

# THE PHILIPPINES

## INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION PROGRAMME



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<b>Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption</b>	As both the Philippines and New Zealand are parties to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption ('Hague Convention'), all adoptions must comply with the Hague Convention's principles and procedural safeguards in order to be recognised. This allows the adopted child to be entitled to reside in New Zealand. The Philippines ratified the Hague Convention on 1 November 1996.
<b>Central Authority</b>	The Philippines Central Authority under the Hague Convention is the National Authority for Child Care ('NACC'), part of the Department of Social Welfare and Development ('DSWD'). The NACC website is <a href="http://www.nacc.gov.ph">www.nacc.gov.ph</a> .
<b>Legislation</b>	The intercountry adoption of Filipino children is legislated by the Adoption (Intercountry) Act 1997 and the Hague Convention.
<b>Facilitation</b>	There are two routes by which New Zealand applicants can undertake an intercountry adoption of a child from the Philippines. They can use the services of Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children OR an accredited body. Inter-Country Adoption New Zealand ('ICANZ') is accredited to facilitate intercountry adoptions and is authorised by NACC to facilitate intercountry adoptions in the Philippines. ICANZ are able to offer additional services to their clients, such as facilitating the 'Special Home Finding' programme and providing support from their liaison agency in the Philippines.
<b>Approval of the Match</b>	All matches of children must be considered and approved by Oranga Tamariki, the New Zealand Central Authority for Intercountry Adoption.
<b>Citizenship and Residency</b>	Oranga Tamariki and ICANZ can only facilitate adoptions from the Philippines for New Zealand Citizens or New Zealand Permanent Residents who are habitually resident in New Zealand.
<b>Age of Applicants</b>	Applicants must be 27 years old or over at the time of application. The applicants (particularly the female applicant) must be at least 16 years and no more than 45 years older than the child to be adopted.
<b>Applicant Couples</b>	Only married couples are eligible to apply to adopt from the Philippines. Couples must have been married for at least three years. However, NACC will recognise a two-year de facto period and one year of marriage as meeting the three-year criterion. A maximum of two divorces is permitted by NACC.
<b>Single Applicants</b>	NACC will accept applications from single, professional women who can demonstrate a solid career and financial base, if they meet all other NACC requirements. There can be a maximum of 45 years between the age of the child and the applicant. Single applicants are likely to be considered for older children with other specific needs.
<b>Religion</b>	Philippine law requires both applicants to provide a reference from a religious leader (local church minister, priest, church official, etc) who has known them for at least five years. Both applicants need to be able to demonstrate that they regularly and actively practice their religion. No specific religious denomination is preferred.

<b>Health</b>	NACC requires applicants to provide medical reports, plus a full psychological report that includes specific psychometric tests and data from a competent practitioner. NACC lists physical and mental health conditions that are not accepted, and Oranga Tamariki and ICANZ can provide details of these.
<b>Education</b>	NACC requires that applicants must have at least a high school diploma. This equates to four years of secondary education in New Zealand.
<b>Income</b>	NACC requires that applicants have a minimum annual income of US\$40,000.
<b>NACC Priority</b>	NACC gives priority to applicants of Filipino heritage.
<b>Character</b>	If an applicant has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude, an application would not be acceptable under Philippine law.
<b>Infertility</b>	Infertility is not a criterion. However, preference is given to infertile couples.
<b>Number of Children in the Family</b>	NACC will give careful consideration to the prospective adoptive family's composition and capacity to meet the needs of an adopted child. Applicants with more than <b>two</b> children may receive lower priority unless they are applying for a child with special needs.
<b>Children Available for Intercountry Adoption</b>	The children are in the care of the State in the Philippines and the specific needs of the children vary widely. Only one child may be adopted at a time, unless you are adopting a sibling group. The New Zealand experience is that there are equal numbers of female and male children, and applicants may not specify the child's gender.
	Children needing homes range from 4 to 14 years old. Under Philippine law, only child under 15 years old can be adopted.
	Children available for intercountry adoption have experienced trauma, and applicants must be able to demonstrate the ability and resilience to deal with the range of behavioural and psychological issues that may arise for the child because of this trauma.
	Children who are not defined by NACC as 'special needs' are available through the 'Regular' adoption programme. While children who are over six years old are considered 'special needs', they may still be matched under the 'Regular' adoption programme.
	'Special Needs' adoption refers to applications to adopt children from the 'Special Home Finding' ('SHF') programme. The SHF programme includes children over six years old, sibling groups with additional needs, children with multiple and/or complex medical needs, developmental delays, seizure disorders, intellectual disabilities, and complex social backgrounds including rape and sexual abuse. The process of being approved by NACC in the SHF programme is different to the process in the 'Regular' adoption programme.
<b>Child's Background</b>	The medical background, social history, and a detailed developmental and psychological assessment is provided for each child. Most of the children have been provided with identifying information about their birth family.
<b>Matching Process and Timeframes</b>	The waiting time between the receipt of documentation in the Philippines to a child being matched is approximately 3-4 years. NACC does not match in strict order of date of applications received. The match is made according to the specific attributes of applicants and the children in need of adoption.
	NACC have introduced an allocation system aimed at reducing the time frame to match a child to two years. The allocation system is aimed at

	<p>reducing wait times by limiting the number of new applications that can be submitted. The allocation system applies to the 'Regular' adoption programme, not to the SHF programme. ICANZ receives a separate yearly allocation and are responsible for managing its own allocation. Due to low numbers of applications through Oranga Tamariki, there has not been any allocations and applications are sent to NACC when received.</p> <p>The time between acceptance of a child and travel to the Philippines is approximately 10-15 months.</p>
<b>Travel Requirements</b>	<p>Both applicants are required to travel to the Philippines and the length of stay is up to two weeks to process the adoption proposal. If Oranga Tamariki is facilitating the adoption, applicants travel independently and are responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements. ICANZ may be able to offer additional support from their partner liaison agency in the Philippines. Interpreters and escorts are not required, but applicants should check with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to see if there are any special instructions issued for the area they are travelling to.</p>
<b>Approximate Costs</b>	<p>Adoption Application via Oranga Tamariki: NZ\$8,000-10,000 (approximately)</p> <p>This includes NACC application and processing fees, pre-placement and pre-travel costs, Child Care Support Fund costs, and registration of the child's New Zealand Citizenship. Additional costs include all international and domestic travel, accommodation, food, and other expenses in the Philippines.</p> <p>Adoption Application via ICANZ: The costs should be obtained directly from ICANZ.</p>
<b>Post-Placement Reports</b>	<p>Following the child's placement, NACC requires three Post-Placement Reports. The first report is due <b>one month</b> after the date the child was taken out of the Philippines, the second report is due <b>three months</b> after this date, and the third report is due <b>five months</b> after this date.</p>
<b>Finalisation</b>	<p>Intercountry adoptions between New Zealand and the Philippines are finalised when the New Zealand Central Authority issues the Certificate of Conformity under Article 23 of the Hague Convention. Once an Article 23 is issued, the adoptive parents apply to Department of Internal Affairs (Citizenship office) for the child's new birth certificate, New Zealand citizenship, and passport.</p>
<p><i>This fact sheet provides a brief general overview of the process and requirements. The criteria, processes, costs, and children in need of intercountry adoption change frequently. Applicants should speak to a social worker to confirm the most up to date information.</i></p>	