

Open Letter to NSW Premier Morris Iemma on Proposed Parental Status for Lesbian Partners

Dear Mr Iemma,

I am very concerned by reports that your government is proposing to extend parenting rights to a mother's lesbian partner.¹

The proposal to record on a child's birth certificate the name of a lesbian partner of the mother, as if she were a parent of the child, is not in the child's best interests. A birth certificate should record, if possible, the actual biological mother and father of the child. Only then can the child know his or her true biological origin.

Children need and have a right to know their father as well as their mother. Children born by artificial insemination or IVF *have* a biological father but the government's proposal would create a legal fiction that somehow two women produced a child. It is wrong to force this adult make believe on to the child's very identity by force of law. The State should not legitimise or encourage means of producing children that intentionally deny a child the right to know his or her father.²

The best available Australian research shows that children raised by same-sex partners rate significantly worse in school achievements and classroom behaviour and show more gender confusion than children raised by married couples.³ Even US studies which are generally positive about children raised by same-sex partners reveal a greater incidence of anxiety, sadness, hostility, defensiveness and inhibitions especially among boys of lesbian mothers.⁴

Lesbian relationships are significantly more unstable than marriage, breaking up within the first 8 years at *over three times* the rate of marriages.⁵ It is not in a child's best interest to give permanent parental status to his or her mother's current lesbian partner when such relationships are so unstable. Many women participate in the lesbian lifestyle for a short, experimental period. It is not in their interest, after leaving this lifestyle, to be burdened with having former lesbian partners holding permanent parental status over their biological children.

I earnestly ask you not to proceed with implementing this proposal with its potentially devastating effects on the lives of children who have no say in being made the participants in a risky social experiment.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE/S:

NAME/S (block capitals: Title (eg Mr/Mrs etc), First Name and Last Name):

.....

ADDRESS:

..... POSTCODE:

PHONE: EMAIL:

Please return to: Festival of Light Australia, GPO Box 9894, Sydney NSW 2001 by 10 June 2008

-
1. "Rights for children of same sex female parents", 22 April 2008, www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au.
 2. *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Article 7 (1); www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm.
 3. Sarantakos, S, "Children in three contexts", *Children Australia*, 1996, Vol 21, No 3.
 4. Wardle, Lynn D, 1997, "The Potential Impact of Homosexual Parenting on Children", *University of Illinois Law Review*, 1997, Issue 3, p 833.
 5. Andersson, G., "Divorce-Risk Patterns in Same-Sex Marriages in Norway and Sweden", *PAA 2004 Annual Meeting*, Boston, 1-3 April 2004.