

MEDIA RELEASE

## **If you're connected to adoption, find out more in Coffs Harbour**

**21 September 2017** – The Benevolent Society's Post Adoption Resource Centre (PARC) will host an Adoption Connections meeting in Coffs Harbour on Monday, 16 October 2017 to provide information and support to people affected by adoption.

Anyone connected with adoption is welcome. This meeting will provide an opportunity to find out about accessing information about past adoptions, how to make connections, and other people's experience of contact and reunion.

People who have been affected by adoption will be there to speak and answer questions at the Coffs meeting.

Fiona Cameron, a Team Leader and Counsellor at PARC, says the meeting will be open to anyone affected by adoption, including other family members seeking advice, support or information.

"With approximately one in fifteen Australians affected by adoption, we're seeing a notable increase in people requesting information, support or counselling in relation to myriad adoption matters. From help finding and contacting family members using social media and/ or other means, to advice on the post-contact processes, the meeting will surely prove beneficial to anyone connected to adoption within the Coffs Harbour area."

Louise Gore is an adopted person who has been to several PARC events.

"I'm happy to talk to people about my experience. It's always difficult to provide the details to strangers but at these meetings, you meet people who have been through similar experiences as you have, so it's not like sharing with a stranger. I think people come to these meetings a little nervous, then when they meet someone who has gone through something similar, it gives them more confidence and reassurance."

Adds Fiona, "The process for finding and contacting a parent or a child who has been adopted is delicate, emotional and difficult. Through PARC, we provide support. It is a very sensitive and challenging experience to search for and try to have contact with one's child who was raised by another family, or with a parent you have never met. We help people to be discreet in the way they make contact, and prepare for the range of possible reactions.

“PARC runs Adoption Connection meetings all over NSW and we have discovered that one of the main benefits of these meetings is the opportunity for people to meet others who have gone through similar experiences. We know there are people who come to the meetings but can’t talk about their experience. Some even drive to the meeting, but can’t bring themselves to come in. We also understand the importance of discretion; for many people the experience of adoption is something very private,” Fiona says.

Many counsellors at PARC have been involved with The Benevolent Society’s Post Adoption Resource Centre since it opened in 1991, when the Adoption Information Act was enacted. Since then, The Benevolent Society’s PARC has supported more than 70,000 people with information, counselling, intermediary services and the process of connection.

**What:** Adoption Connections Meeting, presented by The Benevolent Society

**When:** Monday, 16 October 2017

**Where:** Cavanbah Centre Community Village  
Room 1 22 Earl Street  
COFFS HARBOUR (Behind Coles Supermarket)

**Time:** 6pm – 8:30pm

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** Booking is essential by 25 September 2017  
Please call 1300 659 814, 02 9504 6788 or email: [parc@benevolent.org.au](mailto:parc@benevolent.org.au)

**-ends-**

**For interviews, please contact:**

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#### **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. The Benevolent Society advocates for a better life for all Australians and provides quality services in the areas of Family Support, assisting older people, and Australians with disability. We help people age well and live a healthy life, staying in their homes wherever possible.

For more information, please visit [www.benevolent.org.au](http://www.benevolent.org.au), on Facebook/thebenevolentsociety or on Twitter - @BenevolentAU