

MEDIA STATEMENT

20 March 2025

Change of leadership at The Benevolent Society

After nearly four years at the helm, Lin Hatfield Dodds has stepped down as CEO of The Benevolent Society as the current strategic plan comes to a close.

Lin brought incredible vision and energy to The Benevolent Society, driving growth for impact, organisational resilience, and improved services and supports for the people and communities we serve.

As she embarks on her next adventure, we celebrate her many achievements as CEO and the positive impact she has had on so many lives.

Under Lin's leadership, and guided by staff, Benevolent established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff reference group to advise the CEO, and a strong inclusion and diversity framework that gave rise to a range of staff peer networks.

Lin oversaw a critical uplift and rebuild of Benevolent's strategy and operations. She put in place a nine-year strategic framework, with the first three-year strategic plan focussed on transforming the organisation. Lin led the rebuild of essential functions for a thriving NGO including business intelligence, business development, data strategy, advocacy and systems leadership, and ensuring the best possible practice and service quality.

Her strategic focus was always on the people and communities that Benevolent exists to support, ensuring that Benevolent met people at their points of need and worked with other organisations for a just Australia in which everyone can thrive and reach their potential. Her tenure saw improved staff engagement, revenue up by 30%, and recognition of Benevolent's outstanding service quality and innovation, such as our family preservation program.

"It's been an enormous privilege to lead this amazing organisation and work with the Board and staff over the past four years", Lin said. "I'll be cheering from the sidelines as Benevolent continues to deliver excellent supports, innovates for impact, grows to increase its reach into communities, and works collaboratively with others for system change."

Benevolent Society Chair Ken Smith AO in accepting Lin's resignation said: "On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Lin for her tireless leadership of Benevolent through what has been a challenging time for the Not-for-Profit sector. We wish her well as she moves to her next challenge, where she will no doubt continue to strongly advocate for greater equity and inclusion for all Australians."

Ken announced that the Board had appointed Stefan Duvenhage, the Executive Director Finance IT and Corporate Services as interim CEO. The Board is confident that under Stefan's leadership the team will consolidate and focus on continuing to provide excellent services to individuals, families, and communities. Stefan has worked with The Benevolent Society since 2009 and has been an important part of the organisation's growth and expansion in recent years.

“The Board will now proceed with a search for our next CEO over the next few months to lead The Benevolent Society as we implement our strategic focus of building resilient and empowered individuals, families and communities in the years ahead,” Ken said

The Benevolent Society is one of Australia’s oldest charities and has been supporting a diverse range of important community initiatives since 1813. We remain committed to putting people first and working together to meet our vision of a just society where all Australians can thrive and reach their potential.

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