

*New South Wales***Committee on Adoption and Permanent Care Inc**Chairperson: Angharad Candlin
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**Submission to the
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services
Commonwealth Parliamentary Inquiry into the Adoption of Children from
Overseas**

The NSW Committee on Adoption and Permanent Care Inc ("The Committee") is a non-profit organisation, with membership comprising of government and non-government agencies, support groups and individuals interested in, involved in or affected by adoption and permanent care or related issues.

Terms of Reference

How the Australian Government can better assist Australians who are adopting or have adopted children from overseas countries (intercountry placement adoptions) with particular reference to:

- Any inconsistencies between state and territory approval processes for overseas adoptions; and
- 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

Approval Processes

It is difficult to address the issues pertaining to this Inquiry when the terms of reference are very broad and there is no additional documentation on the key points of concern. Even for professionals working within the adoption field there is no readily available summary of the specific approval processes in the different states and territories and it must be acknowledged that such professionals work largely within the parameters of their own state legislation. It would have been helpful if, as is the case for all other Inquiries, that a discussion paper be provided.

From the brief summary of legislation provided in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Adoptions Australia 2003-04 and from our own knowledge of these issues it would seem that possible areas of inconsistency are:

- Marital status
- Age of applicants
- Length of relationship
- Number of children already in the care of the applicants
- Australian citizenship
- Health
- Infertility
- Differences between eligibility criteria for domestic and Intercountry adoption
- Level of Court in which Adoption Orders are made

Benefits and Entitlements

Similarly, this Inquiry has not outlined the benefits and entitlements for families with birth or adopted children on which they would like comment and whilst this committee could assume that the benefits referred to might be, for example, the Baby Bonus or maternity and paternity leave, once again as there is no discussion paper it is difficult to specifically comment on these areas.

Conclusion

There is certainly merit in an Inquiry of this nature and this Committee would be more than happy to respond more extensively should additional information pertaining to the Terms of Reference be given. We do not believe, however, that it is not the role of respondents to an Inquiry to extensively research and provide the data which requires comment. We would also like to see the examination of the currently absent debate on inconsistencies between three groups: birth children, children adopted domestically and those adopted from overseas for each of the Terms of Reference.

Names of contributors:

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If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Angharad Candlin
Chairperson
NSW Committee on Adoption and Permanent Care

5th April 2005