



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

18 March 2022

To Whom It May Concern

I have had the opportunity and privilege to work in partnership with Ms Lynelle Long, Founding Director InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV), since August 2019. I engaged with Ms Long in my capacity as Director, Intercountry Adoption, Department of Social Services.

I am aware Lynelle has spent over 24 years building an extensive worldwide network among the intercountry adoptee community, to connect with, advocate for, and elevate the intercountry adoptee voice around the world. Under Lynelle's leadership this network has been successful in influencing international and domestic policies, practices and programs that affect their lives.

Lynelle is highly respected with a reputation for proactively and constructively working with a broad range of stakeholders to achieve real and lasting change.

From international bodies like the *Permanente Bureau of The Hague Conference on Private International Law*, to Government authorities in a range of countries, to NGOs delivering support services, and international and local adoptee-led groups, Lynelle is adept at drawing people and stakeholders together to foster understanding and address challenging issues.

Here in Australia, Lynelle has been instrumental in driving the reform of intercountry adoption practice and the delivery of support services – shifting the focus away from prioritising family formation to a much clearer focus on the best interest of the child, consistent with Australia's international law obligations, and the life-long support needs of adoptees and their families. This has included influencing Government to invest in free psychological counselling for all intercountry adoptees in Australia, and providing access to an information and referral line.

In more recent times, Lynelle has worked in close partnership with the Australian Government to ensure Government funded services, supports and resources are fit for purpose. I have observed Ms Long leverage the significant social capital she has cultivated to constructively contribute to Government consultation and submission processes, always ensuring the voice of adoptees are at the centre of the issues and challenges raised.

It is worth noting Lynelle's commitment to contributing advocacy leadership as Founding Director of ICAV is done so without funding support.

Lynelle is to be particularly congratulated on a recent funded project in which she delivered an outstanding video resource, designed by intercountry adoptees for intercountry adoptees and the professionals they interact with.

Lynelle drew on an extensive skill set from which she authored a successful funding proposal, developed and managed a complex project plan, recruited and supported people with lived-experience to create the resource content, and undertook trauma-informed wellbeing support with project participants.

In addition to this, Lynelle took initiative to successfully negotiating additional funding to maximise the value of material captured but not used in the initial project resource.

As part of Lynelle's reflective practice, she undertook a lessons-learnt process that among other things identified an unintended benefit of the project. Participants experienced healing through their participation, by being offered the opportunity to have a voice, by being listened to and being heard. This outcome was a credit to Lynelle's professional and empathic approach to her management of the project and her engagement with the participants. Lynelle captured this benefit in her project reporting, adding to the evidence base of what works.

I would have no hesitation in recommending Lynelle for roles that would benefit from the skills and attributes Lynelle possesses, and would welcome the opportunity to provide further comment if that would be useful.

Sincere Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rowena Freeland', written in a cursive style.

Rowena Freeland
Director
Department of Social Services