

MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Community Services
The Hon. Linda Burney MP**



Friday, 25 September 2009

\$5.67 MILLION IN SUPPORT FOR CENTRAL WEST FAMILIES

Minister for Community Services Linda Burney today announced continued funding of more than \$5.67 million over three years for early intervention services in the Central West.

Ms Burney said this funding is part of a \$20.8 million investment by the NSW Government in its early intervention program, Brighter Futures, for Western NSW.

“Brighter Futures helps struggling families by intervening before problems escalate or turn into a crisis,” Ms Burney said.

“Time and again we see the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage play out, where parenting skills are not handed down from mother to daughter, from father to son. The sad consequence in many cases is that families break up and sometimes children are removed.

“Brighter Futures helps to break this damaging cycle.”

Ms Burney said vulnerable families have minimal family support and are socially isolated.

“By helping families in ways such as offering subsidised child care, parents can give their children a quality early childhood education and improve their development and life chances. At the same time, parents’ social and support networks are expanded,” she said.

“The program also links families to parenting programs, home visiting services and supported parenting groups that connect parents to social networks.”

Ms Burney made today’s announcement with the Benevolent Society Orange, one of the organisations funded to deliver Brighter Futures in the state’s west, along with Mission Australia, UnitingCare Burnside and Barnardos.

“The Benevolent Society welcomes this continued funding for Brighter Futures in the Central West,” the Benevolent Society’s Network Manager, John McClinton, said.

“Over the past three years, Brighter Futures has achieved some great results for families in Orange, Bathurst, Lithgow, Parkes and Mudgee.

“We look forward to continuing our partnership with Community Services and working alongside other agencies to deliver services to vulnerable families.”

Ms Burney said the Government is investing over \$128 million in Brighter Futures across NSW, earmarked for the non-government sector over the next three years.

“This demonstrates our commitment to implementing the Wood Commission’s recommendation to increase the role of the non-government sector in providing child protection services,” she said.

At the end of last year, 3,100 families and 7,500 children benefitted from Brighter Futures.

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CASE STUDY

Helping parents to develop their parenting skills is one of the main objectives of the Brighter Futures program. The Benevolent Society runs parenting programs using a model called *The Incredible Years*.

In Orange, The Benevolent Society has just completed its first *Incredible Years Parents and Babies* program where the focus is on developing strong bonds between parents and their infants aged up to 12 months.

The Society has also run the *Incredible Years Parents and Toddlers* program throughout the Central West, which uses play, praise and rewards to help parents establish positive discipline routines with their toddlers aged up to three years.

Co-facilitator Sandra Wolmarans said results from *Incredible Years* were impressive.

“Parents gain confidence from completing the program and seeing the improvement in their children’s social, emotional, physical and academic development,” she said.

The Benevolent Society runs *Incredible Years* from Glenroi Heights Public School.