



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Review

Queensland's current legislative and regulatory framework for adoption dates from 1964 and reflects many of the important values and issues at that time.

Until the mid-1970s, the State's adoption program focused on finding suitable adoptive families for the large number of infants requiring placements. Although a large number of people still seek to adopt children, only a small number of Queensland parents choose adoption to secure a permanent family for their children each year. In recent years, Queensland's participation in the intercountry adoption program has resulted in a significant number of children from overseas who require adoptive placements being adopted by families in Queensland.

The *Adoption of Children Act 1964* has been amended to respond to changing times and adoption practices, however, the Act has not been subject to a comprehensive review to ensure Queensland's adoption services are consistent with contemporary values and practices.

In October 2001, Cabinet endorsed the Department of Families' intention to conduct an internal review of the *Adoption of Children Act 1964*, recognising the need to develop a legislative framework to support contemporary, child-focused and efficient adoption practice in Queensland. Cabinet also authorised the preparation of initial amendments to the Act to ensure efficient and optimal support for children requiring adoptive placements while the Review was undertaken.

1.2 Terms of Reference for the Review of adoption legislation

The Review will:

- Research and analyse significant issues affecting the provision of quality adoption services.
- Identify and develop appropriate responses that:
 - › provide a framework for contemporary, child-focused adoption legislation in Queensland that comparable with adoption legislation in other Australian jurisdictions;
 - › support efficient and accountable practice in the delivery of child-focused adoption services and business practices;
 - › promote the welfare and best interests of the adopted person throughout his/her life; and
 - › ensure adoption legislation and practice in Queensland complies with Australia's obligations under relevant bilateral agreements and international conventions.
- Identify implications for departmental practice, human resources and information technology and develop strategies to support the implementation of new legislation.

Note: The Government retains its policy in relation to the provision of identifying information and contact, and the capacity to object to the provision of identifying information and contact, as reflected in sections 39AA, 39B, 39C, and 39D of the *Adoption of Children Act 1964*.

1.3 Aims of the consultation paper

The Adoption Legislation Review consultation paper aims to:

- provide information about the Adoption Legislation Review to adoption stakeholders and interested persons in the community;
- promote discussion of issues relevant to developing a framework for contemporary, child-focused adoption practice in Queensland;
- provide information about options, where specific options have been identified, and seek community feedback about them; and
- provide an opportunity for stakeholders and interested community members to give feedback to help draft contemporary adoption legislation.

1.4 Contributing to the Review

Submissions relating to issues raised in the consultation paper or within the review's Terms of Reference are invited from anyone affected by adoption in Queensland and other interested people.

This consultation paper covers many important issues and is quite lengthy. It has been structured so readers can find information about the issues of concern to them without reading the entire document, so some information may be duplicated although this has minimised as much as possible.

Submissions or feedback may be received on some or all of the issues raised in the consultation paper.

The questions highlighted in each chapter are listed in a detachable feedback form at the back of the consultation paper. It provides space for comments about each question as well as other feedback.

Community submissions and feedback will provide a valuable source of information for the review and will be used to develop future adoption legislation. Comments by individuals may be quoted in the review report which will be completed at the conclusion of the review and made available to the public. Contributors to the review can request their contribution, or parts thereof, remains confidential.

Submissions and completed feedback forms will be received until 28 October 2002 and should be forwarded to:

Adoption Legislation Review
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1.5 Acknowledgments

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