



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services

# Discussion Paper

Capturing the voices of the intercountry adoption  
community in the redesign of the  
Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service



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# 1. Purpose of this Discussion Paper

## 1.1 Background

In Australia, the [Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption](#) (the Hague Convention) governs intercountry adoption. It aims to protect children and their families against the risks of illegal, irregular, premature or ill-prepared adoptions abroad.

Each country that signs the Hague Convention needs to have a central authority to implement its standards. In Australia, responsibility for implementing the Hague Convention standards is shared across the Australian Government and state and territory governments, with a focus on meeting the best interests of the child.

State and territory governments are responsible for providing post-adoption support. There are also a number of non-government organisations that provide post-adoption support services for individuals and families. Complementing these existing services, the Commonwealth provides the Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service (ICAFSS) for intercountry adoptees, their families and prospective adoptive parents.

The ICAFSS is funded by the Australian Government and managed by the Department of Social Services (DSS). The ICAFSS is a free, national service that provides post-adoption support for adoptees and families formed by intercountry adoption, including adoptions by expatriate Australians. The ICAFSS also provides support to individuals and couples before and during the intercountry adoption process.

Further details on the aims of the ICAFSS and responsibilities of the Australian Government and state and territory central authorities are at [Annex A](#).

## 1.2 Aims of the consultation

The Government has heard calls from the intercountry adoption sector, particularly adult adoptees, for greater involvement in service design and development. In response to these calls, the Government is holding consultations to ensure that the ICAFSS continues to meet the needs of those who have experienced intercountry adoption.

This consultation aims to capture the voices of the intercountry adoption community in the redesign of the service, recognising the significant benefits gained from the involvement of those with lived experience.

To ensure that the ICAFSS continues to meet the needs of the community, we encourage responses to the Discussion Paper from adoptees and their families, prospective adoptive parents, service providers, professionals, academics and other stakeholders.

### 1.3 Supports

If you or a family member need immediate help or counselling, contact [Lifeline](#) on **13 11 14** or [beyondblue](#) on **1300 224 636**.

You can access intercountry adoption counselling support through the ICAFSS by calling the Intercountry Adoption Support Team on **1300 543 396** or emailing [icasupport@relationshipmatters.com.au](mailto:icasupport@relationshipmatters.com.au). More information can be found on Relationship Matters' [website](#).

### 1.4 Your response to the Discussion Paper

We are seeking your ideas on the questions in this Discussion Paper. Your feedback will inform the design of a revised ICAFSS, which will be available to adoptees and their families from July 2021.

Your experiences and ideas will help us improve the existing service to ensure that people involved in intercountry adoption receive appropriate support throughout their lives.

Responses to the Discussion Paper will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the DSS Privacy Policy. If you are comfortable with DSS contacting you to discuss your comments, please indicate below:

- Yes/ No
  - If yes, please provide your preferred contact details.

Responses to the Discussion Paper can be made public on the DSS Engage website. Are you happy for DSS to publish your response?

- Yes/ No

You are invited to contribute to this discussion by visiting [DSS Engage](#) and searching 'Consultation on the Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service'. Alternatively, hard copy responses can be sent to:

Intercountry Adoption  
GPO Box 9820  
CANBERRA ACT 2610

There will also be targeted consultations on the proposed direction of the ICAFSS. If you have any questions please contact: [ICAPrograms@dss.gov.au](mailto:ICAPrograms@dss.gov.au).

## 1.5 Milestones

Milestone	Timeframe
Discussion Paper open for responses	Tuesday 4 February 2020
Discussion Paper closes	Friday 13 March 2020
Targeted consultations	February – March 2020

## 1.6 The reason for redesign – Independent review of the ICAFSS

In June 2019, the Australian Healthcare Associates conducted an independent evaluation into the effectiveness and appropriateness of the ICAFSS. A summary of the Evaluation of the Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service (the evaluation) is provided at [Annex B](#).

The evaluation was the result of interviews with representatives of the service providers, academics, DSS, state and territory central authorities, and advocacy groups. Key findings of the evaluation are listed below.

### The key needs of those who use the service are:

- social and emotional support
- counselling and information related to:
  - identity formation
  - cultural connection
  - family formation
- parenting support and education.

### The strengths of the ICAFSS are:

- free service delivery
- intercountry adoption-aware counselling support and information
- support, practical advice and information provided through case management services.

### Evaluation participants suggested the service should include:

- peer support and mentorship
- counselling support
- support to search for, or trace, origins

- a community of practice among practitioners working in the intercountry adoption space.

Participants identified the following opportunities:

- greater involvement of intercountry adoption community representatives in service design
- services that are available over the course of adoptees' lives, including a greater focus on the needs of adult adoptees
- equity of service provision and accessibility in regional and remote areas for adoptees, their families and prospective adoptive parents
- an expansion of intercountry adoption-aware training for parents
- intercountry adoption-aware training for intercountry adoption practitioners and other allied health service providers
- continued promotion and awareness of the ICAFSS.

## 2. Key principles for redesign

The following key principles must be considered in the redesign of the ICAFSS:

- the service will operate within an **annual budget of \$900,000** (see [2.1 Funding](#))
- the service must comply with the Australian Government's **authority to spend public funds** (see [2.2 Authority to fund the ICAFSS](#))
- the **service must be accessible** to anyone who may face barriers to receiving assistance (see [2.3 Accessibility of support](#))
- review or expansion of the Australian Government's adoption arrangements is **not in scope** (see [2.4 Not in Scope](#)).

### 2.1 Funding

Between January 2016 and 30 June 2020, the Australian Government has committed a total of \$4.447 million to deliver the ICAFSS. This is around \$900,000 (GST exclusive) a year.

To ensure there is no disruption in service delivery while this consultation process is taking place, the current service arrangements have been extended for an additional year to 30 June 2021.

Any redesign of the ICAFSS will operate within this annual budget of \$900,000.

## 2.2 Authority to fund the ICAFSS

The Australian Government can only fund services and activities for which it has the authority to spend public funds.

Therefore, when we consider types of activities that the redesign of the service might include, they must:

- a) align with a head of power in the Australian Constitution, as per the [Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act](#).

A range of constitutional powers may be relevant to the ICAFSS redesign. For example, the communications power may be relevant to ideas for online or telephone support activities.

- b) comply with the Commonwealth supplementary powers to fund intercountry adoption activities under Schedule 1AB: Arrangements, grants and programs – Part 4: Programs – 337 Overseas Adoption Services, listed at [Annex C: Overseas Adoption Services](#).

This is the specific schedule of the [Financial Framework \(Supplementary Powers\) Regulations 1997](#), which gives the Commonwealth supplementary powers to fund intercountry adoption activities. The *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997* confers on the Commonwealth, in certain circumstances, powers to make arrangements under which money can be spent.

## 2.3 Accessibility of support

The ICAFSS provides a respectful, equitable, flexible and culturally sensitive service. Service delivery must be accessible to people who face barriers to receiving assistance. This includes, but is not limited to, considering the needs of:

- people living in regional and remote areas
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people with disability.

## 2.4 Not in Scope: Australian Government's adoption arrangements with overseas countries

Reviewing or expanding the Australian Government's adoption arrangements with overseas countries is not in scope of the redesign, nor are activities that are the responsibility of state and territory central authorities (see [Annex A](#)).

## 3. Possible elements of redesign

### 3.1 Addressing the needs of those who use the ICAFSS

The evaluation found that the primary needs of those using the ICAFSS were:

- social and emotional support
- counselling and information related to:
  - identity formation
  - cultural connection
  - family formation
- parenting support and education.

It also found that there was a desire for services available over the course of adoptees' lives, including a greater focus on the needs of adult adoptees.

#### **For discussion**

- Does the ICAFSS meet the needs of the intercountry adoption community, as identified in the evaluation? See [Annex A](#) for detail on the ICAFSS.
- If not, what changes to the ICAFSS would you recommend?

### 3.2 Ideas for different forms of support

Subject to the funding authority described at [2.2 Authority to fund the ICAFSS](#), there may be opportunities to fund activities that provide:

1. support to address adoption experiences that can be characterised as preventing or treating a mental illness
2. support to intercountry adoptees and their adoptive families in relation to the process of tracing origins.

For example, the ICAFSS could facilitate support for community-based initiatives or practical and material assistance to individuals. Possible targets for funding could include:

- intercountry adoption-related peer support, mentorship and group activities to assist with connecting to others with shared experience
- intercountry adoption-aware training for parents and families
- establishing a community of practice among practitioners working in the intercountry adoption space
- intercountry adoption-aware training for allied health services
- costs in applying for Australian or country-of-origin citizenship



- costs involved in preparing to trace origins, not including overseas travel
- costs to support access to the ICAFSS for intercountry adoptees living regionally or remotely.

#### **For discussion**

- How could the ICAFSS facilitate different forms of support, like those listed above, for the intercountry adoption community?
- What is the best way to ensure that the available funding is accessed equitably?

### 3.3 Search for origins

The findings of the evaluation noted calls from the intercountry adoption community for funding to support tracing and reunification services. The ICAFSS can provide information, counselling and support to intercountry adoptees and their family as they consider, or start, tracing origins.

There are **limitations on the scope of support** that can be offered for tracing and reunification. These are detailed at [2.2 Authority to fund the ICAFSS](#) and [Annex C: Overseas Adoption Services](#).

In 2016 and 2017, the Australian Government provided one-off non-ongoing funding to International Social Service (ISS) Australia to deliver an Intercountry Adoption Tracing and Reunification Service (ICATRS). This grant funding was in response to requests from advocacy groups for the Australian Government to explore tracing services. The long-term view was that the provider would develop strategies for operational sustainability beyond the initial one-off Government funding support.

While it is not possible to replicate the ICATRS service model under the ICAFSS funding authority, support related to adoptees or their families' decision to search for origins may be considered.

#### **For discussion**

- Noting the items described at [2. Key principles for redesign](#), what type of:
  - a) practical support
  - b) emotional support
 would you like from a service if you were thinking about searching for your origins or supporting someone to do so?

### 3.4 National accessibility

As a national service, the ICAFSS is required to be accessible to all adoptees, including adult adoptees, their families and prospective adoptive parents, irrespective of geographical location. In order to respond to geographical challenges, the ICAFSS is currently provided through face-to-face, telephone and video-link facilities.

#### **For discussion**

- What alternative service delivery models can you suggest that would support national delivery of the ICAFSS and ensure equitable access for people living in regional and remote areas?

### 3.5 Capacity building

The evaluation raised the need for expanded intercountry adoption-aware training for parents and families, professionals and allied health service providers, as well as the establishment of a community of practice among practitioners.

In continuing to build specialist intercountry adoption knowledge and practice, we need to consider new ways that the ICAFSS can encourage greater cooperation and collaboration between individuals and adoption-related services. For example, this could be achieved through partnerships and collaborative activities that help share and adapt relevant information and resources, or through engaging existing grass-roots support and mentor groups.

#### **For discussion**

- Do you have any suggestions on how to:
  - a) support or encourage capacity building and improved collaboration in the service sector?
  - b) support or encourage peer support and mentorship among adoptees and families?
  - c) encourage development of support networks and information resources for adoptive and prospective adoptive parents?

### 3.6 Measuring success

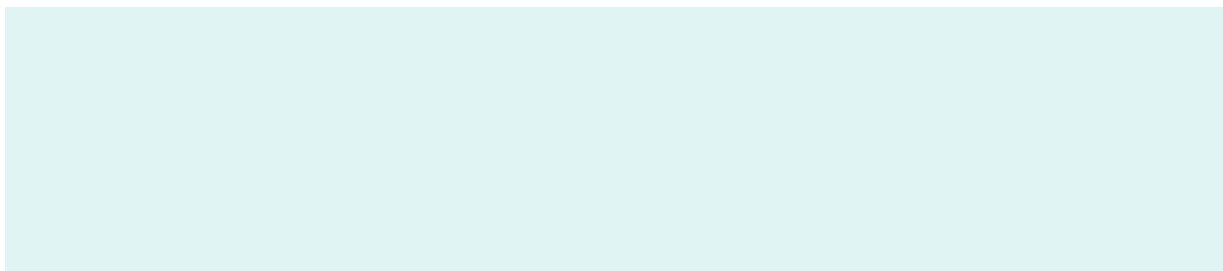
In order to ensure that the redesigned ICAFSS meets the needs of the intercountry adoption community, and is delivered as intended, it is important to measure its success. Thinking about your responses to the previous questions, please provide suggestions for the relevant items below:

- What are the short-term outcomes that your idea or activity seeks to achieve for people using the ICAFSS?
- What are the long-term outcomes that your idea or activity seeks to achieve?
- What knowledge, attitudes or skill should be developed through the activity?
- What performance indicators or other measures could be used to show the change or benefit that has occurred?
- What evidence or data could be collected to measure the intended outcome of your idea or activity?

### 3.7 Other suggestions

This paper seeks to foster discussion on ways to develop the ICAFSS to best address the needs of adoptees, their families and prospective adoptive parents.

Please feel free to provide any further suggestions or comments that were not raised by the evaluation or captured by the prompted questions. In doing so, please consider [2.Key Principles for Redesign](#).



## 4. Glossary

**Adult adoptee:** A person who came into Australia as a child as a result of a completed intercountry adoption, and who is now over 18 years old.

**Central authority:** An officially designated body with specific obligations under the Hague Convention. The Australian Central Authority is the Australian Government Department of Social Services. As Australia is a federation, a central authority has also been designated in each state and territory.

**Country of origin:** usually, the country of residence of the child being adopted. This is generally also the child's country of birth.

**DSS:** The Australian Government Department of Social Services.

**Expatriate adoptions:** Adoptions by an Australian citizen or permanent resident living abroad for 12 months or more, through an overseas adoption agency or government authority. Australian central authorities are not responsible for expatriate adoptions, and do not assess or approve applicants for these adoptions.

The ICAFSS is available to expatriate adoptees and their families.

**Grant:** A grant is an arrangement for the provision of funds to a provider by the Commonwealth, or on behalf of the Commonwealth, for the purpose of delivering a service.

**Hague Convention (intercountry adoption):** The [Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption](#) establishes standards and procedures for adoptions between countries.

The Hague Convention includes legally binding safeguards, a system of supervision, and establishes channels of communication between countries.

It came into force in Australia in December 1998.

**Intercountry adoption:** An adoption of a child from an overseas country with which Australia has an official adoption program. The child must be determined as legally able to be placed for adoption, and has generally had no previous contact with the adoptive parent(s).

**Peer support groups:** Groups that have formed amongst people with a shared experience.

**Prospective adoptive parent(s):** A person who has applied, or intends to apply, to a central authority to adopt a child through the intercountry adoption process.

**Special needs:** A child with special needs may have physical, intellectual or cognitive disabilities or potential barriers to permanent placement or adoption, such as behavioural disorders, medical conditions, is part of a sibling group, or is an older child.

**State and territory central authority:** Each Australian state and territory has a central authority to ensure that Australia meets its obligations under the Hague Convention.

# Annex A: Intercountry Adoption in Australia and the ICAFSS

## Intercountry Adoption in Australia

In Australia, intercountry adoption is conducted under the [Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption](#) (the Hague Convention). It aims to protect children and their families against the risks of illegal, irregular, premature or ill-prepared adoptions abroad.

The Hague Convention reinforces the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (Article 21) and seeks to ensure that intercountry adoptions are only conducted when in the best interests of the child and with respect of their fundamental rights.

Australia only facilitates intercountry adoptions if the principles and standards of the Hague Convention are met in practice, regardless of whether the country has signed the Convention. Currently, Australians can apply to their state or territory central authority to adopt from 13 countries.

The Hague Convention came into force in Australia in December 1998 and is implemented by the [Family Law Act 1975](#) and its regulations. Each state and territory in Australia also has laws relating to intercountry adoption, which are similar, but not identical.

Each country that signs the Hague Convention is required to have a central authority to implement its standards. The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) performs the duties of the Australian Central Authority under the Hague Convention. There is also a central authority for each state and territory. Responsibility for intercountry adoption is shared across these central authorities.

As the Australian Central Authority, DSS is responsible for:

- enabling the performance of Australia's responsibilities under the Hague Convention
- building strong relationships with overseas countries
- providing national policy leadership on intercountry adoption practices.

DSS also delivers the [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#) information and referral service.

State and territory central authorities are responsible for:

- managing and assessing adoption applications
- preparing families for, and supporting them through, the intercountry adoption process
- providing advice and assistance to families regarding specific overseas country requirements
- monitoring progress of individual applications with the relevant agency in the overseas country
- providing support and supervision of families after the placement of adopted children.

## The ICAFSS

The ICAFSS is currently delivered by Relationship Matters: Relationship Counselling, Mediation and Education Services. The ICAFSS is a free, national service that provides post-adoption support for adoptees and families formed by intercountry adoption, including adoptions by expatriate Australians while living overseas. The ICAFSS also provides support to individuals and couples before and during the intercountry adoption process.

Currently, the ICAFSS aims to provide:

- broad-based relationship and education counselling
- intensive, long-term and early intervention support
- information and referrals to other support services as required
- responsive support tailored to meet the needs of the client
- parenting and education training
- distance and outreach services (including face-to-face, email, telephone and video-link, depending on the client's needs)
- training and education for families to prepare them to:
  - support children with special needs
  - respond to issues commonly associated with intercountry adoption (including family functioning, cultural identity, mental health, trauma, grief and social issues).

# Annex B: Summary of the Evaluation of the ICAFSS

## Australian Healthcare Associates

June 2019

### Overview

In June 2019, DSS engaged the Australian Healthcare Associates to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the ICAFSS. A summary of the Evaluation of the Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service (the evaluation) is provided below.

### Stakeholders consulted

The evaluation included interviews with representatives of the following organisations:

- the ICAFSS service provider Relationship Matters: Relationship Counselling and Education Services (formerly LifeWorks Relationship Counselling and Education Services) and subcontractor International Social Services Australia
- the Australian Central Authority (DSS)
- the Victorian, South Australian and Queensland Central Authorities
- academics from the University of Sydney: Institute of Open Adoption Studies, Deakin University: Faculty of Arts and Education, and Griffith University: School of Human Services and Social Work
- InterCountry Adoptee Voices and International Adoptive Families of Queensland
- the service providers Relationships Australia: post-Adoption Support Services, VANISH Inc., Adoption Research and Counselling Service and Jigsaw.

### The ICAFSS

The ICAFSS is an independent, Australia-wide service, funded by DSS since January 2016. It is provided free of charge to the following groups:

- children, teenagers and adults who have been adopted from overseas
- couples, families or individuals who have placed an application for adoption with their jurisdictional department and are going through the assessment process
- couples, families or individuals who have adopted a child from overseas (post-placement)



- couples, families or individuals who have adopted a child while living overseas and have returned to live in Australia with the child (expatriate adoptions).

The aims of the ICAFSS are to:

- provide counselling, information and support services for children, teenagers and adults adopted from overseas
- provide practical and emotional support, including information regarding intercountry adoption, to prepare couples and individuals for the process, as well as providing post-placement support
- support in planning for, and meeting, the adopted child
- support for adoptive parent(s) in dealing with the impact of the process on them and their relationships
- manage the impact of new members entering an existing family dynamic.
- support adoptive parent(s) and the adopted child in managing challenging behaviours, including the impact of complex trauma and attachment issues
- provide support to positively develop as a person, couple or family unit
- assist and guide in navigating available supports and services for the parents and child
- provide support and understanding to manage challenges during the child's teen years.

## Clients

The ICAFSS clients are:

- adoptees, including adult adoptees
- families who have commenced the intercountry adoption process
- families who have already adopted a child from overseas.

Clients with complex mental health needs are, and should continue to be, referred to external providers (noting that there is a need for more adoption-aware practitioners in allied health services).

The support and practical advice provided by the ICAFSS was seen as crucial to its clients.

## Client engagement

From the beginning of the service, January 2016, to March 2019 the largest group of clients were parents (57%), followed by adult adoptees (28%), other (11%) and child adoptees (4%). The distribution of ICAFSS uptake was broadly consistent with the population distribution in Australia.

## Theory of change

The theory of change refers to how the ICAFSS aims to assist clients.

The ICAFSS aims to be a dedicated service that delivers:

- counselling support
- information and support services
- education seminars
- information about referrals.

With the resulting outcomes of:

- improved family functioning
- strengthened relationships
- skills development for attachment concerns
- enhanced parenting skills
- individual wellbeing.

## Evaluation methodology

The evaluation examined the effectiveness and appropriateness of the ICAFSS for adoptees, their families and prospective adoptive parents. A mixed-methods approach was used to conduct the evaluation. Qualitative and quantitative data were obtained from multiple sources.

- Qualitative data: data collected through consultations and other documentation was analysed to identify key themes and concerns.
- Quantitative data: data provided by DSS and the service provider were summarised using Excel 2013 software.

## Stakeholder perspective

Stakeholders differed in their views on the extent to which the ICAFSS was meeting the needs of clients. The key needs presented by those who use the service were:

- social and emotional support
- counselling and information related to:
  - identity formation
  - cultural connection
  - family formation
- parenting support and education.

The ICAFSS counselling services was reported as filling a much-needed gap. While there was general consensus on the need for adoption-aware services, particularly counselling, it was also noted that not all ICAFSS clients needed counselling. Some clients instead prioritised practical support around matters such as tracing, identity and dealing with schools.

The free of charge nature of the ICAFSS was seen as highly beneficial to clients, some of whom would be unable to access the ICAFSS if fees were involved. Other strengths of the ICAFSS included:

- the intercountry adoption-aware counselling support and information
- the support, practical advice and information provided through case management services
- that those with complex mental health needs are referred to expert mental health care providers.

In addition to these strengths, stakeholders who participated in the evaluation suggested that an intercountry adoption service should include:

- peer support
- counselling support
- support to search for, or trace, origins
- a community of practice among practitioners working in the intercountry adoption space.

## Opportunities

The following areas were identified for continued improvement of the ICAFSS:

- greater involvement of intercountry adoption community representatives in service design
- services available over the course of adoptees' lives, including a greater focus on the needs of adult adoptees
- equity of service in regional and remote areas for adoptees, their families and prospective adoptive parents
- intercountry adoption-aware training for intercountry adoption practitioners and other allied health service providers
- an expansion of intercountry adoption-aware training for parents
- continued promotion and awareness of the ICAFSS.

### Greater involvement of intercountry adoption community representatives in service design

Understanding the needs of intercountry adoptees was seen as critical to the development and delivery of appropriate and effective support services.

The evaluation suggested that services be co-designed with intercountry adoptees, with consultation at every step of the decision-making process.

## Services available over the course of adoptees' lives

One of the resounding messages from stakeholders was that intercountry adoption is life-long, and adoptees may experience difficulties at different points that lead them to enter and exit support services. Therefore, services need to recognise and accommodate this fluctuating need, incorporating a greater focus on the needs of adult adoptees.

## Equity of service in regional and remote areas

Currently residents in regional and remote areas have access to telephone, online or Skype/Zoom support. To ensure everyone has access to the ICAFSS, it was suggested that face-to-face services be provided as outreach services or through recruitment of service providers based in regional and remote areas.

## Intercountry adoption-aware training for intercountry adoption practitioners and other allied health service providers

There is growing recognition of the need for practitioners to understand adoption-related issues and apply best-practice interventions. Training in the following areas was recommended for professionals:

- trauma-informed practice
- theory of attachment and related behaviours, including the relationship between trauma and attachment, the importance of attachment to a successful bond and competency in understanding attachment presentation in adults
- working in multidisciplinary teams
- use of good practice reporting and information sharing.

## An expansion of intercountry adoption-aware training for parents

An adoptee's relationship with their parent(s) was described as a critical factor in the child's development of coping strategies. Parental openness about a child's adoption and the circumstances of their adoption were seen to develop trust and reduce feelings of shame.

Trauma-informed training could be made available to parents. This could assist parents to understand their child's behaviour as a possible response to experiences of trauma, or as symptoms of possible mental health concerns.

It was also suggested that parents may benefit from training on:

- helping their child cope with racial discrimination
- dealing with issues at school
- parenting a child that has experienced trauma
- talking with children about their adoption and origins.

## Continued promotion and awareness of the ICAFSS

The evaluation showed mixed effectiveness of the promotion of the ICAFSS. There was some reported confusion or misconceptions about what the ICAFSS provided. Stakeholders reported hearing about the ICAFSS through word-of-mouth, through Facebook groups and through attendance at national targeted-community events.

## Annex C: Overseas Adoption Services

The *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997* confers on the Commonwealth, in certain circumstances, powers to make arrangements under which money can be spent.

These arrangements are specified in the [Financial Framework \(Supplementary Powers\) Regulations 1997](#). Commonwealth supplementary powers to fund intercountry adoption activities fall under Schedule 1AB: Arrangements, grants and programs – Part 4: Programs – 337 Overseas Adoption Services.

To provide support for:

- (a) persons ordinarily resident in Australia who were adopted from a foreign country; and
- (b) children who are being adopted from a foreign country by adoptive families ordinarily resident in Australia; and
- (c) the adoptive families of persons mentioned in paragraphs (a) and (b);

by providing the following:

- (d) counselling, relationship education and support to address family relationship issues arising in connection with undertaking an overseas adoption process;
- (e) counselling, relationship education and support to address past adoption experiences that can be characterised as preventing or treating a mental illness;
- (f) information, counselling and support to overseas adoptees and their adoptive families in relation to the process of tracing origins.

This objective also has the effect it would have if it were limited to measures:

- (a) in connection with the use of postal, telegraphic, telephonic and other like services (within the meaning of paragraph 51(v) of the [Constitution](#)); or
- (b) in relation to the provision of sickness benefits or medical services (within the meaning of paragraph 51(xxiiiA) of the [Constitution](#)); or
- (c) to give effect to Australia's obligations under one or more of the following:
  - (i) the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Articles 4, 7, 18, 21 and 23;
  - (ii) the Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, particularly Articles 5 and 9;

(iii) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, particularly Articles 2, 10 and 12;

(iv) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, particularly Articles 2 and 23; or

(d) in relation to places, persons, matters or things external to Australia or matters affecting Australia's relations with foreign countries.