

How the Federal Government can better assist adoptive parents



Immediate/Short Term

- 1) Maternity Allowance available to all adoptive parents.
Regardless of the age of the child when he/she enters the country, his/her parents should be able to receive this financial assistance. Set up costs are just as great for older children.
- 2) "Bounty Bag" (or adoption equivalent) be given to adoptive parents upon arrival of their child.
Adoptive parents need to be made aware of the benefits and services they are entitled to, and receive information necessary to gain all appropriate documents for their child.
- 3) National system for adding an adoptive child to Medicare card.
A simple, clear system needs to be in place so that adoptive parents can put their child on to their card as soon as they arrive in Australia.
- 4) Waive the \$1250 DIMIA immigration fee for adoptive children.
Australian families with birth children do not pay a fee upon the birth of their child, so adoptive families should not have to pay a fee for the arrival of their child. The paperwork required to process adoption visas is minimal, and so should not attract such a high fee.
- 5) Medicals should be subject to a Medicare rebate.
As part of the adoption process, parents have to undergo at least one medical assessment. They should be allowed to make a claim under Medicare for this assessment.

Short/Medium Term

- 1) Standardised/lower fees across the States and Territories.
Parents should not be discriminated against because of their income, providing they can show that they are financially able to support an adoptive child.
Intercountry adoption should not be the exclusive domain of the wealthy.
- 2) Introduction of an "Adoption Allowance", tax deductibility of fees, or tax rebate.
Australian and overseas costs for adoption can add up to the tens of thousands of dollars. Some sort of scheme to ease the burden of these costs on parents is needed.
- 3) Consultation in policy-making.
Adoptive families need to be represented at policy-making forums at all levels of government.