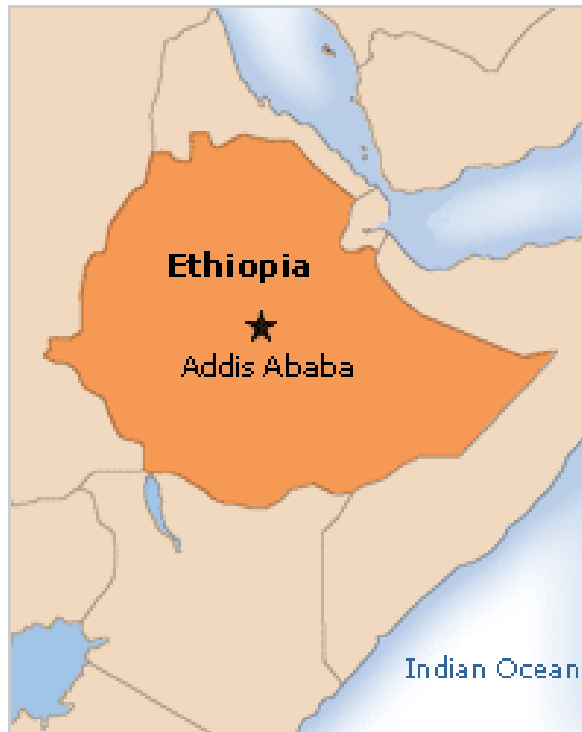




Post Adoption Guidelines

Ethiopia



Australia supports open adoption practices. Many adoptees and adoptive families wish to search for information about their birth origins and, where possible, establish and maintain relationships with their birth families. These Guidelines outline the post-adoption reporting process, and factors influencing the exploration of birth origins and search for birth families in Ethiopia.

Post adoption reporting

The Ethiopian Government respects the right of adoptees to information about their birth families, and prefers to encourage open adoption practices.¹

Post adoption reports are required annually for each Ethiopian-Australian adoptee by the Ethiopian Government, until the adoptee turns eighteen. It is important that adoptive families continue to prepare reports until their adopted child turns eighteen.

Some adoptive families have chosen in the past to send their reports to the Ethiopian Government through Woz Lemlem Fesseha, the former Australian Representative. The Australian Representative role has been discontinued, and Woz Lemlem will no longer deliver post adoption reports.

The Ethiopian Government has advised the Australian Central Authority that it will only accept post adoption reports that it receives directly from the Australian Government or state and territory governments.

Adoptive families should send their reports to:

- the relevant state or territory central authority (the state or territory in which the adoption was processed),
- the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS).

The Australian central authorities and DSS will arrange for the reports to be provided to the Ethiopian Government. Appendix A provides postal addresses for the Department of Social Services and state and territory central authorities.

Post adoption exploring and searching

The Australian Central Authorities recognise the importance of post adoption exploring and searching for many adoptees and adoptive families, to learn about origins, and contact birth families.

It is up to adoptees and adoptive families to decide how they wish to undertake post adoption exploring and searching. Intercountry Adoption Australia provides information on its website about post adoption support and follow up.

While post adoption searching can be a fulfilling and positive experience, adoptees and adoptive families undertaking post adoption searching need to be sensitive and appropriate in doing so. Not all Ethiopians are open about adoption, or understand the effect or purpose of adoption in the same way as Australians. This means that contacting a birth family, if located, can potentially have serious consequences. It is important to respect and

¹ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Women's Affairs, *Alternative Childcare Guidelines*, June 2009, at 47.

understand that birth families may have preferences about how, or whether, they are contacted.

The state and territory central authorities can provide further guidance on cultural sensitivities in post adoption searching, as well as general information on post adoption exploring and searching. Contact details for state and territory central authorities (see <https://www.intercountryadoption.gov.au/post-adoption-support/state-territory-support/>).

Access to adoption files

The adoption files previously held by Ato Lakew and Woz Lemlem, and stored by the Australian Embassy in Ethiopia, are now with the state and territory central authority that facilitated the adoption. This ensures the file is maintained with other relevant information about the adoption. For information on how to access these files, please contact the relevant state or territory central authority (see <https://www.intercountryadoption.gov.au/post-adoption-support/state-territory-support/>).

The Department of Social Services do not keep a copy of the post adoption reports it receives. However, the department does record what post adoption reports we have received and forwarded to the Ethiopian Government.

Post adoption support services

Post adoption support includes information, resources and a range of services such as counselling, workshops and support groups. Adoptive families and adoptees may find value and support in sharing their experiences with others, either through professional post adoption support services, or through less formal means such as social networks.

Details for some providers can be found at <http://www.intercountryadoption.gov.au/post-adoption-support/state-territory-support/>.

Appendix A

Postal addresses for DSS and state and territory central authorities

Relevant Public Authority

Children's Policy Branch
Department of Social Services
GPO BOX 9820
CANBERRA ACT 2601

State and territory central authorities

New South Wales

Adoption Services
Department of Family and Community Services
223 Liverpool Rd
ASHFIELD NSW 2131

Victoria

Intercountry Adoption Victoria
Department of Health and Human Services
GPO Box 588
Collins St West
MELBOURNE VIC 3003

Queensland

Adoptions Services
Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
GPO Box 806
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Western Australia

Adoption Services
Department of Communities
PO Box 6334
EAST PERTH WA 6892

South Australia

Adoption Services
Department for Child Protection
GPO Box 1072
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Tasmania

Adoption and Permanency Services
Department of Health and Human Services
GPO Box 538
HOBART TAS 7001

Australian Capital Territory

Assessment and Support Unit - Adoptions
Child and Youth Protection Services
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Northern Territory

NT Adoption Unit
Territory Families
PO Box 37037
WINNELLIE NT 0820