

**From:** Rachel [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 9 May 2005 3:05 PM  
**To:** Committee, FHS (REPS)  
**Subject:** Inquiry into Adoption of Children from Overseas

**Rachel Griffiths & Bevin Meads**  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] WA [REDACTED]

**9<sup>th</sup> May 2005**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

**Re: Inquiry into Adoption of Children from Overseas**

1. Any inconsistencies between state and territory approval processes for overseas adoptions; and
2. 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.

**My name is Rachel and my partner's name is Bevin and we reside in WA. We have been in a 'defacto' relationship for 10 years and have 1 bio daughter who will be 3 very soon. Getting married is something we have always wanted to do and have just not gotten round to. Our daughter is the light of our lives and we hope to have another child very soon. We also sponsor 2 children (sibling group, girl 9, and boy 8) in an orphanage in Ukraine and would like very much to be able to offer these children a loving home. Though we have been told the following:**

***As we already know of the children, the adoption can not take place.***

**We would have thought that the fact that we have an already established long distance loving relationship with these children would be more important an aspect for consideration.**

***Australia does not have an agreement with Ukraine and Ukraine is not a Hague country.***

**NZ has a successful adoption agreement with Russia (a non Hague country) which has been in place since 1992, therefore why is it not possible to consider the setting up of similar agreements as there are hundreds of orphanages in Eastern European countries full of beautiful children needing a family.**

***In order to adopt we must go and live in Ukraine/overseas for over a year then we can adopt and bring them back to Australia (told this by DCD).***

**Why should we have to leave our home and upset our entire family?  
This is discrimination!!**

***The children we adopt must be younger than those already in the family***

**We fail to see what difference this makes! I am a product of a step-family where two families were integrated. In today's society families are made of up of many different mixtures of ages, races and family groups!**

**In general the adoption process in Australia is made very difficult and the countries available are very limiting. If we can not adopt our Ukraine children, we would be very interested in adopting children from Eastern Europe. Not so long ago a representative of Helen Brain's office laughed at me over the phone when I told her this, which I found very insulting. The representative stated quite categorically that only Asian countries were available and that we would be wasting our time otherwise!**

**The treatment we have received from the Departments in WA and Australia in general has left a very negative impression. Quite clearly if these Departments are to be the doorway to international adoption, they must be highly sensitive and appropriate in their manner of dealing with prospective adoptive parents.**

**The first contact a person makes with the Department/s can determine their views with regards to the adoption process ahead, and from what we have experienced just from the first interview, the impression left was not a positive one, in fact it seemed that the idea of adopting internationally was made as difficult as possible in order to put people off, especially those that had any personal opinions or were interested in countries not currently available!**

**We hope that you will take into consideration the complete adoption process, or rather lack of in Australia. We would like to see more countries available, and not be told that (you can pick a country, and then we will try and see if we can set up a program, but we can't guarantee it), so that 5 years down the track you are still waiting!**

**There are family's out there, like mine, who have no other reason for adoption, other than the fact that this is something they want to do, another way of adding to a family and giving a child/children a good, happy family home to grow up in. At the moment all I can say is that bureaucracy is getting in the way of this happening.**

**Yours faithfully, Rachel Griffiths and Bevin Meads**