

Dear Committee

I am currently progressing through the process to adopt a child from overseas, I am a single woman, living in Sydney, NSW.

I know that the process is lengthy and costly, but it is apparent that although some of this cost and length of time is necessary - some of it is unnecessary and causes considerable difficulty and hardship for those trying to do one of the most basic things in life - form a family.

The costs in NSW are nearly \$10,000 to the NSW department - whereas other States charge much less costs - if these other States can function satisfactorily with lower costs - then why are the costs so high for NSW? HOWEVER - is the solution going to be that the cost is decreased - but NSW applicants have to struggle through longer and longer time frames due to over-stretched department workers?

I whole-heartedly agree that applicants should be chosen carefully, as there are now and have been in the past, people who have questionable motives in wanting to adopt a child. However - it seems that what different States of Australia feel are suitable checking processes differ greatly - and a person living in Qld may not be accepted whereas the same person might be accepted in another state.

Also - should such decisions be made on a State basis? Or should there be a National department that governs local offices?

Lastly, the inconsistencies between benefits available for natural families and families formed through adoption are grossly unfair. And in particular to say that because a child is adoption over the age of 2 means that their parent cannot receive the \$3000 benefit is most unfair.

I trust that the Committee will consider these matters carefully, keeping in mind the needs of the children to be adopted as well as those couples and singles who are wanting to form a family through adoption.

Thank you
Leanne Clark