



HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKING GROUP
Dr Andreas Schloenhardt (Coordinator)

The University of Queensland
TC Beirne School of Law

www.law.uq.edu.au/humantrafficking

NEWS REPORT

Headline	Anger grows over adoption scam
Reported in	<i>The Australian</i>
Date of publication	November 4, 2009
Authors	Rory Callinan, Sean Parnell
Page	3
Copyright	© 2009 News Limited.

AN Australian parent who unwittingly adopted stolen children from India has accused the federal government of failing to launch a proper investigation into the case and other related child-trafficking issues.

The parent's trauma and frustration is detailed in internal government documents which also reveal a group of children from another Indian orphanage are barred from being adopted by Australians amid concerns about procedural irregularities.

Late last year the federal government began a review of the adoption program after it was revealed a child-stealing gang had sold kidnapped children to suspect orphanages. Those children were later adopted by parents in Australia.

The review was supposed to examine the inter-country adoption programs and why official processes did not detect the stolen children before they were allowed into Australia.

But one of the adoptive parents, whose name was suppressed, expressed serious concerns in an email to the Attorney-General's office earlier this year. "While I appreciate the opportunity to have input into the whole review of the Indian program, I am feeling that what is really needed is a thorough investigation into the whole Indian adoption program -- rather than a review," the parent wrote in the email.

"I had understood that allegations of child-trafficking were going to lead to just such an investigation. I feel that child-trafficking in India has caused such devastation in Australia and several other receiving countries, as well as India, that a proper and thorough investigation is warranted. If not, I fear our case will be repeated again and again."

Inter-country adoption branch assistant secretary Vicki Parker wrote back, saying the review would "look in as much detail" as an investigation and there had been significant changes to India's Central Adoption Resources Agency. The child-stealing operation in Chennai, on India's east coast, was detected in 2005, but it took years to unravel the files of the orphanage that received most of the children.

The Attorney-General's Department this week said the review was expected to be completed by the end of the year. A spokeswoman confirmed Australian adoptions of children from the Preet Mandir orphanage in Uttar Pradesh, northern India, which was not linked to the other child-trafficking cases but has been under investigation, would remain suspended.

An electronic copy of this document is available at www.law.uq.edu.au/humantrafficking.