

MEDIA RELEASE

Barnardos launches ground-breaking adoption research

New research from Barnardos Australia and the University of Oxford has revealed that children who were adopted had significantly better life outcomes when compared with children that remained in foster care, particularly when it comes to education and employment.

Professor Leon Feinstein, Director of the Rees Centre at Oxford University said, “we are delighted to announce our partnership with Barnardos Australia on the book launch of a major research study on adoption, entitled ‘Outcomes of Open Adoption from Care’. The project, funded by Barnardos (Australia), with research undertaken by Emeritus Professor Harriet Ward and Helen Trivedi at the Rees Centre (Oxford), presents new and vivid findings concerning the extreme vulnerability of children placed for adoption from care, the impact and durability of face-to-face post adoption contact and adult outcomes of adoptees.”

Launched today by Barnardos is the first longitudinal study of open adoption undertaken in Australia, examining the long-term outcomes of 210 children adopted through Barnardos between 1987 and 2013. The children in the study were permanently removed from their birth parents and placed in foster care due to severe abuse and neglect. Pioneers of open adoption in Australia, Barnardos recognised the secrecy that traditionally accompanied “closed” adoptions was detrimental to children’s development. By maintaining “openness” through contact with their birth family, these adopted children formed a healthy sense of identity and experienced greater stability and belonging, for life, compared to those in the unstable foster care system until the age of 18.

Key findings of the study include:

- 63% of adult adoptees completed Year 12 or higher, compared with 42% of adults who grew up in foster care.
- 62% of adult adoptees were engaged in full-time employment, education or training compared with 34% of adults who grew up in foster care.

These findings have important implications for government support and funding of open adoption in Australia. Currently only NSW and ACT have legislated for open adoption and Barnardos is the largest non-government provider of open adoptions from care Barnardos Australia CEO Deirdre Cheers said;

"This is a children's rights issue. All children have the right to an education and to grow up in a stable and supportive environment. There are over 45,000 children in foster care in Australia but only 171 children were adopted from foster care last year. Currently adults working in child protection are making the decision as to whether a child can be adopted. Barnardos world-first research will serve to inform our state governments about the urgent need to bring about open adoption reform in order to improve life outcomes for the children and young people currently in foster care."

This launch [video](#) features two of the authors of the study and two adult adoptees speaking about their experiences of foster care and open adoption.

Click [here](#) for the Executive Summary of the study and [here](#) for free and unlimited access to 'Outcomes of Open Adoptions from Care'.

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For more information or to arrange media interviews, contact:

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About Barnardos Australia

Barnardos Australia is here because every child needs a champion. We listen, we act, and we advocate for the safety of children at risk of abuse and neglect, providing family support programs and services that empower children to reach their full potential. When it comes to protecting vulnerable children from abuse, we never give up. We are dedicated to the prevention of trauma in children, and support families to be the best parents they can be. We help children to recover and thrive, and we find safe homes for them through foster care and open adoption.