



Editorial

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The second carer recruitment campaign based on the theme of 'Real Carers Really Needed' ended on 29 May 2011. The campaign was a great success with over 150 potential carers calling the 1800 number.

On 27 May 2011, Michelle O'Byrne, Minister for Children, welcomed carers at a 'get together' at the Child and Family Centre in Beaconsfield to celebrate the end of the campaign.

Although the campaign has officially ended, potential carers continue to lodge expressions of interest in being an approved carer. This is the sign of a successful campaign.

Planning for another carer recruitment campaign during 2011-2012 has commenced. Themes for the next campaign will be explored over coming months.

Carer payments are being increased to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The new rates commence from 2 July 2011. The new rates of payments are outlined on page 2 of this newsletter. Carers will receive the new payments during the week commencing Monday 18 July 2011.

I recently attended the Implementation Working Group meeting for the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children. The Framework is broader than children involved in the care and protection system. For instance, the Working Group is also concerned about the high incidence of children falling from residential buildings. However, improving child protection systems is a strong theme. An important way of achieving this is through building meaningful relationships between child protection workers, carers and children under care and protection orders.

The State budget was released on 16 June. Carers will have heard about the current difficult budget position that we are facing. I will do my best to ensure that you are kept informed and be assured of my ongoing commitment to all carers.

Regards

Mark Byrne

Chief Executive Officer, Children and Youth Services

NEWS

Improving support for carers

Improving support for carers is one of the priorities of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*.

To progress this initiative, the Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) engaged the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) to identify gaps in the financial and non-financial supports for carers.

The research found that carers were not aware of the range of supports and services that are available to them. In response to this finding, FaHCSIA is developing an 'online resource' that will provide information about the Commonwealth, state, territory and non-government supports and services. The site will include Indigenous specific resources. It is anticipated that the online resource will be ready for release in August 2011.

Commissioner for Children's Visitors Pilot

An evaluation of the Visitors Pilot was presented to the Minister for Children in June 2011. The evaluation report recommended that a new model for a children's visitors program be developed. The new model will initially focus on young people in therapeutic residential care. In the interim, those children who participated in the pilot will continue to be visited once a month by their visitor.

New carer payments

From 2 July 2011 the fortnightly payments for children in care are as follows:

Standard board payments

Children aged 0 – 4 years;	\$359
Children aged 5 - 11 years:	\$411
Children aged 12 – 17 years:	\$475

Payments for children with intensive needs

	Level 1	Level 2
Children aged 0 – 4 years;	\$580	\$875
Children aged 5 - 11 years:	\$633	\$928
Children aged 12 – 17 years:	\$696	\$992

Payments for children with complex needs

	Level 1	Level 2
Children aged 0 – 4 years;	\$1,171	\$1,392
Children aged 5 - 11 years:	\$1,224	\$1,445
Children aged 12 – 17 years:	\$1,287	\$1,508

Additional payments for the care of children in care must be approved by the Area Funding Panel. Please contact the child's case manager if you have any questions regarding the new payments.

Carers will receive the payments during the week commencing 18 July 2011. This year there will not be a delay in the when the payments commence and no need to make 'back payment's as has occurred in previous years.

Register your interest in attending the Tasmanian and National Conferences now

Tasmanian foster and kinship carers' conference

The annual carers' conference, organised by the Foster Carers' Association of Tasmania (FCAT) will be held at the Tailrace Centre in August 2011. The Centre is located at 32 Elouera Street (off West Tamar Road) which is approximately ten minutes from the Launceston CBD.

The theme for the conference is 'building connections through care link us together'.

The conference program on Saturday 20 August will include a workshop on the impact of trauma for children in care by Caroline Brown from the Child Trauma Service. Tim Vaastra and Rosie Crumpton-Crook will conduct a workshop on transfer of guardianship.

The conference dinner will commence with pre-dinner drinks at 6.30 pm.

Accommodation is across the road from the conference centre.

This is a great opportunity for carers to catch up on what's been happening across Tasmania. Carers are encouraged to register for the conference by contacting FCAT.

You do not have to be a member of FCAT to attend the conference. Child care is provided but must be booked in advance.

National foster and kinship carer conference

The 2011 national conference will be held in Surfers Paradise, Queensland from 7 to 9 October. It will commence with a 'meet and greet' from 7 to 9 pm on Friday 7 October.

The conference program includes two keynote addresses and many workshops. Caring for traumatised children is a strong theme of the conference with recognised speakers such as Gregory Nicolau, Consultant Psychologist, and Noel MacNamara from the Australian Childhood Foundation.

Workshops will also cover kinship care and caring for indigenous children. CREATE will present a session on the issues facing young people leaving care. There will be a session on the Queensland Community Visitors Program and the Foster care Advocacy and Support Team (FAST).

The impact of technology is covered with a session on dangers and risks for children using the internet as well as a session by two social workers in Western Australia on the use of Viewpoint. Viewpoint is an internet program that enables children and young people in care in WA to contribute to their case and case plan and provide feedback to managers on how to improve services for children and young people in care. The use of Viewpoint is well established in the UK, although it is understood that WA is the first state to use the program in Australia.

There is a session that will outline resources for supporting carers to talk about sexuality, relationships and being safe with children in care.

Experienced carers will be the presenters for some of the sessions and the conference will provide opportunities for carers to learn from the experience of other carers. Foster Care Queensland has developed an exciting program that promises to be extremely relevant and very informative for carers. FCAT will be assisting some Tasmanian carers with the travel and registration costs. Register your interest now by contacting their local committee or Maggie Philips on 0400 876 907.

There is more information about the national conference on the Foster Carers Association of Tasmania site at <http://www.fcatas.org.au/>

Medication Management

If you have not yet completed your compulsory Medication Management training, please contact your child's worker to find out when the next session is in your area.



CREATE News

The CREATE Your Future Program

The *Create Your Future Program* was held in the northern area in May and June. The delivery of the program in the north was different to the earlier program in the south as the northern program included a camp during the June holidays. This was seen as the best way to support young people to develop leaving care skills but at the same time allowing them opportunities to pursue other interests during the holiday period.

Eleven young people attended the camp. The young people were quite positive with a young person aged 17 years saying "I liked this camp cause I made new friends and learning new things was great. The food was the best, I would love to do it again".

National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC) Summit

The 2011 NYAC Summit was held in Sydney in May. Bek, Sarah and Josh were the young Tasmanian delegates at the Summit.

This was an important opportunity for young people from across Australia to get together to explore how the experience of being in care can be improved.

The 2011 Summit explored three main issues. These were housing and homelessness; health and wellbeing; and transitioning to independence.

The 2011 Transitioning from Care in Australia report was released during the Summit. The report includes the findings from a survey of 605 young people aged 15 to 17 years. A clear message was that many young people were not actively involved in the development of their leaving care plans.

In February 2011, CREATE surveyed 605 young people aged 15 to 17 years on their experiences of leaving care. 86.5 per cent of young Tasmanians in care participated in the survey. This was a much higher rate of participation than all other states and territories. This result suggests that we have been successful in engaging with young Tasmanian care leavers and we can build on that engagement

CREATE presented the findings of the report to the Minister for Children on 4 July 2011 and to representatives of the out of home care sector on 5 July 2011. The report is available on CREATE's website <http://www.create.org.au/>

If you are caring for a young person who has turned 15 years and who does not have a leaving care plan, please contact the young person's case manager to request that a plan is prepared and reviewed at least annually.

club.CREATE

To take part in CREATE's events, training and activities, children in care need to be a club.CREATE member. **It's free.** They receive a welcome pack in the mail for joining, quarterly club.CREATE magazines, Christmas and Birthday cards and invites to all CREATE events in their area. You can join by ringing CREATE on 1800 655 105, online at <http://www.create.org.au> or by visiting us at our office.



CREATE Office
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National Standards for Out-of-Home Care

The National Standards are available on the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs website at http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/nat_std_4_0_utofhomecare/Pages/default.aspx

Reporting against the standards will commence from July 2011. Reporting will be implemented in stages over coming years with the first report being published after July 2012.

The Charter of Rights – making a difference for children and young people in care – improving their educational opportunities

The Charter of Rights states that Tasmanian children in care have a right to an education.

Recent research published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) found that many children in care across Australia are not meeting national benchmarks for reading and numeracy.

Tasmanian children in care who are in years three and five are doing as well as children in care in other states and territories. However, the performance for Tasmanian children who are in grade seven was not as good as similar children on the mainland.

A new partnering agreement between the Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) was signed by the respective Secretaries in early 2011.

Under the Agreement, child protection workers and schools are required to work together to ensure that all students in care have a personalised learning plan (PLP). The plans must be developed through discussions with the individual student.

Students with more complex educational needs may require an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

If you are caring for a student who is attending a state school or college and who does not have a PLP, you should discuss the need for a personalised learning plan with the child's case manager or teacher.

Blind and Curtain Cords

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) have produced a brochure that outlines ways to protect children, especially young children, from the risk of strangulation by loose blinds or curtain rods.

Here is an electronic version of the brochure: <http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/item.phtml?itemId=972983&nodeId=b9b76403dfb460c210b55453f7ce2158&fn=Safety%20alert%20%E2%80%94%20Blind%20and%20curtain%20cords.pdf>

Child and Family Centres

The Child and Family Centre in Beaconsfield is now open and new centres in East Devonport, Queenstown, Clarence Plains, Ravenswood and St Helens will be open by December 2011.

The Centres aim to meet the health and well-being, education and care needs of local children aged 0 to 5 years. The Centres will assist Tasmanian children to have the best possible start in life.

The centres are being developed in close partnership with the local communities. Centre staff work closely with local services and local families to determine how best to respond to the needs and aspirations of families with young children.

Centre staff will be pleased to welcome foster and kinship carers who are caring for young children in the communities where the centres operate. If you live in an area where there is a centre, you are encouraged to be involved in the activities that are provided for children. For more information, click on <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/childandfamily>

Receiving Carers News by email

The number of carers who have agreed to receive the newsletter by email was very low. We encourage you to switch to electronic mail. All you have to do let us know your name and email address via fostercare@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Do you have a story to tell about your caring experience?

Or, do you know of an experienced carer who deserves recognition? Send a piece to the Foster Carers Newsletter at fostercare@dhhs.tas.gov.au