

Editorial



It was a great pleasure to attend the Carers Big Day Out on Sunday 27 March. This annual event is managed by the Foster Carers Association of Tasmania (FCAT). A big thank you to John Flanagan and his team for all their hard work in making sure that the day was a success. Thanks also to the CREATE team for their contributions on the day. The weather was great and it was fantastic to see so many carers and children having fun.

On 24 March 2011, Lin Thorp MLC, Minister for Children, welcomed carers and other representatives in the out of home care sector to Parliament House to launch Phase 2 of the carer recruitment campaign, 'Real Carers, Really Needed'. Both the Minister and the Commissioner for Children acknowledged the important role that carers play in the Tasmanian community.

Katie Wells, a southern foster carer, provided an excellent account of what it means to be a carer. Thank you Katie!

The information booklet for prospective carers has been revamped to reflect the images for the latest carer recruitment campaign. The campaign is being supported by a central foster care recruitment centre. Campaign material will appear on television, in the three daily papers and on bill-boards until the end of May 2011. You can also find us on Facebook and you are welcome to share this with your networks.

Over the next few months Children and Youth Services will be focussing on improving case and care planning for children in care. A clear message from both carers, and the children in their care, is that they want more opportunities to engage in the case and care planning process. I look forward to hearing that both carers and children in care are feeling more engaged in case and care planning.

In the Summer edition of the 'carers news' I advised that we have been working to implement the Pathway Home Program that will support children and young people in care to reunify with their families. I am pleased to advise that the program is now running across Tasmania.

Regards

Mark Byrne

Chief Executive Officer, Children and Youth Services
Disability, Child, Youth and Family Services

NEWS

The House of Assembly Select Committee on Child Protection

The last edition of the carers news advised that the Parliamentary Select Committee on Child Protection was planning to release its report in the near future. The Committee has now decided to table a Progress Report and will release its final report in October 2011.

The Committee has heard from 115 witnesses and received in excess of 2000 pages of written information.

As reported in the Summer edition several carers gave evidence to the Committee. The Progress Report outlines the range of issues that have been received to date. These include:

- the need for health and trauma assessments for children entering care
- more effective oversight of child protection decision making processes and complaints mechanisms
- the adequacy of carer numbers, training, support and recognition
- improved reunification processes
- recognition of the rights of children in care and improving their outcomes
- greater recognition of the importance of kinship care placements for children
- improving educational outcomes for children in care and
- leaving care plans for children in care

CREATE News

The CREATE Your Future Program

The *Create Your Future Program* kicked off in early January. The eight week program was the most amazing and rewarding experience for young people and CREATE staff.

The program is an action-packed eight weeks where young people learn all there is to know about leaving care and becoming independent. They learn how to cook, the 'ins and outs' of getting a job, what services are in the community, how to stay healthy and practical things like getting a driver's licence, having enough ID and writing resumes. All of this serious stuff is mixed together with loads of fun stuff, like high ropes at Fusion, the wild thing speed boat, MONA FOMA, a road trip to Launceston to explore services in the north and, to finish things, they graduated by having a Glam Masquerade Ball with heaps of delicious food, games and prizes.

The program will run twice per year for 3 years so please be quick and refer young people who are, or have been, in care who you feel would benefit from the awesome program.

The next program will be run in Launceston starting 6 May 2011.

information on CREATE's activities and programs and then answered questions related to their foster care experiences. All were incredible and the new foster carers provided lots of positive feedback. They were very touched by what the young people said, it gave them a real insight into what foster care is all about.



High ropes activity



Create Your Future activity

Foster Carer Training

CREATE Young Consultants were recently given the opportunity to present to a group of new foster carers currently undertaking training. They shared

Relaunch – Leaving Care Kit

CREATE has revamped the 'Outta Here' kit. We consulted with young people at our Youth Advisory Group about what was missing in the leaving care backpack and what things needed changing and updating. Young people now have a choice of either a backpack or satchel bag and the information book has been updated with relevant information, plus we have added a great toiletry bag, a cookbook, first aid kits and lots of added application forms and relevant information. CREATE hopes that not only will these kits help young people with their transition from care to independence, but they will be a practical tool for case workers to use when assisting a young person with their leaving care plan. If you have a young person in your care aged 15 or over and they would like an 'Outta Here' pack please let us know. (See contact details on the next page.)

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
260 Macquarie Street Hobart
6224 9822
www.create.org.au

The Charter of Rights – making a difference for children and young people in care

The Charter of Rights for Tasmanian children and young people in out of home care makes clear statements about what a child in care can expect. For instance, children in care have a right to identify with their culture and community and to observe their chosen religion.

On 30 June 2010 there were 138 Aboriginal children in out of home care in Tasmania. The majority of these children were placed with non-indigenous carers. Although they are receiving good care there is a danger that they have no or only limited links with the Aboriginal community and culture. The Be.Heard survey of children in care found that the majority of Aboriginal participants in the survey felt that they had no or very little connectedness with their culture.

Carers can play a significant role in supporting Aboriginal children to grow up with strong connections with their culture. To achieve this, carers must demonstrate a positive regard for the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. They should provide opportunities for Aboriginal children in care to learn about their culture. They should be available to support the child who has been subjected to racist comments. They should never make racist comments themselves.

Aboriginal Cultural Competence Training sessions will be held in each area for carers from July to November 2011. The sessions will provide an understanding of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community including its history and culture. Carers, speciality non-indigenous carers who are caring for an Aboriginal child are

encouraged to attend a session. There will be more information on session times in the Winter edition of the Carers' Newsletter.

Other training opportunities for carers during 2011

A calendar of training sessions for prospective and approved carers is now available on the DHHS and FCAT websites. The calendar will be updated to incorporate new training opportunities as they are confirmed. See:

http://www.fostercare.tas.gov.au/information_for_foster_carers2

The Foster Carers Association of Tasmania has engaged the Australian Childhood Foundation to run two day training sessions for approved carers on the impact of abuse and trauma on children's emotional, psychological and social development.

Many children and young people entering out of home care have invariably experienced significant abuse and trauma that contribute to a range of complex needs and challenging behaviours that are difficult for carers to understand and supportively respond to.

The 'Connecting Through Care' training sessions will be from 9.30am to 3.00pm to enable carers to fit in with children getting to and from school.

North West

- 23-24 April 2011 - 15 Marine Plaza Burnie (FCAT office)

North

- 29-30 June 2011 – 11 Birch Avenue Newstead (FCAT office)

The sessions were held in the south in early April.

The numbers of carers per session are limited (up to 25 participants) and carers are encouraged to register. To register phone the Child Trauma Service on 6232 0222 or contact FCAT at secretary@fcatas.org.au

Tasmanian Youth Conference

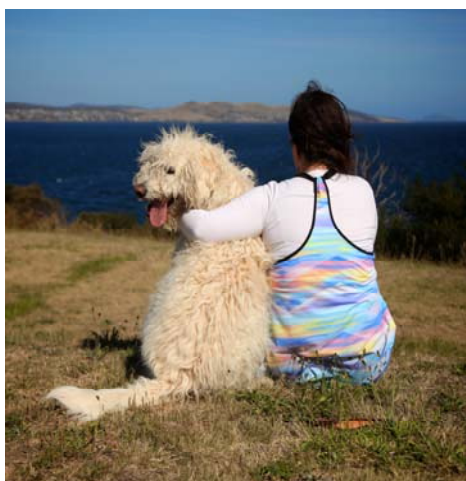
The 2011 Tasmanian Youth Conference will be held at the Tramsheds in Launceston on Wednesday May 18 and Thursday 19 May.

The conference will provide development opportunities for those who support young people. For more information contact admin@ynot.org.au

Training on medication guidelines

To assist foster carers to understand the medication guidelines, sessions will be held around the State by the Pharmacy Guild of Tasmania. Foster carers will need to attend a session to ensure that they are familiar with their obligations. Certificates of attainment from the Pharmacy Guild will be sent to carers who attend, including those who attended last year

Sessions will be held throughout 2011 in all areas. The sessions in the south and the north west have been arranged. See the DHHS website at this address: http://www.fostercare.tas.gov.au/information_for_foster_carers2 or via the FCAT website: <http://www.fcata.org.au/> Alternatively call your support worker to find out when the sessions are being held and to book a place.



National Standards for Out-of-Home Care

As advised in the summer edition, the National Standards for Out of Home Care have been approved. The development of National Standards was a priority project under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020.

Work is now underway on the development of nationally agreed measures to build a sound picture of the outcomes of children and young people in out of home care. Reporting against the standards will commence from July 2011. It is planned that there will be an annual report that will drive continuous improvement in child protection systems. It is anticipated that the first annual report will be released in the second half of 2012. The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA) also plans to conduct national surveys of children and young people in care.

Recruitment Campaign

Do you know of anyone who might be interested in becoming a Foster Carer? Sometimes word of mouth is the best way of recruiting Foster Carers. There may be someone you know who has mentioned it in the past but hasn't known what options are available. If you know someone, please encourage them to call the Real Carers Really Needed hotline 1800 REAL CARERS. Our team of helpful staff would be happy to speak to them and answer any questions that they may have.



Be.Heard Survey

CREATE interviewed 96 children and young people in care in Tasmania over the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2010. This is the first time in Tasmania that there has been a project that asks children and young people in care about their experiences.

A clear finding from the survey was that the participants wanted more opportunities to be involved in the decisions about their lives. This is a fairly consistent theme when children and young people in care are asked what they would like to see happen to improve the out of home care system. For instance, issues discussed by CREATE's National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC) summit in 2010 were very similar to the issues identified through the Tasmanian Be.Heard survey. During 2011, Children and Youth Services will work closely with CREATE and young people in care or with a care experience to improve opportunities for children to more actively participate in decisions. There will also be training sessions for carers in how to create opportunities for children to contribute to decision-making.

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