

To Members of the parliamentary inquiry into the Children, Youth and Families Amendment Bill 2015

Dear Colleague,

As a member of Grandparents Victoria I hereby requests members of the parliamentary inquiry into the Children, Youth and Families Amendment Bill 2015 to take measures to address the following criticisms of the bill.

First the bill establishes a hierarchy of out -of- home care options and places adoption as the first preference. This is deeply offensive to grandparents who believe that the first option should be to keep the children with their family. Only when it is clearly proven that being raised by the extended family is not in the Childs best interest should other options be canvassed.

The second issue is the fast-tracking of permanent care orders. We agree that permanent care decisions should be made where reunification with parents is not viable. However, it is unacceptable for DHHS workers, many of whom are junior social workers with minimal expertise, to make this judgment whilst magistrates and experts from the Children's Court Clinic are precluded from deliberations.

Thirdly, the legislation should provide for the participation of grandparents in any procedures designed to keep families together. Courts and many agencies now recognize the power of grandparents in ensuring that court orders are successful. We are left wondering why DHHS, with all its first hand experience with grandparents as kinship carers, has not recognized the positive power of their input and their capacity to keep families together.

We believe these matters are urgent and seek your assistance in addressing them.

Dorothy A.C. Horbury
15th June, 2015

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June Smith

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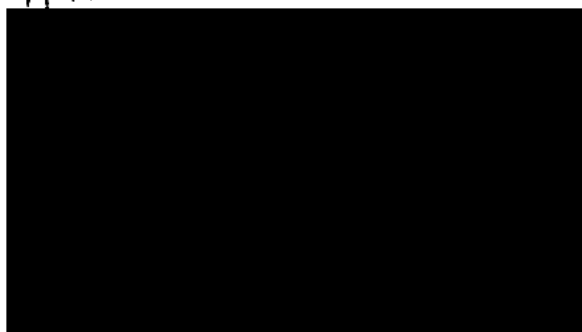
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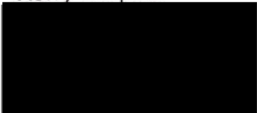
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Regards,



Kerry Doquile



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Catherine Rowan