

SUBMISSION NO. 4

AUTHORISED: 9/8/05

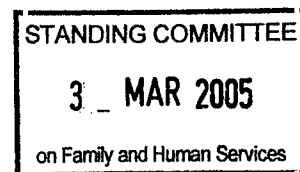
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Your Ref:

Our Ref: GWF:RG

16 February 2005

Hon Bronwyn Bishop MP
Chairman
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Ms Bishop

I note in media reports that Government backbenchers at their meeting on 15 February have called for legislative and administrative changes to make the adoption of children from overseas easier and that your Committee is looking at this issue and may recommend a parliamentary inquiry into the issue.

Certainly, I can assure you that these concerns are valid and that the confusing and complex laws – Territory, State and Federal - make overseas adoptions an expensive and time-consuming matter for couples who are inspired by the finest and most loving of intentions.

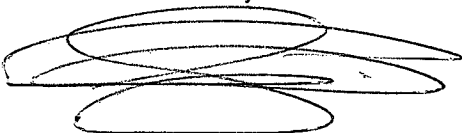
The shocking tsunami disaster as well as continuing civil unrest, poverty and deprivation in much of the developing world have meant that many children have been deprived of caring and loving parents and it is deeply regrettable, to say the least, that Australian couples who wish to adopt are frustrated by red tape at all levels of Government.

Media reports have noted that it can take up to four years and cost between \$25,000 and \$45,000 to adopt a child depending on which country the child comes from and I am sure that you would agree that this situation is in nobody's interest whatsoever - least of all the interests of the prospective adoptees.

I urge you to take every step necessary to ensure that costly and lengthy administrative delays are resolved and that the wonderful spirit that all Australians have shown recently in their response to the tsunami disaster is reflected by a humane adoption regime which allows needy children to have loving Australian parents as soon as is practicable.

This issue concerns lawyers who work in this area as much as it concerns your parliamentary colleagues.

Yours sincerely



Glenn W Ferguson
President, Queensland Law Society
President, Immigration Lawyers Association of Australasia