

2. The marketing campaigns

'All kinds of kids need all kinds of carers' – The Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society's out-of-home care program in New South Wales, Fostering Young Lives, developed the campaign slogan 'All kinds of kids need all kinds of carers'. A broad foster carer marketing and recruitment plan that specifically targeted the LGBTI community was designed to promote the campaign. Communication strategies and promotional materials were developed including information packs, brochures (general and LGBTI), postcards, a kinship care handbook, Q&A sheets for the LGBTI community, an eight minute DVD, outdoor and indoor banners and other promotional items. Appropriate imagery was developed to reflect diverse carers. Some 'scripting' material for staff was also developed to ensure that clear, consistent and positive messaging was delivered.

Significantly, the materials were positive in both message and imagery, which was a deliberate move away from the traditional portrayal of a 'poor, sad child who needs a home for Christmas'.

The campaign also involved:

- advertising (radio, print, billboards, all LGBTI newspapers and magazines)
- online and social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- participation in high profile LGBTI community events such as Sydney Mardi Gras Fair Day and the Gay and Lesbian Business Awards
- hosting information events specifically targeted to the LGBTI community
- actively seeking publicity (e.g. newspaper articles etc) to advertise that the organisation was proud to be recruiting LGBTI carers and recognised that they have much to offer children.

The campaign, and in particular executive endorsement to participate in high visibility events such as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival, was also affirming for LGBTI staff. Staff attended events, distributed information and supported 'word of mouth' promotion. Already

recruited LGBTI foster carers also attended targeted information sessions to speak about their fostering experiences. This last strategy was particularly effective and often resulted in increased enquiries in the days following each event.

'Fostering with Pride' – Berry Street

Berry Street's 'Fostering with Pride' campaign was the organisation's first overt campaign specifically to recruit LGBTI carers, and was a whole of organisation campaign. The start of the campaign was timed to coincide with the 'season' of events in the Victorian LGBTI community such as Midsumma Carnival, Pride March and the ChillOut Festival. Merchandise developed for use at these events included promotional items tailored to the LGBTI community. Berry Street held a stall at Midsumma and ChillOut staffed by employees and foster carers. Berry Street saw its presence at these events as an opportunity to distribute information, talk with interested people and demonstrate that the organisation supported the LGBTI community and does not discriminate against LGBTI foster carers. These events were followed by foster care information sessions held specifically for the LGBTI community.

Primary media promotion of 'Fostering with Pride' was through radio sponsorship with JOY 94.9FM in Melbourne, Australia's only gay and lesbian radio station. The radio promotion included community service announcements, interviews at LGBTI community events, monthly podcasts that involved interviews with Berry Street staff and on-air interviews. There was also a Berry Street banner on the JOY FM website and the station distributed foster

care flyers to all new radio members. Berry Street continues to support JOY FM through sponsorship as it is a central media channel for the LGBTI community.

Training of staff was also considered critical. The organisation recognised that some staff might not be familiar with issues faced by LGBTI people or might harbour personal prejudices, which could result in a lack of sensitivity in their discussions and support of carers. In addition, some staff expressed the view that they 'have no problems if people were gay or lesbian' and they 'treat everyone the same', indicating that they might not recognise and respond appropriately to important differences. The training aimed to increase staff awareness of the issues and to enable them to recognise some of the unique challenges LGBTI carers might face in relation to identity, stigma, hostility, isolation, ridicule or discrimination when living in a society that often marginalises their experiences.

