Adoptions DSS 2020-21

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Set Specification
METEOR identifier:	749045
Registration status:	[Children and Families](#), Standard 03/11/2021
DSS type:	Data Set Specification (DSS)
Scope:	The Adoptions data set specification (DSS) describes data collected from state/territory departments responsible for adoptions for the Adoptions Australia Collection.

[Adoption](#) is the legal process by which a person legally becomes a child of the **[adoptive parent](#)**(s) and legally ceases to be a child of his/her existing parent(s). Adopted children are normally aged 18 years and under; however, some **[known child adoptions](#)**, such as adoptions by **[step-parents](#)**, can involve adoptees over 18.

The Adoptions Australia Collection contains data relating to two populations of children, those subject to:

- Finalisations- children who were the subject of a **[finalised adoption](#)** order during the reporting period. This includes orders that were made in Australia and in the case of some **[intercountry adoptions](#)**, where the full adoption order was made in the **[country of origin](#)**.
- **[Placements](#)**- children, regardless of the status of their adoption order, who were placed with their adoptive family during the reporting period. 'Placed with their adoptive families' refers to when the child enters Australia for intercountry adoptions, or when the child is taken into the care of the prospective adoptive parent(s) for local adoptions.

The DSS excludes **[expatriate adoptions](#)** by Australian citizens or permanent residents who have lived overseas for 12 months or more and have adopted a child through an overseas agency or government authority. Australian adoption authorities are not responsible for expatriate adoptions and do not assess or approve applicants for such adoptions.

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:	**Adoption categories**

[Intercountry adoption](#)—Intercountry adoptions are adoptions of children from countries other than Australia, who are legally able to be placed for adoption, but who generally have had no previous contact or relationship with the adoptive parents. There are four categories of intercountry adoptions, divided into two groups.

Program adoptions — an intercountry adoptions through an official Australian intercountry adoption program that was active at the time the file of the applicant(s) was sent.
Theses adoptions can be a:

- **[Hague adoption](#)** — an intercountry adoption where Australia had an official adoption program open with the adoptive child's country of origin and the adoptive child's country of origin has ratified or acceded to the Hague Convention, and the file of the applicant(s) was sent after the Hague Convention entered into force in that country
- **[Bilateral adoption](#)** — an intercountry adoption where Australia had an official adoption program open with the adoptive child's country of origin at the time the file of the applicant(s) was sent.

Non-program adoptions — an intercountry adoption that was not through an Australian intercountry adoption program that was active at the time the file of the

applicant(s) was sent.
These adoptions can be a:

- **Known child intercountry adoption** — an adoption where the child and the applicant had a pre-existing relationship prior to the adoption that allowed the adoption to occur. Without this relationship, the child would not generally be able to be adopted by the applicant through an intercountry adoption process.
- **Ad-hoc adoption** — an adoption from a country with which Australia did not have an existing intercountry adoption program at the time the file of the applicant(s) was sent.

Local adoption—an adoption of a child or children who were born or permanently lived in Australia before the adoption, who are legally able to be placed for adoption, but who generally have had no previous contact or relationship with the adoptive parents.

Known adoption—an adoption of a child/children who were born or permanently lived in Australia before the adoption, who have a pre-existing relationship with the adoptive parent(s) and who are generally not able to be adopted by anyone other than the adoptive parent(s). Known child adoptions include adoptions by step-parents, relatives, carers and others. Intercountry known adoptions are not included in this category of adoption.

Hague/bilateral adoptions

An adopted child's country of origin is categorised as either a 'Hague' or a 'bilateral' country. A Hague country is where the adoptive child's country of origin has ratified or acceded to the **Hague Convention** on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, and the **applicant**(s) file was sent to that country after the Convention entered into force in that country. By ratifying or acceding to the Hague Convention a country is legally bound to apply the Convention.

In some cases, the categorisation of a country as either 'Hague' or 'bilateral' may vary at different stages of the overseas adoption process (for example, a country may have signed but not yet ratified or acceded to the Hague Convention when an applicant's file is sent to that country, but by the time the adopted child enters Australia and is placed with their adoptive parent(s), the country may have ratified or acceded to the Convention and the Convention has come into force). By signing the Hague Convention a country expresses, in principle, its intention to become a party to the Convention. However, signature does not, in any way, oblige a country to take further action (towards ratification or not). A country is party to the Hague Convention if it has ratified or acceded to the Convention - this involves the legal obligation for the country to apply the Convention.

The list of 'Hague' countries, (i.e. countries that ratified or acceded to the Hague Convention) can be found on the HCCH website here. The date listed for when the Convention came into effect can be used to determine which countries had ratified the Convention before the end of the reporting period for the Adoptions DSS.

Implementation start date:	01/07/2020
Implementation end date:	30/06/2021

Comments:	For local and intercountry adoptions, children are generally placed with their adoptive families before their adoption order is finalised; however, for some intercountry adoptions where a finalised adoption order recognised by Australian authorities was issued by the country of origin, placement may occur after the adoption order is finalised. Some children placed for adoption during the reporting period may not have their adoption finalised until a following year. In addition, some adoption orders finalised in the reporting period may relate to children who were placed in previous years.

Glossary items

Glossary terms that are relevant to this data set are included here.

[Ad-hoc adoption](#)

[Adoption](#)

[Adoptive parent](#)

[Applicant](#)

[Bilateral adoption](#)

[Country of origin](#)

[Expatriate adoption](#)

[Family](#)

[Finalised adoption](#)

[Hague adoption](#)

[Hague Convention](#)

[Intercountry adoption](#)

[Known child adoption](#)

[Known child intercountry adoption](#)

[Local adoption](#)

[Non-Hague adoption](#)

[Placement](#)

[Step-parent](#)

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation:	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Steward:	[Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:	Supersedes [Adoptions DSS 2019-20](#) [Children and Families](#), Superseded 03/11/2021

Metadata items in this Data Set Specification

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—access arrangement type, agreement type code N](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on the adoption being a **local adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—adoption consent, code N](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption** or a carer (known child) adoption.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—adoption organisation sector, code N](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption**.

DSS specific information:

A government is a state or territory department, or another government authority authorised under adoption legislation to make the decision about the placement of an adoptive child.

A non-government organisation is an agency, approved to undertake adoption arrangements in Australia, that is not owned or controlled by the Australian Government or by a state or territory government. Such agencies could include church organisations, registered charities, non-profit organisations, companies, and cooperative societies and associations.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—adoption placement not finalised, total N[NN]](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a partner country **intercountry adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—adoption placement, total N[NN]](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption** or a partner country **intercountry adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—application for information lodged, total number N[NN]](#)	Optional	1
-	[Adoption—application for information type, code N](#)	Optional	1
-	[Adoption—application type, information/veto code N[N]](#)	Optional	2
-	[Adoption—children adopted as part of a sibling group, total number N[N]](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption**, a carer (known child) adoption, a **Hague adoption** or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—finalised adoption, total number N[NN]](#)	Optional	1

DSS specific information:

Finalised refers to those adoption orders finalised by 30 June of the reporting period.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—Indigenous status, code N](#)	Optional	1
-	[Adoption—Intercountry adoption placement type, code N](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **Hague adoption** or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—person who lodged a veto, party to an adoption, code N[N]](#)	Optional	1

DSS specific information:

CODE 8 Child of adopted person should not be used.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—person who lodged an application for information, party to an adoption code N[N]](#)	Optional	1
-	[Adoption—sibling group, total groups N[N]](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption** or a carer (known child) adoption.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoption—veto in place, total number N[NN]](#)	Optional	1
-	[Adoption—veto lodgement, total number N[NN]](#)	Optional	1
-	[Adoption—veto type, code N](#)	Optional	1
-	[Adoptive family—adoptive parent marital status, code N](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption**, a carer (known child) adoption, a **Hague adoption**, or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoptive family—sibling composition, text X[X(199)]](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption**, a carer (known child) adoption, a **Hague adoption**, or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	[Adoptive family—sibling composition, type code N[N]](#)	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption**, a carer (known child) adoption, a **Hague adoption**, or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Adoptive family—special care need, code N	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **Hague adoption** or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Birth mother—marital status, at child's birth code N	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption**.

DSS specific information:

The marital status is measured at the time of the child's birth (rather than at the time of **placement**).

The birth mother is classified as married if she was legally married (regardless of whether she is married to the birth father) at the time of the child's birth. In situations where the birth mother's legal marital partner died before the birth (i.e. during the pregnancy), the birth mother is still classified as 'married'.

The birth mother is classified as not married if she was not legally married at the time of the child's birth (expect in circumstances where the birth mother's legal marital partner died before the birth). This includes situations where the birth mother was living in a de facto relationship.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person—adoption type, code N	Optional	1
-	Person—age, total years N[NN]	Optional	5

DSS specific information:

Age in years is collected up to five times: once for the adopted child subject to a **finalised adoption**; once for the adopted child subject to **placement**; once for the birth mother; once for the **adoptive parent**(s); and, once for the adult adopted person (aged 18 years or older) if they lodge an application for information. If age is unknown, use code 999 (unknown/not stated).

When collecting for the adopted child, the age for the child of a **known child adoption** is counted at the date the adoption order was granted. For a **local** or **intercountry adoption**, the age of the child is counted at the date of placement with the adopted parent(s).

When collecting for the birth mother, age is at the birth of the child. Ages 48 and above are grouped in the 48+ category.

When collecting for the adoptive parent(s), the age of both the adopted mother and adopted father should be collected if relevant (some adoptions may be by single parents or same sex-couples). The age of the adoptive parent(s) is the age completed in years and is counted at the date of placement of the child. Ages of parent(s) are grouped in the following age ranges: Less than 25; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50-54, 55+.

When collecting for an adult person who lodged an application for information, age is at the time of application. Ages are grouped in the following age ranges: 18-19; 20-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45+.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person—country of origin, code (SACC 2016) NNNN	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **local adoption** or an **intercountry adoption**.

DSS specific information:

Country of origin refers to the country of habitual residence of the child being adopted, which is generally a child's country of birth.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person—intercountry adoption living arrangement post arrival, code N	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **Hague adoption** or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person—intercountry adoption order type, code N	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **Hague adoption** or a **bilateral adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person—pre-adoption relationship to adoptive parent(s), code N	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Conditional on adoption type being a **known child adoption**.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person—sex, code N	Optional	3

DSS specific information:

Intersex or indeterminate, refers to a person, who because of a genetic condition, was born with reproductive organs or sex chromosomes that are not exclusively male or female or whose sex has not yet been determined for whatever reason.

Sex is collected up to three times: once for the adopted child subject to a **finalised adoption**; once for the **adoptive parent**(s); and once for the adult adopted person (aged 18 years or older) if they lodge an application for information. When collecting for the adopted child or adoptive parents use code 9 (Not stated/inadequately described) if sex is unknown. Note that when collecting for the adoptive parents, some children may be adopted by single parents or same-sex couples.

For **known child adoptions**, the sex of an adopted child is their sex at the time the adoption order was granted. For **local** and **intercountry adoptions**, it is the sex at the time when the child was **placed** with the adoptive family.

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Service provider organisation—approved intercountry adoption client, total number N[NN]	Optional	1
-	Service provider organisation—intercountry adoption client file sent overseas, total number N[NN]	Optional	1
-	Service provider organisation—intercountry adoption client, total number N[NN]	Optional	1