MEDIA RELEASE

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ADOPTED CHILDREN TO WIN IDENTITY RIGHTS

NSW parents whose legal adoptions are finalised overseas will be able to obtain NSW birth certificates for their children under new laws to be introduced to State Parliament.

Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, and Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward, said the Government was seeking changes to the law to give children whose adoptions are completed abroad, assisted by State agencies, the same rights as children who are adopted in NSW.

“The children would be able to use a NSW birth certificate as proof of identity instead of the adoption documents issued in their country of birth,” Mr Smith said.

“This is a significant reform, as many overseas adoption documents contain derogatory and stigmatising language.”

“For example, many children adopted in China are given a ‘certificate of abandonment’ that states that their parents are ‘unknown’."

“No child in NSW should have to carry around a certificate that reminds them that they were abandoned.”

Currently children whose adoptions have been arranged by Community Services with countries that Australia has formal adoption programs are unable to get a NSW birth certificate if their adoption was finalised in their country of origin.

Ms Goward said the NSW birth certificate would give the children and their adoptive parents more privacy.

“The proposed change in the law will rectify a situation that infringes a child’s rights to privacy and non-discrimination,” Ms Goward said.

“The NSW birth certificate states where a person was born and who their parents are in the eyes of the law – it doesn’t state whether their parents are biological or adoptive.”

“This will have a big impact on the lives of people whose adoptions were completed overseas, particularly when you consider how often birth certificates are used as proof of identification, whether it’s to enrol in school, register for a sporting team, or to apply for a job or a driver’s licence.”
The proposed changes to the *Births Deaths and Marriages Act* and *Adoption Act* are in response to requests from adoptive parents around the State, and will be introduced to Parliament soon.