

MEDIA RELEASE
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Barnardos welcomes national support for Open Adoption

This week in Federal Parliament, the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs tabled its report "Breaking barriers: a national adoption framework for Australian children". The outlines Recommendations following this year's Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Adoption.

Barnardos Australia welcomes the report and is heartened that the Committee has included many of the recommendations presented to the Inquiry both in the Barnardos submission and also direct evidence given by CEO Deirdre Cheers at the public hearing in June this year.

The recommendations focus on the needs of vulnerable children in out-of-home care and the importance of child focussed time frames for decision making over all other considerations. It emphasises that all children need and deserve safety, permanency and stability at home, and proposes a national framework for open adoption is needed.

The Report stresses that restoration to family, if it is safe to do so, is always the preferred option for children in care. However, children whom the courts have ruled can never safely return home need legal permanency and belonging for life. Given the impermanence of foster care, only open adoption can provide the security of a family for life, while also having a sense of identity provided by knowledge of family.

Present at Parliament House for the release of the report, Barnardos Australia CEO, Deirdre Cheers commented: "Barnardos is pleased to see its core values reflected in these recommendations and the principles we have practised for over three decades, which we know work for children in out-of-home care, now enshrined in the Committee's recommendations. We look forward to working with government on a national framework for open adoption, following the lead of NSW which has been spearheading open adoption reform in recent years".

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About Barnardos Australia

Barnardos Australia is a leading non-government, non-denominational, child safety and family care organisation which has provided services for vulnerable children, young people and their families in Australia since 1883. We work with highly vulnerable children and young people to provide a safe home and permanent relationships for all their childhood. We care for children exposed to physical, emotional and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, exploitation and homelessness. As one of the nation's leading child protection charities, Barnardos vision is that all children and young people will have caring families where they can grow safely and fulfil their potential, as we believe all children deserve a safe and stable home. www.barnardos.org.au