

TOGETHER for ADOPTION

**2011 Conference
Melbourne, Australia 18-19 Nov**

Mobilising Christians
across Australia to care for
at-risk children



Breakout Session Speakers:

We have more to be confirmed, but here's a sneak peek.

Joining our main session speakers for the Breakout sessions are the following:

Hon Dennis Hood MLC



Dennis Hood is a Member of the Legislative Council and Parliamentary Leader for the Family First Party in South Australia. He joined his former parliamentary colleague, Andrew Evans - replaced by the Hon Robert Brokenshire MLC in 2008 - in the Upper House after being elected in the 2006 State Election.

In State Parliament, Dennis seeks to promote and protect traditional family values, including the value of human life.

Dennis is currently on the Social Development Committee administered by the South Australian Parliament, Chairman of the Family First Party's State Executive and Member of the Family First Party's Federal Executive.

Prior to entering politics, Dennis spent some 12 years in the pharmaceutical industry, progressing to Senior Management in Johnson & Johnson, the world's largest healthcare company.

Dennis is 41 years old, a Justice of the Peace and holds a university degree in economics and an honours degree in politics and philosophy.

He has been married to Lisa for 12 years, with whom he has a daughter, Madeline.

Janette Pepall, Specialist Trainer and Consultant in Children at risk



[Janette Pepall](#) works in the area of children at risk, and since 1987 has worked as a social worker and educator in local and international adoptions, foster care, counseling and child protection. She and her husband have 6 adult children, one birth son and five adoptees from Australia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong. Janette has been a prolific author, writing YWAM's Orphans and Family Ministry School (OFMS), many articles concerning children at risk, and most recently the module, 'Care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children.' She is

currently writing a series of training modules for national child caregivers. An adoptive and foster mother, Janette is passionate about providing practical knowledge to those who work with children and in encouraging and motivating them to continue to work with the 'most vulnerable.

Janine Weir, Adoptive mother and advocate



After obtaining a Bachelor of Commerce at Melbourne University, Janine worked in investment markets in London and Sydney. Janine has been involved in adoption for over 14 years with direct experience in inter-country adoption, local adoption and foster care through the New South Wales system. She has been widely involved in volunteering nationally in adoption through lobbying,

advocacy, coaching, presenting, writing, media and education for over ten years. Janine is also very involved with a variety of orphan projects in Asia and is a mother via adoption three times over.

Jason Kovacs, Advisory Director for Together for Adoption



Jason is the Cofounder of Together for Adoption and Director of Ministry Development for [The ABBA Fund](#). He also serves on staff as Pastor of Care and Counseling at the [Austin Stone Community Church](#) in Austin, TX where he and his wife live with their five children (four adopted and one biological child). It is Jason's passion to see the church gripped with the

adoptive heart of God and practically living out the Gospel through adoption and orphan care. He is a contributing author of [*Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living Through the Rediscovery of Abba Father*](#), writing on 'Missional Living and Adoption.' Jason is passionate about seeing a global movement of churches caring for the fatherless and loves writing, speaking, and consulting on topics such as the theology of adoption/orphan care, resources and financing for adoption, transracial adoption, and how to care for adoptive families.

Aaron Harvey, Creative Media Director, [Bulls+Arrows](#)



Aaron has been heavily involved in the new media industry for several years, working for different design studios in Melbourne, and is now involved in heading up a youth website called Bulls+Arrows. Bulls+Arrows is a new Australian youth-focussed site that provokes discussion about culture, life and God through films, music and conversations. "We figured that as more and more young people engage with online media, it is vital that we, as Christians, journey with them in ways that are both culturally and technologically relevant. So the website contains various films on life issues, our culture and God in an environment that looks amazing, engages young people and provides opportunities to share their thoughts. We are

connecting directly with young people through school ministries and various social media networks and have been privileged to walk alongside and encourage kids through this new ministry." Aaron is husband to Kristy and a new father of little Eli and loving it!!

Stephen Said, Educator, activist, speaker, writer and community development worker



Stephen is a husband, a dad, and a foundation member of the Melbourne Heart Football Club. He works in the area of activism and social change as an educator, activist, speaker, writer and community development worker. He is involved in leading Missio Dei, a church in Melbourne's north east. He has worked with various community development and mission organisations over the last 15 years

including Catalyst Innovations, Tear Australia and the Forge Mission Training Network and currently works with Urban Seed, a NGO working to eradicate poverty. In addition, he is a regular sessional lecturer at Tabor College Melbourne and ACOM. Stephen is particularly interested in radical spirituality, incarnational community and the dynamics of personal and social transformation. He has helped many think about the nexus between the issues of justice, poverty, consumerism and discipleship in the context of popular global culture.

Stephen is regularly sought after to write and speak at conferences, conventions, camps and retreats, inciting people in the first world to consider integrated missional responses to the challenges of the emerging global culture.

Paul Magno, Pastor at Lighthouse Christian Church and Foster Carer



Paul's passion is to see the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel release justice and transformation in society. He has been involved in different prayer movements and currently serves in the leadership team at [Lighthouse Christian Church](#) in Keysborough. Paul and his wife, Jessica, have 3 kids and are actively involved in foster care.

Helen Parker, Director of [The Babes Project](#)



Helen is the Founder and Director of [The Babes Project](#), an Australian based organisation committed to promoting adoption & parenting as positive alternatives to abortion. As a 20 year old university student Helen found herself unexpectedly pregnant, without support or any clear idea of what to do next, so the doctor booked her in for a pregnancy

termination. The lack of discussion about other options was cause for concern. Helen chose to proceed with her pregnancy, became a single parent and later volunteered in supporting other young mums. Helen has since spent much of her life devoted to working toward greater support services for women, which saw the beginning of The Babes Project in July 2009. She has worked with several women and is passionate about advocating using stories as a means to bring awareness to the issues of crisis pregnancy, adoption and abortion.