fulfilled resulting in persons being involved whose training or experience in adoption is highly questionable. A social work degree does not qualify someone to work in adoptions.

In Queensland home studies are done by "Adoption Contract Workers" (ACW's) some of these have many years of experience in intercountry adoption. These are our professionals

I encourage continuing debate on the issue.