

IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS
Civil Jurisdiction
(Bird J)

Civil Case No. 387 of 2024

IN THE MATTER of the Adoption Act 2004

BETWEEN: **JERVALYN SEDE** Child
AND: **KATIE LOUISE GOSHERT** Wife Applicant
AND: **JOSHUA DANIEL GOSHERT** Husband Applicant

Date of Hearing: 6th October 2025
Date of Decision: 17th October 2025

Mrs. Yvonne Ogaoga for the Applicants

JUDGMENT ON APPLICATION FOR ADOPTION

Bird PJ:

1. This proceeding involves the adoption of a child pursuant to the provisions of the Adoption Act 2004. The child's name is Jervalyn Sede. She was born on the 24th February 2023 and is the biological child of one Veronica Sede. The biological mother is from Takwa in the Malaita Province. She was impregnated outside of wedlock. In Malaita custom, that act would be a disgrace to her family. Her brothers demanded that the pregnancy be terminated.
2. The biological mother did not wish to terminate her pregnancy and sought assistance from the Catholic DMI Sisters in Auki seeking protection and support. She was transferred to Honiara and gave birth to the child at the National Referral Hospital. On the 16th March 2023, the biological mother placed the child under DMI Sisters care through their Baby Box Initiative. In the same year the child was formally placed in the care of Katie Louise Goshert and Joshua Daniel Goshert (Applicants). The child has been under their care since then. Such is the very touching account of this child's predicament and that of her biological mother.
3. The Applicants are from the United States of America. They have been living and working in Solomon Islands since about April 2021. They live at Tanuli Ridge in Central Honiara. They are domiciled here. They are employed as Ministers with Wycliff Bible Translators and are volunteers with the Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group

in Honiara. They still intend to continue to work and live in Honiara. They have good financial standing.

4. They have given the required notice to the Honiara City Council of their intention to adopt the child. No objection to their application was received within the time limited by law. Having fulfilled the notice requirement, the Applicants filed this proceeding.

The Law

5. This court is able to grant orders for adoption under the provisions of the Adoption Act. Pursuant to my duty, I must be satisfied that all of the requirements stipulated under the Act and Regulation therein are met by the Applicants. These requirements are the following:
 - i) Residency of the applicants;
 - ii) Consent of the biological parents;
 - iii) Welfare of the child; and
 - iv) Continuous care and possession by the applicants for three months.

Residency of the Applicants

6. The applicants are citizens of the United States of America. They have been living and working in Honiara since April 2021. They are both employed by Wycliff Bible Translators and currently work with the Bible Translation Advisory Group. They reside at Tanuli Ridge in Central Honiara. They still intend to continue living and working in the country. The Applicants are ordinarily residents of Solomon Islands.
7. The prescribed three months' notice of the applicants' intention to adopt the child was sent to the Clerk, Honiara City Council on the 7th September 2023. By letter dated the 24th September 2024, their legal officer confirmed there was no objection received by them.
8. Upon the above discussion, I am satisfied that the residency requirement has been satisfied by the Applicants.

Consent of the biological parent (s)

9. The child's biological mother is not related to the Applicants. The circumstances surrounding the child's adoption is as stated in paragraph 2 above. The arrangement was made possible through the Auki and Honiara based DMI Sisters. It was through their Baby Box Initiative that the child was placed in the Applicants care.
10. I could see that with the involvement of DMI Sisters and their Baby Box Initiative, the child's biological mother has given her consent for the Applicants to adopt the child. I have had the opportunity to peruse the document marked as "JKG 5" to the Applicants joint statement filed on the 14th February 2025 which contained the biological mother's consent. I am hereby satisfied that the biological mother has voluntarily given her consent for the Applicants to adopt the child.

Welfare of the child

11. The child was born on the 23rd February 2023. By the 7th September, the Applicants had through counsel sent a notice of their intention to adopt the child to Honiara City Council. That indicates to me that the Applicants intention is obvious and genuine. I can also take it that the only real family that the child ever had and known since her birth are the Applicants.
12. The child is now more than two years old. The Applicants took over the duties, responsibilities and obligations of a mother and a father for that period of time to date. She was cared for in respect of her every day aspects of life. It is therefore obvious that the only people the child knows as her family are the Applicants. I have seen the Applicants with the child in court. I could see that there is a bond and attachment between them. In the filing of their application, they have also demonstrated their total regard for the child's wellbeing. I am satisfied that the Applicants have put at heart the total welfare of the child. They have a stable and good financial standing.

Continuous care and possession

13. As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the child has been in the Applicants care and possession for a period of more than two years. The Applicants have taken care of the child since she was an infant. There is a bond and attachment between them. Due to the circumstances surrounding this adoption, the only family the child knows are the Applicants. I am therefore satisfied that this requirement had also been satisfied in this application.

Report from the Guardian Ad Litem

14. I have perused and noted the report by the Guardian of the child dated the 29th May 2025. The Guardian was present in court during the hearing. I have noted from the report that the Applicants took in the child when she was just about two weeks old. He visited the family home and could notice the bond between the Applicants and the child. The Guardian has no hesitation in recommending and supporting the Applicants application.

Name of the child subsequent to the adoption order

15. The child's name is Jeverlyn Sede. In the event that the court grants their application for adoption, the Applicants wish to have other names included in her name subsequent to an adoption order. The name that the Applicants wish the child to have is Asiel Talitha Javelyn Goshert. The court has noted the name.

Conclusion and decision

16. Being satisfied with all the requirements stipulated under the Adoption Act 2004, I hereby make the following orders:

- i) The application of the Applicants is hereby granted.
- ii) Mr Joshua Daniel Goshert and Mrs Katie Louise Goshert are the parents of the child.
- iii) For the purpose of this adoption order, the name of the child shall be known as Asiel Talitha Jevalyn Goshert.

