

The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Social Services
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

15 March 2018

Funding of ISS Australia's Intercountry Adoption Tracing & Reunification Service

Dear Minister Tehan

We are writing in response to the decision by DSS to no longer fund the Intercountry Adoption Tracing and Reunification Service (ICATRS) for Australian citizens who are intercountry adoptees.

We are members of the Advisory Group to this service and have recognised expertise in the field of intercountry adoption in Australia. Our expertise covers decades of being involved in intercountry adoption research, policy and practice in Australia.

The provision of 'enhanced post adoption support services' to those impacted by intercountry adoption was Recommendation 6 of the Commonwealth Government's *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Intercountry Adoption (7 April 2014)*. Assistance with search and reunion is widely recognised as essential to post adoption support. Such services were also directly proposed by adult intercountry adoptees to the Prime Minister's advisors on 27 April 2015, and to the DSS on 22 June 2015. Both meetings reiterated the importance of recognising the lifelong journey of adoption and the importance of support to enhance positive outcomes. It was a 'world's first' leadership action by the Commonwealth Government to recognise this by providing funding for both counselling *and* search/reunion services. It was also concrete action confirming our obligations as a signatory country to *The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*.

Since its inception, the Intercountry Adoption Tracing & Reunification Service (ICATRS) has seen a significant uptake by adoptive families and adult intercountry adoptees, confirming the demand for the nationally-funded service.

We are disappointed with the latest decision and appeal to you directly as the Minister to do whatever you can to review this decision and ensure the continuity of this invaluable service.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter as we believe wholeheartedly in the importance of this service and its positive impact on the lives of those whom it serves.

Yours sincerely

Advisory Group to ISS Australia's Intercountry Adoption Tracing and Reunification Service (ICATRS)

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