



27 July 2010

The Hon Kristina Keneally MP
Level 40, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Premier,

Adoption Amendment (Same-Sex Couples) Bill

We write to urge you to support the passage of the Adoption Amendment (Same-Sex Couples) Bill introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 24 June 2010.

Women's Legal Services NSW is a community legal centre that aims to achieve access to justice and a just legal system for women in NSW by promoting women's human rights, redressing inequalities experienced by women and fostering legal and social change through strategic legal services, community development, community legal education and law and policy reform work.

We unequivocally support the amendment of NSW adoption laws to allow same-sex couples to adopt.

We welcome the steps taken by the NSW government in 2008 to remove discrimination towards people in same-sex relationships from state legislation and consider the extension of adoption to same-sex couples is a necessary and logical next step.

We strongly believe that individuals and couples should be assessed on their ability to care for a child and provide a stable home, not on their sexual orientation.

In many circumstances it would be in the interests of a child to be adopted by a non-biological parent or by a same-sex couple, including children in same-sex foster families, some children with same-sex step-parents and co-parents, as well as same-sex couples who wish to jointly adopt a child.

We note the disadvantage suffered by children where they have primary carers who are not legally recognised as parents. We also note this legal change may help reduce social stigma and discrimination suffered by children of same-sex relationships.

We consider that it is never in a child's best interests to be subjected to discrimination.

Adoption by same-sex couples will benefit children by ensuring they have equal rights and protection under the law by providing:



- greater stability in medical and other emergencies,
- more certainty and financial security should their parents separate,
- access to workers compensation and victim compensation payments where one or both parents are killed or injured,
- rights to inheritance of both of the parents' assets,
- recognition of both parents by school authorities, and
- improved access to guardianship orders for elderly parents.

We strongly encourage you and all members of your government to children and support the removal of discrimination in adoption law.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Mari Vagg on (02) 9749 7700 or mari_vagg@clc.net.au

Yours faithfully,
Women's Legal Services NSW

Janet Loughman
Principal Solicitor