

Changes to Queensland's adoption legislation

Information sheet 8

Background

On 2 November 2016, Queensland Parliament passed the Adoption and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, making important changes to Queensland's adoption laws.

What are the changes?

Changes to the *Adoption Act 2009* (the Act) commenced on Friday 11 November 2016. The changes include:

- Expanding when a person is eligible to have his or her name entered, or remain in, the Expression of Interest Register to include same-sex couples, single persons and persons undergoing fertility treatment.
- Removing the offence and associated penalty for breach of a contact statement for adoptions that happened before 1 June 1991 (the obligation of the department to provide information contained in a contact statement, including a person's reasons for providing a contact statement, will be maintained).
- Improving access to adoption information by:
 - enabling the department to consider the release of identifying information without consent from adoptive or birth parents, in exceptional circumstances
 - broadening the definition of 'relative' in relation to who may access or consent to the access of information on another person's behalf, to include grandparents and grandchildren, and people recognised as parents and children under Aboriginal tradition or Island custom
 - expanding when information about a person who may be an adopted person's biological father may be provided to them.
- Requiring the Childrens Court to be satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist before including a change to a child's first name in a final adoption order.
- Enabling the department to facilitate contact between parties to a proposed adoption during an interim adoption order.
- Improving processes for adoption of a child by a step-parent.
- Making minor technical amendments to clarify the intent of existing provisions, correct drafting issues and make consequential amendments based on endorsed policy objectives.
- Undertaking a further review of the Act in five years' time.

Where can I find more information?

For more information about the changes to Queensland's adoption laws, go to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services:

Website:

www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety

Phone: Adoption Services on **3224 7415** or **1800 647 983** (free call within Queensland)

Email: ads@communities.qld.gov.au