



# Adoption laws in Queensland changed to allow same-sex couples to become parents

By Gail Burke

Updated Wed 2 Nov 2016, 4:30pm

**Same-sex couples, single people and couples undergoing fertility treatment will now be able to adopt a child in Queensland.**

The Palaszczuk Government passed the Adoption and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 last night with the help of the three independent MPs.

The LNP and Katter's Australian Party opposed expanding the adoption criteria to include same-sex couples and single people.

LNP's communities spokeswoman Ros Bates argued the expanded criteria was not needed.

"Prospective parents are waiting years to adopt children after getting on the waiting list, meaning there aren't enough children seeking adoption to warrant a relaxation," she said.

"At last count there were 22 local adoptions in 2015-16, nine local and 13 step-parents.

"There is no demand so there's no need to expand the eligibility. And it's also unfair to build unrealistic expectations of any Queenslanders wishing to adopt."

But the Communities Minister Shannon Fentiman said it was not a matter of supply and demand.

"It is a matter of fairness, it's a matter of removing unfair discrimination from the Queensland statute books," she said.

"Expanding the eligibility criteria provides a wider and richer pool of people that we can ultimately find the right home for each child who requires adoption.

"Loving, nurturing and safe environments are in the best interests of the child. Gender orientation is no barrier to this."

## 'We should be encouraging more to adopt children'

The changes put Queensland in line with most other states and territories - except South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Ms Fentiman said they would also remove the offence and penalty for breaching a contact statement for adoptions prior to June 1991.



**PHOTO:** Single people and couples undergoing fertility treatment are now able to adopt children in the state. (Stocksnap: Danielle MacInnes)

**RELATED STORY:** Adoption by same-sex couples, singles to be legalised in Queensland

**MAP:** QLD



They also facilitate face-to-face contact between an adoptee and their birth family during interim adoption orders; improve access to information; and streamline the step-parent application process.

"The removal of these provisions will further honour the apology given by Parliament to Queenslanders who were affected by past forced adoption practices," Ms Fentiman said.

Ms Fentiman said the new law will also improve access to information by an adoptee, birth parents or an adult relative.

Industrial Relations Minister Grace Grace told Parliament that as the mother of an adopted daughter she felt it was important to support the bill.



**PHOTO:** Ms Grace is the mother of an adopted daughter. (ABC News)

"We should be encouraging more Queenslanders to adopt children where they have a clear desire and a demonstrated ability to raise children in a loving family environment," she said.

"That's exactly what I have done as the mother of a beautiful, wonderful and absolutely loved adopted daughter, and it's what many other Queenslanders want to do, but are being held back."

**Topics:** adoption, family-and-children, community-and-society, state-parliament, parliament, government-and-politics, qld

*First posted Wed 2 Nov 2016, 4:24pm*