



Speech by

**Liz Cunningham**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2007

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## OVERSEAS ADOPTION

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (5.14 pm): Proposed changes to overseas adoption fees will place the process out of the reach of many loving families who wish to open their hearts and homes to children who need a stable, loving environment in which to grow and mature. I would like to quote from a letter I received from a local constituent which states—

Adoption services are run by the Department of Child Safety. Adopting parents pay fees and charges whereas other customers using their services and/or other government services do not have to pay a cent.

Parents adopting locally currently pay \$541.65 in departmental fees and charges. The fees/charges for parents adopting overseas are \$2053. The assessment process is the same for both types of adoption so we question why people adopting overseas have been paying almost 4 times more than people adopting locally? This could be seen as discriminatory. If that's not bad enough, we have just been informed that the fees for overseas adoption are being increased by 250%, rising from \$2053 to \$5060, whilst local adoption fees will be retained at \$541.65. Why are the charges not indexed to a CPI of 2.1% as promised in 2002? Will the service provided by the Department of Child Safety improve with the rise?

It is important to us and other families to find out why this situation exists in Queensland and to receive an explanation of how these funds are being dispersed.

A lot of people are childless and desperate to become parents through intercountry adoption but cannot afford it. Isn't it hard enough to face infertility? It seems like the government thinks that only well off people make good parents!

The couples I know who have applied for overseas adoptions have done so out of an abundance of compassion, not an abundance of cash. They want to see their families completed, in their view, with children, and for varying reasons they apply for adoption overseas. Whilst they will accept that some charges must apply, they are calling for those charges to be fair and reasonable. The proposed fee increases cannot be accepted and I call on the minister and members of this House to strenuously oppose the proposed fee hikes contained in the RIS that is currently out for comment.