

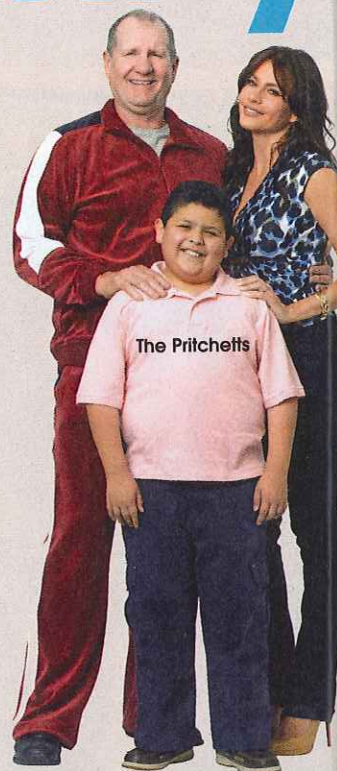
# Meet the *real* Modern Family



The Pritchett-Tuckers

The Dunphys

The hit TV comedy, *Modern Family*, is flying the flag for families in unconventional situations and it seems Aussies can't get enough. Here *that's life!* takes a look at three modern Australian families and finds out how they make things work



The Pritchetts

## Two men and a baby

When I met Mark, now 47, 16 years ago, it was love at first sight.

Within six months we'd moved in together and although we were happy, about five years ago we realised we wanted a child to complete our family.

It was a difficult process, not only because same-sex couples are not allowed to adopt in Australia, but because we were worried a child might be discriminated against for having two dads and no mum.

But eventually we decided to go ahead and searched the internet for the right country and surrogate for us.

We were recommended a place in India and went to visit, checking out the hospital and meeting our potential surrogate and her husband.

We had to provide the sperm and used a donor egg. This was then implanted into our surrogate, and happily, resulted in a pregnancy.

It was all completely above

board and, while we would be re-mortgaging our home to pay for it, our surrogate would be paying off hers. She certainly hadn't been forced into it.

In August last year, after paying around \$60,000, we went back to India for the birth of our daughter, Rani.

It was an amazing day and we both cried for hours when she was placed into our arms. It was by far the best thing we had ever done.

We've been really lucky and have been accepted by our local community completely. People's views are changing.

Occasionally we get people asking if we are giving Mum at home a break for a while. When we explain Rani has two dads, they are normally just a bit embarrassed about the mistake they have made.

We haven't had any abuse or problems.

We're glad people have become more accepting of all types of families and we hope that in future gay families will have the same rights as anyone else.

One thing's for sure though, Rani has completed our family. We're over the moon to have her. ■

**Allan Luciani-Croul, 41, Daylesford, Vic**



Mark and I so love Rani

## The changing face of our families

- The number of cohabiting same-sex couples doubled from 10,000 in 1996 to 20,000 in 2001.
- More than 33 per cent of babies born in 2008 were to unmarried mothers, up from 8.3 per cent in 1970.
- In 1975, only 16 per cent of couples lived together before getting married. By 2008, 78 per cent of married couples had.
- People are having fewer children. In 1966 the average number of kids was 3.5. By 2006 this had dropped to 2.6.
- Dads are getting older. In 2008, 8566 babies were born to men aged 45 to 49, compared with 3252 in 1988.