

PRESS RELEASE

ANNIE O

BOTANICAL STYLIST

ANNIE WINS ADOPTION REFORM BILL, NAME ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE

28 July 2023

After years of gusty determination, adopted Annie Oxborough has finally got her wish Wednesday, when her Birth Parents Registration Bill passed in Parliament. She can now legally have, her birth parents names on her birth certificate.

A first of its kind in NZ, it's likely to have a far reaching impact on the over approximately 100,000 closed adoption NZers. **Closed adoption in New Zealand was at its peak between 1955 and 1985.**

This bill is the Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill and introduced by National MP Chris Penk. The law change specifically relates to Annie, a constituent of his Kaipara ki Mahurangi electorate. Annie has had a number of different names throughout her life. This struggle for identity on a personal and legal level, is something that many adopted people feel deeply and fundamentally about. Some consider it a human rights issue that these closed adoptions removed legal status and deep ties to a child's whakapapa, roots and DNA identity. A right every individual has to their birth heritage.

Chris Penk says parliament as a whole has engaged with the issue in a way that recognises its importance to many New Zealanders who have been affected by similar but, in some cases, different events surrounding adoption, particularly during a certain period of our history when processes were less open and transparent, shall we say, and when it was fair to say perhaps that a degree of coercion was exercised in some cases, sadly—not in all, of course, "I hasten to add, but to the extent that that took place in some cases and also without the knowledge, for many years in some cases, of the person being adopted. I think that is a fair subject for us to revisit in this House in 2023."

Although some MPs said it may not be possible for every individual adopted NZer to each submit a similar private members bill, it would certainly impact the current NZ Adoption Legislation Reform – justice.govt.nz – [Reform of adoption laws in Aotearoa New Zealand](#).

Chris adds, while the bill is ostensibly specific to Annie only, there is potentially wider significance. "I'm aware of many other Kiwis—and others around the world, for that matter—who have faced the same difficulties and distress. By shining a light on the plight of those adopted away from their birth parents without the informed consent of anyone involved—that is to say, the birth parents and the child herself or himself—the passage of this bill will help them indirectly."

Hon David Bennett National MP said, really, **this is a bill that is a trailblazer** in the sense of setting down a direction, I think, for future Governments to actually look at this area and to try and accommodate these kind of wishes, and also to look at the wider area around surrogacy, adoption, to make that more up to date with the reality of how people live their lives now. So, in that sense, I think it actually might push forward—for other people in different circumstances—their wishes to see the Parliament be a little bit more open and up to date in its approach towards adoption.

Dr James McDowall Act MP, said, The select committee obviously said they encourage the Government to consider reforms that could prevent the need for using private bills to achieve these outcomes, and we agree

with that. The select committee made very helpful improvements to the bill around definitions, helped by Department of Internal Affairs officials.

The bill will be signed by the governor general on Monday of next week. As a general comment, Chris Penk responded along the lines of Annie specifically, is affected by this legislation. Of course, the rules that would apply to others going forward (for example, whether consent is needed from either set of parents) could be completely different. It will depend on what Parliament does in this space in the future.

Annie's Child, Law and Order Bill Second Reading supporting MPs

Chris Penk - National MP and Lawyer
Hon David Bennett - National MP
Jamie Strange - Labour MP (adopted)
Paul Eagle Labour MP (adopted)
Naisi Chen - Labour MP
Dr James McDowall - Act MP
Teana Tuiono - Green MP
Hon Dr David Clark - Labour MP
Nicola Grigg - National MP
Rachel Boyack - Labour MP
Lemauga Lydia Sosene - Labour MP
Glen Bennett - Labour MP

Readings in Parliament by over 12 MPs supporting the Bill yesterday. There are 12 videos of MPs endorsement along with the following videos, starting with National MP Chris Penk. Transcripts further below.

[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 1](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 2](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 3](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 4](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 5](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 6](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 7](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 8](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 9](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 10](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 11](#)
[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill - Second Reading - Video 12](#)

Resources

Adoption Law Reform 2022 – current

[justice.govt.nz – Reform of adoption laws in Aotearoa New Zealand](#)

Bill First Reading 10 May 2023

[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill — First Reading](#)

Bill Second Reading 26 July 2023

[parliament.nz – Annie Oxborough Birth Parents Registration Bill — Second Reading](#)

Duncan Garner Interview 10 May 2023

[omny.fm – Annie's Law - a fight for a basic human right](#)

Otago Daily Times 13 May 2023

odt.co.nz – [A Bill with profound possibilities](#)

Biography

Annie Oxborough runs a floral and events company from Matakana, Auckland – annieo.co.nz

Adoption Story – annieo.co.nz – [Me, My Adoption, and My Story](#)

Book – amazon.com – [Where the Fuck is My Mother?: A book for grown-up adoptees](#)



Annie O is available to interview.

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