

Question on Notice
No. 886
Asked on 19 August 2004

MRS L CUNNINGHAM asked the Minister for Child Safety (MR REYNOLDS)-

QUESTION:

With reference to both domestic and overseas adoption (by separate category), since 30 June 2002 and for each year to date –

How many adoptions have been completed and how many are waiting to be processed?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and for her interest in the area of adoption. As detailed in table one below 134 adoptions have been completed in Queensland in the last two years. In addition to this another 59 prospective adoptive parents have been placed with children on interim orders or are under supervision, bringing to nearly 200 the number of children who have been placed in Queensland in the last two years.

The Member may also be interested to know that Queensland families wishing to adopt children from within the state or overseas are able to express their interest in being assessed as prospective adoptive parents following the recent re-opening of bcal and intercountry adoptions registers.

The call for new expressions follows my recent announcement that Queensland couples wishing to be assessed as adoptive parents will not be prevented from expressing interest because of arbitrary age limits.

I have amended the Adoption of Children Regulation 1999 to completely remove maximum age limits from the eligibility criteria for all categories of adoption in Queensland, however applicants wishing to adopt a child from overseas will still need to meet any age requirements set by the country from which they are hoping to adopt.

As a result of changing societal values and the supports now available to parents, there are less and less Queensland children needing adoptive families, and to a growing extent, fewer overseas children whose needs cannot be met in their home countries.

Overseas nations determine the number of children for whom placements are required in Australia and seek overseas adoptive families if no placement can be found in their own country.

Some countries, such as South Korea, are decreasing the number of adoptive placements in other countries in an attempt to find more local placements for Korean children.

Table 1 - number of adoptions completed since 30 June 2002.

Year	Completed Adoptions	
	General Children's Relative Children's and Special Needs Children Adoption	Intercountry
2002-2003	38	29
2003-2004	16	49

1 July 2004 – 24 August 2004	2	0
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Table 2 - number of couples with names entered on the Expression of Interest Register seeking to be assessed as prospective adoptive parents.

As at Date	Expression of Interest Register			
	General Children's Adoption Program	Relative Children's Adoptions Program	Special Needs Children	Intercountry
30 June 2002	273	135	9	505
30 June 2003	130	119	13	280
30 June 2004	111	126	14	160 (note 1)
24 August 2004	107	126	16	147 (note 1)

Note 1 – includes 110 couples who have requested that their applications be postponed.

General Children's Adoption Program

As at 24 August 2004, of the 107 couples with names entered in the Expression of Interest Register seeking to be assessed as prospective adoptive parents, 15 couples had been favourably assessed as prospective adoptive parents for children in Queensland requiring placement under the General Children's Adoption program. Couples who have been approved as prospective adoptive parents and whose names are entered in the Assessment Register may be considered for the placement of a child requiring an adoptive placement. The couple best able to meet the individual child's needs is matched with the child.

Relative Children's Adoption Program

As at 30 June 2004, of the 126 applicants with their names entered in the Relative Children's Adoption List seeking to adopt their step-children, the Department of Child Safety is actively progressing 61 applicants.

Special Needs Children's Adoption Program

Applicants for adoption of a special needs child in Queensland are only assessed when a child with specific needs the applicant is seeking to adopt requires placement.

Intercountry Adoption Program

Queensland works with thirteen overseas countries. A number of the countries have restrictions on the number of files they require, including:

- Korea - 17 files in 2004
- Taiwan - up to 6 files each half year;
- Ethiopia - 7 files in country at any one time; and
- Thailand – 3 files for 2004.

The programs for Fiji, Colombia, Hong Kong (special needs placements only), Lithuania and Mexico are small, with lengthy waiting periods. Romania has recently closed its program.

As at 30 June 2004, there were 120 couples on the Intercountry Assessment Register having been favourable assessed as suitable prospective adoptive parents. Of these, 59 couples had been placed with a child and were on Interim Orders or were under supervision and 61 couples have been assessed and are awaiting placement of a child.

Between 1 July 2004 and 24 August 2004, a further 13 couples have been approved as prospective adoptive parents and their names placed on the Intercountry Assessment Register.