

The Hon. P.D. Cummins AM
Chair
Victorian Law Reform Commission
Level 3, 333 Queen Street,
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Phillip,

I write in support, to the review of the adoption act, of the submission written by Dr. Briony Horsfall, Adjunct Research Fellow at Swinburne University of Technology.

Her submission contains a number of responses that are similar to those in the GPV/KCV submission. However, one in suggestion in her submission is worthy of close support: that adoption services in Victoria be proved by an independent, non-religious statutory organisation.

GPV/KCV agrees that such an authority would ensure services were non-discriminatory, subject to appropriate complaint mechanisms and held accountable through regulatory oversight. We also agreed that the role of such an authority should include provision of:

- **An Adoption Registry** containing details of adoptions made in Victoria
- **An Adoption Linking Service** to manage access to non-identifiable and identifiable information for adopted children, biological parents, adoptive parents, extended biological family members, and future family members of the adopted child
- **Pre-adoption and post-adoption support services**, including counselling for any child and their adoptive or biological family
- **An adoption contact service**, where supervised face-to-face contact or non-face-to-face contact (e.g., letters) may be managed and supported
- **Therapeutic programs** to support birth parents on how to manage post-adoption contact
- **A family finding service**, this is particularly important before any final decisions about adoption are made and will assist in ensuring that the extended family has a role in the decision making.

The promise of such an authority does not mean that the GPV/KCV concerns about adoption expressed in our submission are acquitted. However, once a biological family friendly and cautious approach to adoption is framed in legislation the work of such an independent authority would contribute much to the implementation of adoption procedures and encourage the ongoing wellbeing of children.

Yours sincerely,



Anne L McLeish OAM
Director

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