

The Secretary,
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services

Re: Inquiry into the Adoption of Children from Overseas.

To the Committee,

In the light of recent legal information recieved from the Department responsible for intercountry adoptions here in Queensland, we are unable to publish information about the adoption process. Unfortunatley due to this and threats of fines and possible imprisonment we must request that our names be withheld.

1. ***Lengthy process***. We are Adoptive parents of a Korean born son who joined our family in 2004. The time in which it took from expression of interest until we arrived home in Australia as a family took about 2 and half years which by QLD standards was quite fast but yet still too long. To my knowledge other States / Territories have been able to process files in less than half this time. Families wanting a quicker result have had to move interstate at great expense to them, yet it was necessary due to age restraints that were in place.
2. ***Age***. In past submissions the upper age limit has been addressed. On the other hand discrimination is occurring with those who have been told they are too young and could wait. When my wife and I married in our early 20's we decided to have children soon after. Unfortunately infertility put an end to our dreams of having biological children. Whilst we were processed in chronological order, the system in QLD has now changed whereby the department responsible can choose at their discretion the order in which couples are assessed. One couple we know in QLD have been told that they were still young (30ish) and they have been told that they had to wait. If couples discover their inability to have their own biological children whilst they are still young should not be penalised and put on the back burner when they choose to adopt.
3. ***Expense***. Our desire to have a family is immense and so too has been the expense. In an attempt to have a family we first went through the process of costly IVF. After more than seven years of treatment and many tears we left the program without joy only to shed many more tears of pain as we struggled through the process of inter-country adoption. With most of our savings exhausted on IVF, we were now faced with the mammoth task of saving \$20,000+ for each adoption. When we first discussed having a family we agreed that 3 to 4 children would be great. Now 2 children is the

most we will ever have simply because of the costs associated with adoption, and this is only achieved through great sacrifice and at a great financial burden, something that couples who are blessed to have biological children don't even have to consider. Taxation relief on expenses associated with adoption should be considered. Whilst other families can enjoy government services at no cost to them, it seems that those who wish to utilize the state government funded inter-country adoption service have to pay. Why is this so?

4. ***Baby Bonus***. We travelled to Korea with another family from Brisbane to pick up or sons. Their son was 5 days older than ours. Whilst we were fortunate to receive the baby bonus, they were not. There is no equality with the 26 week of age cut off. As far as I am concerned there is expense incurred whether you give birth to a child, adopt one at age 5 months, 5 years or at any age.
5. ***Name Issues***. Fortunately here in QLD we are able to give our adopted sons/daughters a name of our choice. Speaking with couples from NSW, I believe that this is not the case. Once again no uniformity here. With much already taken from our control some of us are denied the opportunity to name our own children.

Overall we are pleased with the outcome of our adoption, we have a beautiful boy who we love so much. BUT the obstacles and burdens we have had to hurdle and endure could be reduced. We would appreciate any relief, preferably much relief and some equity that parents of biological children enjoy.

Parents of one very gorgeous Korean born son.