

Discussion guide

Welcome and introductions

Thank you so much for making the time to talk to me.

As you know, this consultation is part of an evaluation of the Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS) that has been commissioned by the Australian Federal Government Department of Social Services. The department fund ICAFSS and would like to understand whether this program is working well, and if any improvements can be made. This service is not the same as the State based post adoption supports like VANISH (VIC), PARC (NSW), Jigsaw and PASQ (QLD), ARCS and Jigsaw (WA), PASS (SA). State based services are funded by the State governments.

I am working with Whereto who holds the contract with the department.

Whereto are speaking with Relationships Australia South Australia (the organisation responsible delivering ICAFSS), and ICAFSS clients to understand if the service is meeting the needs of the intercountry adoptee community. Today's consultation is an attempt to help make sure that the views of adoptees also inform the evaluation report.

- If you have any experience of ICAFSS, we would be interested in understanding your views on the service (if you feel comfortable sharing these). We are also interested in general views of whether the service is heading in the right direction. Don't worry if you don't know anything about ICAFSS, I will share some information with you to support the conversation.

We are keen to get your views on the:

- ICAFSS principles:
 - Whether these still resonate
 - What meaningful engagement with adoptees in program implementation should involve
- Most important focus for ICAFSS, including whether the current service mix is right.
- Barriers and enablers to take up of ICAFSS:
 - And the best way to promote ICAFSS so that people who would like to access the service know about it.

I am here to listen and take notes and make sure I understand your point of view. If it is okay with you, we will also tape the session to make sure we don't miss out on anything. If everyone in the room is comfortable with this, I will pass on the recording to Whereto so that they can include your feedback in their report. When Whereto reports back to the department, they will not mention names or any stories that might identify anyone. Please let me know if anything you say today is 'off the record' (e.g. it is information that can be shared with Whereto for their background, but should not appear in the report).

Throughout our discussion some difficult topics may arise, so I just want to say, if you want to stop at any time, just let me know. You don't need to discuss any issues you are uncomfortable with and can take a break and come back to us or decide that you don't want to continue at all. This conversation is in your hands.

I also wanted to remind you that you only need to share as much information as you feel comfortable with.

Does anyone have any questions for me?

Introductions

As appropriate.

Discussion of ICAFSS

Unprompted

Has anyone heard much about ICAFSS before? Where did you hear about ICAFSS? What did you hear? (*Tease out fully*)

If you haven't heard about ICAFSS, what does the name suggest? (*Tease out fully*)

ICAFFSS

In November 2020 an open competitive grant opportunity was run by the Aust Federal Government Department DSS to determine the provider of the redesigned ICAFSS. Relationships Australia SA (RASA) was selected as the successful provider to deliver the services from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2026.

The service is available to intercountry adoptees (children, young people and adults), adoptive parents of children adopted from overseas or expatriate adoptions, family members of intercountry adoptees, and anyone who is going through the intercountry adoption process.

RASA offers:

- Individual and family counselling
- Case management and casework support
- Therapeutic groups
- Parenting support
- Small grants and bursaries scheme
- Referral to other support services where required
- Education and training for allied health and community workers.

The service is free and confidential.

The funding of the service is 4.75 million AUD over 5 years¹ and of that, \$50,000 is allocated per year to the Small Grants and Bursaries program. We assume majority of the funding goes towards therapeutic services.

The design principles outlined in the ICAFSS guidelines are:

Services must be offered in a way that means:

- clients drive the type and direction of support
- clients are the expert in their own life
- service delivery is flexible and tailored to the individual needs of each person
- services are clear about what they do and how they do it
- feedback loops and ways to improve the service are built into its delivery.

¹ <https://nt.relationships.org.au/news-articles/relationships-australia-new-provider-intercountry-adoptive-and-family-support-service>

Prompted

Understanding the design principles of ICAFSS, prompt on the continuing relevance of the design principles, and focus for the service.

- How do you feel about the ICAFSS design principles?
 - Do these still feel relevant? Is anything missing?
 - What should these principles look like in action? *(If anyone has had experience of ICAFSS and feels comfortable sharing, did the service live up to these design principles? Why or why not?)*
 - What would we expect RASA to do to ensure that adoptees can contribute meaningfully to the ongoing design and implementation of the ICAFSS service?
- How do you feel about the ICAFSS service? *(If anyone has accessed the ICAFSS service, they might feel comfortable explaining the service more fully to the group...)*
 - Why is each element important (or not)?
 - Do you have questions about what is or isn't covered by the existing ICAFSS?
 - Is anything missing? What is this? Why is this important to include?
 - If you accessed the ICAFSS service in the past when Relationship Matters had it, do you see the current service under RASA as better or worse? In what ways?
 - If you accessed the ICAFSS service in the past with Relationship Matters, do you have any feedback on the transition and how this needs to improve next time once the RASA contract expires?
 - Do you feel that RASA has sufficiently promoted ICAFSS? Is it nationally accessible?

Barriers and enablers

- What do you feel are the barriers to accessing ICAFSS are? *(Encourage list of barriers and establish reasons for this)*
- I would like to get your thoughts on what could be done to improve access to ICAFSS. For example, is this about:
 - Awareness that the service exists?
 - Awareness of other services (State based vs Federal) that are similar and how they are different or not to ICAFSS?
 - Knowing that the service is adoptee informed?
 - Different types of services than are currently available?
 - Anything else?

How might we practically go about making these improvements?

Anything else

Is there anything else you think it is important that the department know about the ICAFSS service? What is this?

Close

That was great. Really useful. How are you feeling about what we've covered? (Moderators to look for any signs any participant is not feeling comfortable).

Again, thank you so much for taking part.