

# MEDIA RELEASE



**For Immediate Release: Wednesday 19 November 2014**

## **Advocacy groups call on Victorian parties to remove last discrimination faced by same-sex couples in Victorian Law**

Today the Victorian Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby (VGLRL) and Rainbow Families Council launched their '**Adoption Equality Now**' petition calling on the three major parties in the Victorian election to commit to removing discrimination in adoption law in the first 100 days of the next Parliament.

"Many people don't realise that there is still discrimination against same-sex couples in Victorian adoption law," said Anna Brown, VGLRL Co-Convenor and LGBTI Victorian of the Year. "Although there are just a tiny number of infant adoptions each year, the ban against adoption by same-sex couples affects many hundreds of other children, especially those children in foster/permanent care with same sex couples or living in step-parent families."

**Victorian law still only lets heterosexual couples adopt, and under special circumstances single people.**

Australian and International studies [1] clearly show that it's the quality of parenting relationships that determines a child's wellbeing, not the gender or sexual identity of their parents [2].

Foster agencies like Berry Street know that. That's why so many children are in successful long-term placements with same-sex carers. Research also shows that the stability and legal certainty of adoption is very positive for children's wellbeing [3].

**In a recent letter to Rainbow Families Council, Sandie de Wolf CEO Berry Street stated, in support of the adoption equality campaign, that "Discrimination of this type directly impacts on these children by denying them access to adoption with their permanent carers and more broadly reinforces homophobic attitudes against same-sex couples which is harmful to all children."**

"It's time for all parties to commit to a timeline for removing this last stain of discrimination against same-sex couples from the statute books," said Ms Brown, "The ALP and the Victorian Greens have committed to removing discrimination but have not committed to a timeline for action. However as we near the state election, voters remain in the dark about where the Liberal National Coalition stands on this important children's rights issue, despite Community Services Minister Mary Wooldridge recently expressing her 'personal' support for reform."

**"We call on Premier Napthine to publically support reforming adoption law and, at the very least, commit his party to a conscience vote to allow supportive Coalition MPs to vote in favour of reform."** said Ms Brown.

You can watch the parties stance on adoption in this Meet Your Candidates webisode released overnight: <http://www.pridetv.com.au/vglrl-meet-the-candidates-ep-7-adoption-equality-in-victoria/>

**Sign the 'Adoption Equality Now' petition**

<http://www.change.org/p/premier-denis-napthine-support-adoption-equality-in-victoria>

**For media comment please contact:**

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FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/adoptionequalityvictoria> TWITTER: [@AdoptionEquality](https://twitter.com/AdoptionEquality)

[1] Dempsey, D. *Same-sex parented families in Australia*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2013, available at [www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/same-sex-parented-families-australia](http://www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/same-sex-parented-families-australia)

[2] Crouch S, Waters E, McNair R, Power J and Davis E (2014). *Parent-reported measures of child health and wellbeing in same-sex parent families: a cross-sectional survey*. BMC Public Health 14:635 (available here: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/14/635/abstract>)

[3] Farr,R, Forsell,S and Patterson, C.J. *Parenting and Child Development in Adoptive Families: Does Parental Sexual Orientation Matter?* 2010 available at <http://people.virginia.edu/~cjp/articles/ffp10b.pdf>