

MEDIA RELEASE

## **NSW Government should support Aboriginal Community-Controlled organisations to keep children out of out-of-home-care**

**7 February 2018** - The Benevolent Society welcomes the West Australian Government's decision to contract four Noongar Aboriginal – controlled organisations to work with families in danger of having their children taken into out-of-home-care. It is a sign that some governments recognise the benefits of community involvement in caring for children, and that there are better ways to protect Aboriginal children and families than the accelerated child removal programs currently in place.

Despite being only three per cent of the population, Western Australia's Aboriginal children account for more than fifty per cent of children in out-of-home-care. Western Australia is not alone. In NSW, Aboriginal children make up over forty per cent of the children in care. This is an urgent matter for all Australians.

The Benevolent Society believes that the NSW Government should follow Western Australia's example and shift the decision-making for children in need of help from government to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

The current NSW Inquiry into the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home-care will report to the Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing Pru Goward in June. The Benevolent Society calls on the government to act now to resource and support Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to prevent Aboriginal children entering the child protection system. As the Victorian Minister pointed out, "Services had greater success rates if they were in Aboriginal hands."

The Benevolent Society supports the call from the NSW Family Matters campaign for the NSW Government to build an Aboriginal state-wide safety net of community-controlled organisations that is resourced to meet the needs of Aboriginal children, families and communities, similar to Western Australia.

Minister Goward has the opportunity to show real leadership here.

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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. 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](http://www.benevolent.org.au), on Facebook/thebenevolentsociety or on Twitter - @BenevolentAU