

# Media Release

Tuesday 31 August, 2010

## Same sex adoption will benefit children and boost foster carer numbers

The Benevolent Society and UnitingCare Burnside support the *Adoption Amendment (Same Sex Couples) Bill 2010*, currently being put before the NSW Parliament by the Member for Sydney, Clover Moore.

The Bill would remove discriminatory practices from the adoption process and ensure that the guiding principle is the best interest of the child.

The Benevolent Society Acting CEO Maree Walk said: "We believe that an individual or couple's sexuality has no relevance when it comes to considering their ability to provide high quality care and a nurturing environment for a child. Potential adoptive parents should be assessed on the basis of their suitability to parent, not their sexual orientation.

"Through our post adoption support service, The Benevolent Society has had contact with many same-sex couples who have adopted children outside NSW. Our experience is that they have been highly sensitive to the needs of their child or children and have actively sought advice and support in order to provide the best care for their children," said Maree Walk.

Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare Burnside, Jane Woodruff said: "We do not believe that prospective parents being in a same-sex relationship should be a barrier to adoption. Rather, the overriding principle should be providing the best possible outcome for children. Our experience with same sex foster carers has shown that it's about them being good carers rather than what their individual sexual orientation may be".

There are an estimated 1300 children in NSW living with same-sex parents. By denying their parents the right to adopt, these children are deprived of a secure future.

Following their 2009 inquiry into adoption by same-sex couples, the Standing Committee on Law and Justice determined that "reform to allow same-sex couples to adopt in NSW will protect children's rights and help to ensure children's best interests." As it currently stands, the Act is in direct conflict with NSW anti-discrimination legislation. Amending this legislation is one more step towards a just and equal society.

The Bill will be debated on Thursday September 2.

**Media inquiries for UnitingCare Burnside to Mark Warren 0438 294 938**

**Media inquiries for The Benevolent Society to Carolin Wenzel 0411 766 682**

### ***About The Benevolent Society***

*Established in 1813, The Benevolent Society is Australia's first charity. The Society works with women, children, families, older people, people with a disability and those who care for them and people affected by adoption. It supports more than 17,000 vulnerable and disadvantaged people through 124 separate programs from 48 locations in NSW and Queensland. Our purpose is to create caring and inclusive communities and a just society.*

### ***About UnitingCare Burnside***

*UnitingCare Burnside is a large child and welfare agency in NSW which has provided care and support for families and children for the past 100 years. Its work in foster care, in particular, focuses very much on the needs and rights of the child.*