

MEDIA RELEASE

The Benevolent Society asks NSW Government to stop proposed adoption reforms

9 November 2018

The Benevolent Society's calls on the NSW Government to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past by stopping the proposed reforms to make it quicker and easier to adopt children from out-of-home-care.

The proposals contained in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment Bill 2018, including an arbitrary two-year time limit for children in out-of-home care fail to acknowledge the complexity of family breakdowns or to guarantee vulnerable children and families will get the services they need.

The Benevolent Society has historic and current experience providing support to adopted children and their families.

Executive Director, Dr Kirsty Nowlan says, "As a service provider we understand the ongoing trauma that past adoption practices have inflicted on children and families and cannot support practices that continue to make the same mistakes."

"The Benevolent Society rightly apologised for our past practices in 2011 and we welcomed the NSW Government's apology in 2012."

"The impacts of the Bill on all children and families in the statutory system is a cause for deep concern, but the effect in particular on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families requires immediate action from the Government." Dr Nowlan said.

"30 years after the *Bringing Them Home* report and 10 Years after the National Apology to the Stolen Generation, this Bill seeks to provide the legislative mechanism for Aboriginal children to again be removed from their families and placed with non-Aboriginal families for the rest of their lives."

"This ignores the shocking consequences of past practices, is completely contrary to the wishes of Aboriginal communities. It can't be supported and must be stopped".

The NSW Government must fulfil its obligations to provide the support and services vulnerable children and their families need. The Benevolent Society calls on the Government to immediately refer the legislation to an inquiry so that the consequences of the Bill can be fully examined and understood.

-ends-

For interviews, please contact:

Lisa Hresc, Manager Strategic Communications & Media Relations, The Benevolent Society

0421 761 332

lisa.hresc@benevolent.org.au

About The Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society is Australia's first charity, working as a catalyst for social justice and change for over 200 years. Founded in 1813, The Benevolent Society advocates for a better life for all Australians, and provides in-home services for older Australians, and people with disability, as well as providing programs in Family support and early intervention. We help people age well and live their best lives, staying in their homes wherever possible.

For more information, please visit www.benevolent.org.au, on Facebook/thebenevolentsociety or on Twitter - @BenevolentAU