



23 and 24 November 2015

## **Intercountry Adoption Central Authorities Meeting**

### ***Communiqué***

The Australian, state and territory central authorities for intercountry adoption, together with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) met on 23 and 24 November 2015. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the New Zealand Central Authority also attended parts of the meeting.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Attendees participated in a preparatory discussion on reviewing the *Commonwealth–State Agreement for the Continued Operation of Australia’s Intercountry Adoption Program*. Discussion also took place on identifying operational enhancements in the intercountry adoption process.

### **Country programme update**

The Attorney-General’s Department (AGD) provided an update on the commencement of new programmes with Poland and Latvia ([announced on 9 November 2015](#)) and reported on a delegation visit to the Philippines and Thailand in September 2015. Attendees discussed a number of operational programme issues including processes, timeframes and the profile of children in need. Challenges associated with relative adoptions were also shared.

Central authorities also discussed the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea and Taiwan quotas, emphasising the importance of filling quotas within the required timeframes and across jurisdictions to ensure quota allocations are fully utilised.

AGD also reported on a delegation visit to Bulgaria in early November 2015 to discuss the possibility of a new intercountry adoption programme.

### **Australian Government updates**

DSS reported on the operation of the Intercountry Adoption Australia support service, including information on how the service is being utilised. DSS outlined a number of existing and proposed research projects, including post-adoption support, and discussed the recent announcement of family support services to help families and children that are going through the intercountry adoption process.

DSS presented a prototype eligibility calculator that is being developed based on work previously undertaken in Victoria. DSS will continue to work with states and territories to agree business requirements. The tool is expected to be made publicly available from early 2016.

DFAT informed attendees of the posting of officers to China and South Korea to provide support on intercountry adoption issues within the region. DIBP informed attendees that dedicated intercountry adoption officers were now located in Hong Kong, Manila, Seoul, Bangkok and Chile to assist families in-country in relation to the adoption visa and Australian citizenship processes.



**Australian Government**

---

**Department of Social Services**

AIHW provided an update on the preparation of the 2014–15 *Adoptions Australia* report and national data development work on adoption and related issues.

State and territory central authorities also provided updates on key developments in each jurisdiction.

### **Update from the International Social Service (ISS)**

A representative from the ISS International Resource Centre in Geneva provided attendees with information about the services available to central authorities and professionals working in the adoption area. ISS provided an update on the efforts of a number of countries to implement international standards related to the alternative care of children. ISS also outlined a number of key ongoing special projects, including illegal adoptions and adoption breakdown.