

**Orphans of Vietnam:
A History of Intercountry Adoption Policy and Practice in Australia,
1968-1975**

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Abstract

This thesis presents a detailed historical analysis of the origins of the policy and practice of intercountry adoption – the legal adoption of children from overseas – in Australia. Efforts by Australian families to adopt children from overseas were made in the years immediately following the Second World War, but it was not until the Vietnam War that significant numbers of adopted children began to arrive in Australia. This thesis focuses on the period from 1968, when the first Vietnamese children were adopted, up until Operation Babylift in 1975, and examines the development of state and Commonwealth government policies towards intercountry adoption. Through an examination of the relationship between state and Commonwealth government authorities, international social welfare organisations, volunteer groups and individual adoptive parents, it argues that each phase of the development of adoption policy was shaped by broader political considerations, such as foreign affairs, defence and immigration policies, more so than any consideration for the interests of the children themselves.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Joshua Forkert and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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