

*Date April 2016*

## HARDSHIP POLICY – INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS

The current pricing structure for intercountry adoption fees were set under the *Adoption Act 2000* and gazetted on 25 June 2004. (Please refer to the Information Sheet titled Fees and Costs for Intercountry Adoptions for further information on the fees.)

Fee relief may be applied for at any of the three stages of the process.

The Hardship Policy and fee relief provisions relate only to FACS fees and charges. Adoption Services cannot waive or reduce overseas country costs or any other costs, for example travel, that are associated with the adoption of children from overseas. Applicants will be required to provide full details of their financial circumstances and to demonstrate an ability to save for the overseas costs if they do not have the required savings. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Information Booklet ‘Considering Adoption’ in relation to anticipated financial requirements for intercountry adoptions.

### How it Works

Under the two-stage hardship policy:

- Applicants will be eligible to receive 50% fee relief if their household income is less than \$39,100.
- Applicants with a household income of less than \$46,400 would be eligible for 25% fee relief. The table below explains this further:

### Fee Structure for 1<sup>st</sup> Time Applicants

Stage	Information Stage	Assessment	Allocation	Total
Unit Cost/Fee	\$640	\$4,260	\$4,800	\$9,700
25% Discount	\$480	\$3,195	\$3,600	\$7,275
50% Discount	\$320	\$2,130	\$2,400	\$4,850

### Fee Structure for 2<sup>nd</sup> and Subsequent Applicants

Stage	Information Stage	Assessment	Allocation	Total
Unit Cost/Fee	\$0	\$2,100	\$4,800	\$6,900
25% Discount	\$0	\$1,575	\$3,600	\$5,175
50% Discount	\$0	\$1,050	\$2,400	\$3,450

#### What is 'household income'?

For the purposes of this policy, household income is the taxable (assessable) income of the applicant/s in the last financial year.

#### Applying for assessment for fee relief:

You can apply for assessment for fee relief at any of the three stages of the adoption process.

Approval for fee relief cannot be back-dated or applied to stages of the adoption process which have already commenced.

If you consider you may be eligible for fee relief:

1. Send a letter to the Director, Adoption Services explaining how you are eligible for fee relief and requesting assessment under the hardship policy. The letter is to be signed by the applicant/s.
2. Include a copy of the Australian Taxation Office 'Notice of Assessment' which shows the taxable income for each applicant. Provide this information for the most recent financial year available.

#### Assessing eligibility for fee relief:

Adoption Services will assess eligibility for fee relief based on the financial information you have provided against the threshold levels for fee relief detailed in this policy.

A caseworker will assess your application for fee relief. After assessment the caseworker will make a recommendation to the Director, Adoption Services.

The Director, Adoption Services will inform you of the outcome of the application.

Note: the information provided for assessment for fee relief may be reviewed against financial information provided at later stages of the adoption process, including assessment, allocation and placement stages. This includes:

- the general financial information provided in the adoption application
- adoption assessment reports, which provide a comprehensive evaluation of the applicants' financial circumstances.

Families are invited to ring 9716 3004 and speak to a caseworker to clarify any aspects of the Intercountry Adoptions Hardship Policy.

**If you wish to apply for fee relief please write to the:**

Director  
Adoption Services  
Department of Family and Community Services  
Locked Bag 4028  
ASHFIELD NSW 2131