



Council of Social Service of New South Wales

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Statement of Support for Same-Sex Adoption

NCOSS calls on the NSW Government to end discrimination against same-sex couples.

The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) is an independent non-government organisation (NGO) and is the peak body for the non-government human services sector in NSW. NCOSS works with its members on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities towards achieving social justice in New South Wales.

Currently the definition of a 'de facto' partner in the *Adoption Act 2000* excludes same-sex couples. It means that same-sex partners cannot adopt the children of their partner. This means that the best interests of children in same-sex parent families are not being met as their relationship with their non-biological parent cannot be legally recognised.

Further preventing same-sex couples from being able to adopt children in general seems ridiculous in light of the widespread number of same-sex couples who are foster parents. If same-sex couples are able to provide short-term support and care, and a balanced family life, for foster children, then there is no reason to deny them this same right in regards to an adopted child.

Internationally there are an increasing number of countries that allow the adoption of children by same-sex couples. These include Canada, United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany and Ireland (to name a few).

In Australia, the ACT, Western Australia and Tasmania allow adoption by same-sex couples.

Therefore both internationally and within Australia changes to adoption practices are occurring and NSW should change the *Adoption Act 2000* accordingly.

NCOSS believes that it is time for the *Adoption Act 2000* to be updated and recognises same-sex couples in the same way as other pieces of legislation in NSW already do.

NCOSS also believes that the best interests of children will be furthered by removing discrimination against same-sex couples in the *Adoption Act 2000*.