

From: Berenice Holmes [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, 22 April 2005 11:05 AM  
To: Committee, FHS (REPS)  
Subject: International Adoption of children

I would like to quickly outline my views in this issue.

### **Intercountry Adoption**

These children become Citizens of Australia, so why do people have to apply through state governments? We have to go through Australian government Immigration channels and the children are issued Australian passports. Surely the whole process should be a Federal Government responsibility.

My husband and I adopted two children aged 6 and 4, from Ethiopia in late in 2002. We are fortunate to already have our children as I would hate to be waiting on the list now. I will not list the statistics here because I know others have already done this. We applied through the Queensland Government over 4 years earlier. We never understood why we would be applying to the state government. In that long and agonising waiting period we often read about or spoke to parents, who had been allocated children in half the time, in other states of Australia. We read of couples who had uprooted their families and risked their livelihoods to move interstate for the sole reason of adopting a child from overseas because the Queensland system was so slow. Why should this be necessary? Surely, all Australians should have access to the same system, and have the same rights.

The Queensland Government only has adoption agreements with 6 countries - some of these programmes are 'closed' from time to time with no chance of any allocations of children happening and applicants then have to change countries mid-process. Again, I find it unbelievable that this isn't the job of the federal government to set up these agreements and make sure the program is scrupulous and above board with the best interests of the children involved in mind and to make sure that the nominated children are those in real need.

We believe the system needs to change.

Yours sincerely,

Michael and Berenice Holmes

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