



Intercountry Adoption Central Authorities Meeting Communiqué

The Australian Central Authority for intercountry adoption - the Department of Social Services (DSS) - and State and Territory Central Authorities (STCA), met on 26 March 2020 via teleconference.

Representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) also attended. The Department of Home Affairs was unable to attend and provided a written update.

Roles and responsibilities

Attendees discussed actions arising from the STCA Teleconference on 31 October 2019 and reviewed priority areas within the National Action Plan and National Work Schedule of the Commonwealth-State Agreement for the Continued Operation of Australia's Intercountry Adoption Program.

Updates from Australian governments

DSS provided updates on key program and policy developments concerning matters of national intercountry adoption policy and country program management.

STCAs provided updates on key developments in each jurisdiction.

The Home Affairs written update covered matters relating to policy and legislative work associated with the *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946*.

Attendees discussed and acknowledged the impacts of COVID-19 on service delivery for the next 6 to 12 months.

Country program updates

Attendees discussed several country program matters.

Queensland and the Northern Territory central authorities, who are currently participating in the reactivation of the India Program, provided progress updates.

DSS provided an update on the hold on the Philippines Program.

Attendees agreed a schedule for country program reviews to be completed in the coming 12 months.

Policy and National Practice Agreements

Attendees recognised the need for further work around complex issues associated with ad hoc, relative, known non-relative, subsequent sibling and expatriate adoptions. A working group will be established to focus on re-drafting the existing National Practice Agreements to better support assessment and decision making processes for these types of adoption requests.

DSS reiterated Australia's policy position regarding requests for Letters of No Objection (LNO) in support of expatriate adoptions.

Post-Adoption Support

DSS discussed the preliminary findings of its Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service (ICAFSS) consultation supporting the re-design of the service.