

## Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc

### August 2010 Newsletter

Click here to view the following information available on the FCAV website :

[FCAV Statement of Purpose and Rules](#)

[Caregiver Reimbursement Rates for 2010/11](#)

[FCAV & Prime Consulting Conference, 27th & 28th October 2010](#)

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Message from FCAV	2
FCAV/PPSS Info Sheets	3
In brief	4
Updates from The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and CREATE Foundation	5
FCAV/PPSS Carer Info & Support Service	6
FCAV/PPSS Carer Info & Support Service	7
Out of home care updates	8
Thanks for all you do!!	9
Therapeutic Care	10
DHS Caregiver Reimbursement Help Desk	
Dr Bruce Perry Seminar	
A message from DHS	11
Upcoming Events	12

### FCAV / Dendy Village Dental / Big 4 Holiday Parks Celebrating Carers Competition

The Foster Care Association of Victoria, in conjunction with Dendy Village Dental & Big 4 Holiday Parks are excited to announce our greatest FCAV Member competition yet.

We have three great prizes on offer that we believe are going to suit our carers and their families down to the ground!



#### FIRST PRIZE

Big 4 Holiday Parks gift voucher, valid for 1 year, valued at \$500

Prize sponsored by [Dendy Village Dental](#)

#### SECOND PRIZE

2 nights in any of Big 4 Holiday Parks cabins\* across Australia valued at \$400 (\*conditions apply)

Prize sponsored by [Big 4 Holiday Parks](#)

#### THIRD PRIZE

Big 4 Holiday Parks Club Membership valid for 2 years valued at \$50

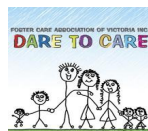
Prize sponsored by [Big 4 Holiday Parks](#)

All FCAV Members have to do for a chance to win one of these great prizes is find the secret 10 word FCAV message hidden throughout this newsletter.

Then simply email or call us, quoting the message correctly and you will go in the draw for these amazing prizes.

Entries close on Friday 17th September, 2010 so get reading!!

(Prizes will be drawn on Tuesday 21st September, by Katie Hooper, FCAV Executive Officer, with winners notified on the same day. Results will be published in the October FCAV Newsletter)



## A Message from the FCAV Office

*Dear all,*

FCAV would like to take this opportunity to thank and celebrate the work of carers. FCAV have designed a Carer gift (see page 9) that will assist carers with another tool to visually add structure and consistency to children's lives. We hope that you can use the fridge magnet by putting children's names at the top and listing tasks or activities that they are to complete. Let us know how the tool goes and if you have successful or creative uses. We also wish all agencies and carers fun with the Rainbow Hair for Foster Care campaign (see page 5). Colour up everyone and encourage others to find out more about being a foster carer.

We would also like to welcome you to the 2010 State Conference (see below). We anticipate the conference will be an informative event and a great opportunity to network. **GET** ready for a great two days!!

Don't forget to go to the website [www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au) after looking at page 3 of this publication which details our newly released info sheets – also see the updated Leaving Care – Financial info sheet on the website for more information. We are delighted that DHS have launched their Leaving Care website and materials <http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/leavingcare> - DHS have used some of FCAV's info sheet work by incorporating the carer checklist regarding getting young people ready for independence in their package – what great partnership!!

There has been a large amount of work undertaken by many individuals and groups on the National Framework. Go to <http://www.apo.org.au/research/development-national-standards-out-home-care> to see the draft national standards – don't forget to give us feedback regarding these standards if you want us to pass it on.

Finally, FCAV are really proud of our bi monthly e-news circulation. This in-brief, informative document emailed to all our members who have supplied email addresses, provides an additional information source effecting out of home carers – make sure you advise Gabbi at [admin@fcav.org.au](mailto:admin@fcav.org.au) of your email address to get up to date news and special offers as they come to hand.

*Regards, Katie*



**The FCAV Team, from left to right:  
Beth Laister, Biba Dickson, both with the Carer  
Information & Support Service,  
Katie Hooper, Executive Officer and  
Gabbi Dalsasso, Membership Officer**

### FCAV/Prime Focus Consulting Carer/Worker Conference 2010


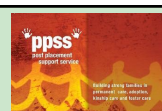
- Where:** The Treacy Centre, 126 The Avenue, Parkville
- When:** Wednesday 27th & Thursday 28th of October, 2010 (FCAV AGM to be held Wednesday evening)
- Cost:**
- For carers:  
1 day—\$110.00 (plus GST. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided.)  
2 days—\$195.00 (plus GST. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided.)
- For workers:  
1 day—\$150.00 (plus GST. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided.)  
2 days—\$275.00 (plus GST. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided.)

**FCAV will be sponsoring the first 75 FCAV member and associate member carers** to call and register for the conference (registration costs only), so if you haven't signed up for FCAV membership yet, do so now!!

Registrations are now open so email your registration via:  
[conferenceregistration@primefocusconsulting.com.au](mailto:conferenceregistration@primefocusconsulting.com.au) or call 9415 6066.

## FCAV/PPSS Carer Information & Support Service

Believe **US** when we say we have been busy working on new Info Sheets! Here's the latest drafts from the 'FCAV/PPSS Information Sheet Desk' - check the FCAV website for full copies.

	<b>FCAV/PPSS INFO SHEET: <a href="#">Explaining Children's Court Orders</a></b>	
--	---	---

### Background:

The Children's Court makes decisions about child protection matters, such as whether or not a child or young person should be removed from the care of their parents, the type of order a child or young person should be placed on, and the conditions and length of that order. The aim of this info sheet is to give carers an overview of Children's Court orders. Please refer to the hyperlinks throughout the sheet for further information from the Department of Human Services on each order.



It is important to note that prior to any order being put in place, a Protection Application will have been sought (and proven) by the Department of Human Services Child Protection division through the Children's Court under Section 162 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (CY&F Act 2005)*.

	<b>FCAV/PPSS INFO SHEET: <a href="#">Caregiver Reimbursement for Foster Carers</a> (<a href="#">Kinship &amp; Permanent Care 2010-11 Rates Sheet</a> also available)</b>	
--	--	---

### Foster Care Association of Victoria (FCAV) Position:

Children and young people residing in foster care have a range of needs. Foster carers are provided with financial reimbursements to contribute to the costs of caring for children and young people. Reimbursements are based upon three levels of intensity of care; General, Intensive and Complex. There is no concrete tool for "classifying" children according to these three levels, rather there is a process of assessment which occurs at a regional level between DHS child protection, the DHS Placement and Coordination Unit (PCU) and the Community Service Organisation (CSO).

Levels of complexity and need vary for each child or young person, and it is recognised that some children and young people will place a greater demand on carers and the CSO supporting the placement. Not all carers and CSOs have the placements, resources or expertise to work with the most difficult children and young people, however those that do, are reimbursed with appropriate funds to contribute to the additional costs of caring.

	<b>FCAV/PPSS INFO SHEET: <a href="#">Carer support during Quality of Care</a></b>	
--	---	---

### Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc (FCAV) Position:

When an allegation of abuse in home based care is made it is essential that appropriate support be offered to the carer during and following the QOC process. A copy of the full departmental guidelines outlining these processes is available at <http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/placement-support/library/publications/guidelines-responding-to-quality-of-care>. Alternatively, the [FCAV/PPSS Info Sheet on the Quality of Care process](#) provides further information regarding the outcomes and support for carers. The FCAV strongly recommends that available supports be utilised by carers to manage what can be an extremely stressful and isolating experience. FCAV are also aware that the exact nature of the support roles will vary from foster care organisation (CSO) to CSO.

### FCAV / PPSS Carer Information & Support Service



The [FCAV / PPSS Carer Information & Support Service](#) is a joint venture operated by the Foster Care Assoc of Victoria and Post Placement Support Service. The service provides carers with someone to call when they need support, information, referrals or even just a chat about what's going on for them.

If you need assistance or advocacy on an issue impacting you as a carer, please call the FCAV/PPSS Carer Information & Support Service on **(03) 9489 9770** on Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and on Fridays from 9am to 4pm. If you wish to contact us after these hours, send through an email to [b.laister@fcav.org.au](mailto:b.laister@fcav.org.au) and we will respond as soon as we can. You can also check out our website at [www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au) for FCAV/PPSS Info Sheets, newsletters and e-News. **The Carer Information & Support Service – providing care for carers.**

## In Brief

### Winners for Dr Bruce Perry seminar tickets

Congratulations to the winners of our **e-News** competition for tickets to attend Dr Bruce Perry's seminar *Transforming Childhood Trauma—Connecting with Empathy and Compassion*, on 8 September, 2010:

- \* **Fay & Ray Steadman, Springhurst, Vic**
- \* **Emily Vaivars, Shepparton, Vic**
- \* **Peter O'Toole, Caroline Springs**

**\*\*Please Note\*\***

There are still two more complementary tickets (valued at \$280 each) available to this now sold **OUT** event, so if you are keen to attend and you are a member of FCAV, then tell us in 100 words or less why you should win!

Email your entries to [admin@fcav.org.au](mailto:admin@fcav.org.au) by 3 Sept, 2010.

### Nikara's Journey Contest Winner

Congratulations to **Raelene Vissenga** on winning a spot on the Nikara's Journey training program run through the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA). We loved Raelene's 25 words or less entry:

*First placement, family excited, two indigenous children*  
**Reconnaissance** – crying, scared  
**Decode** – bottle, nappy change, nurturing cuddles  
 Nikara's Journey Training – **Process of Healing and Joining Together**

### Foster Care to Permanent Care Research

Christine Quilty, a Bachelor **OF** Social Work student from Victoria University is seeking people to participate in a small research project exploring Foster carers' perspectives on conversions from foster care to permanent care.

Christine Quilty is herself a former foster carer and current permanent carer. Christine is interested in interviewing people who are part of the following groups:

- Foster carers who have subsequently become permanent carers;
- Foster carers who have contemplated providing permanent care for a child then decided against it;
- Foster carers who are in the process of considering a conversion from foster care to permanent care of a child.

If you would be interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Christine Quilty directly on 0432 050 375 or email [christine.quilty@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:christine.quilty@live.vu.edu.au).

### Victorian Law Reform

The Victorian Law Reform report in to the Victorian Children's Court is due to be tabled in State Parliament any day now, with the last opportunity to table the report being 6 Oct, 2010. FCAV will be notified if the report is to be made public at which time we will post a link of the report to our website and let you know the key findings.

### Education Tax Refund

If you receive Family Tax Benefit Part A for a child in primary or secondary school then you are eligible to claim up to \$375 for each primary student and up to \$750 for each secondary student through the Education Tax Refund.

To find out more, including what you can and cannot claim, go to **HERE** : [australia.gov.au/educationtaxrefund](http://australia.gov.au/educationtaxrefund) or call the Tax Office on **13 28 61**.

### Leaving Care Helpline

If you are caring for or have cared for a young person aged between 16-21 years and they are leaving or have left out of home care in Victoria, the Leaving Care Helpline can help connect them with local services for:

- Accommodation support
- Centrelink & Legal advice
- Financial Assistance
- Counselling

Call **1300 532 846** from 10am to 8pm weekdays and 10am to 6pm weekend and public holidays or go to [www.cyf.vic.gov.au/leavingcare](http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/leavingcare).

### Leaving Care Research Study

A student from Chisholm Institute is seeking people to participate in a small research project exploring the *experiences of foster carers related to caring for young people who are transitioning from home-based care into independent living*.

Garry Neeman, a respite foster carer, is carrying out this project as part of the Diploma of Community Development.

Garry is interested in interviewing around 10 people who:

- are caring for a young person approaching transition or;
- have cared for a young person who has made the transition.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Garry at [leavingcare@neeman.info](mailto:leavingcare@neeman.info) or on 0438 734 402 at your earliest convenience.

## Updates from: The Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare, & CREATE Foundation

### Rainbow Hair for Foster Care Campaign

September is Foster Care Month, and this year foster care providers around Victoria are asking local people to wear Rainbow Hair for Foster Care.

During September, the Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare and local agencies will be partnering with businesses and educational institutions to give away free Rainbow Hair extensions to promote foster care.

Packs of Rainbow Hair extensions featuring foster care information will be stocked at local outlets around the state, and local foster care providers will be holding a series of events in a range of communities. It is hoped that the campaign will increase public awareness of the need for foster care and encourage people to find out more about becoming a foster carer.

A list of Rainbow Hair for Foster Care events, and locations where Rainbow Hair and foster care information can be found will be available at [www.fosterabrighterfuture.com.au](http://www.fosterabrighterfuture.com.au) towards the end of August.



Please contact Josh Fergeus or Emma Stapleton  
at the Centre for more information on 9614 1577.



Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

### What's The Plan?

According to a study conducted by CREATE Foundation, over half of young people leaving residential or foster care in Australia are at higher risk of homelessness and unemployment because they do not have a Leaving Care Plan. CREATE Foundation is working to change these statistics with a campaign titled 'What's the Plan?'

*What's the Plan?* aims to empower young people to be actively involved in planning for their move into independence. A Leaving Care Plan should assist them in areas of their lives such as education, employment and health and nutrition.

CREATE Foundation is encouraging the support from foster carers to ensure that every young person between the ages of 15-18 who will be transitioning from care to independence will have a Leaving Care Plan. Over the next few years, these young people will also receive CREATE resources that explain how to get a plan, what makes a good one, and who to contact should they have difficulty accessing one.

Law states that all young people must develop leaving care plans with their case worker or residential worker. To find out how to ensure that the young person you care for has a Leaving Care Plan, visit the CREATE website at [www.create.org.au/whatstheplan](http://www.create.org.au/whatstheplan) or call 1800 655 105.



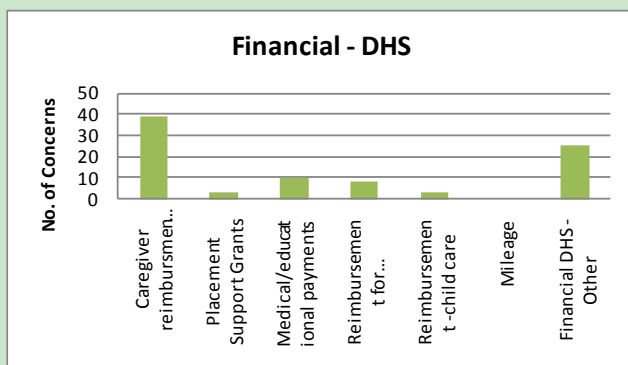
## FCAV/PPSS Carer Information & Support Service: Annual Reporting

The annual statistics and recommendations reporting for the FCAV/PPSS Carer Information and Support Service for the financial year ending 30 June 2010 is almost complete. We thought you might like to see a breakdown of the concerns and issues raised by carers over the last twelve months.

Welfare to work dominated the 'Financial—Centrelink' concern category for the period with queries around Family Tax Benefit also featuring.

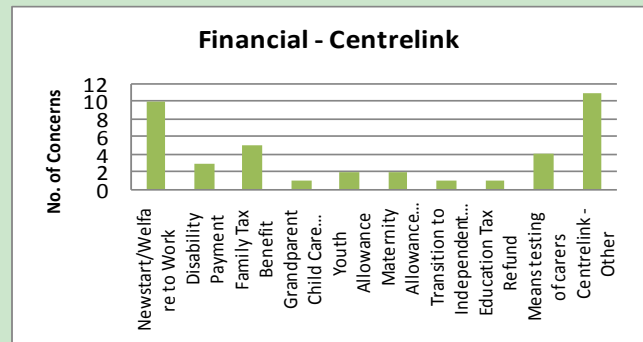
Queries pertaining to Centrelink payment eligibility based on the means testing of carers centred around the Australian Government stimulus package payments and access to Family Tax Benefit.

**Total concerns: 40**



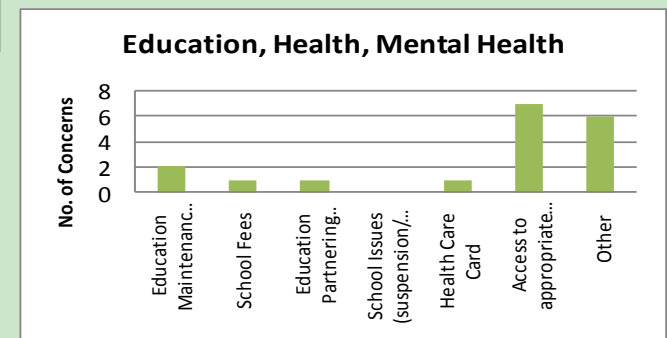
The key concern highlighted in the Education, Health, Mental Health category was that of access to appropriate services for children and young people in out of home care. In particular this was of issue for non-statutory kinship carers and permanent carers.

**Total concerns: 18**



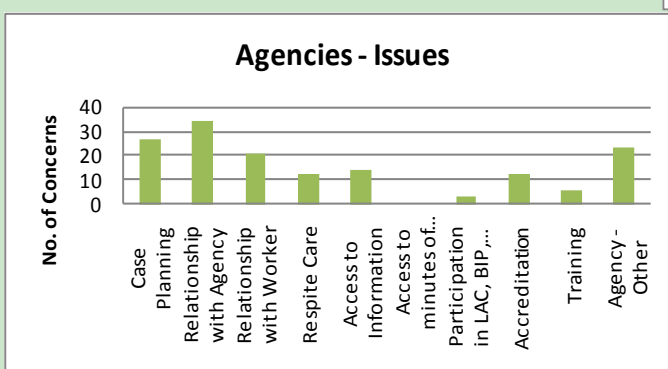
Caregiver Reimbursement Rates dominated the concern category recorded for the Financial DHS with 39 of the 88 calls received highlighting caregiver reimbursement rates as an issue needing clarification. The calls ranged from querying rate amounts and rates not yet being received, to non-statutory kinship carers trying to gain access to the rate assistance.

**Total concerns: 88**



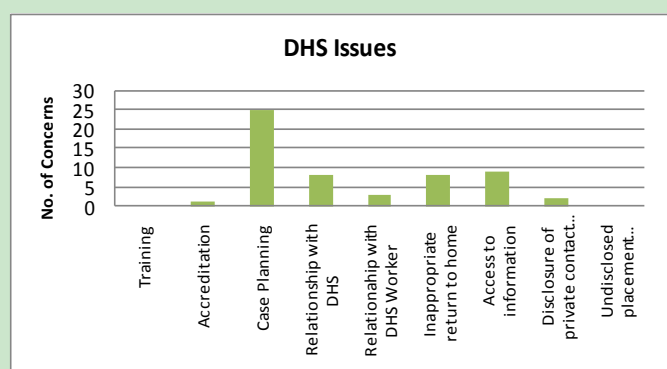
With 152 concerns recorded, the Agencies—Issues category came in second to only the **FCAV**—General Enquiries category. The concerns of 'relationship with agency/worker' recorded a total of 55 concerns, while 'case planning' recorded 27 concerns. Amendments have been made to the CISS database to ensure 'case planning' can only be recorded under 'DHS—Issues' from now on, while 'care team' will be recorded as a agency responsibility.

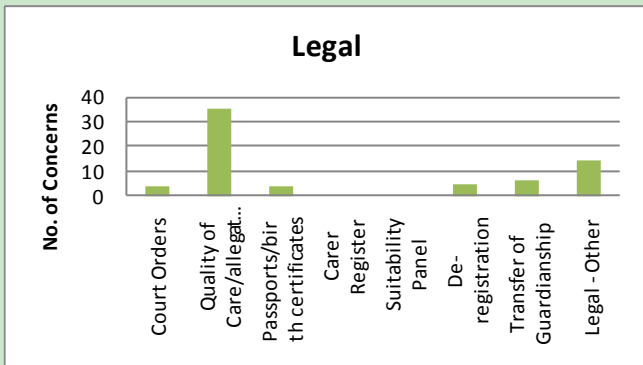
**Total concerns: 152**



Case Planning dominated the DHS—Issues category with nearly half the concerns recorded highlighting this area as of concern. In many cases, the conflict between carers and workers in terms of case planning decisions, saw strained working relationships within the care team which in some cases resulted in the breakdown of the placement.

**Total concerns: 56**





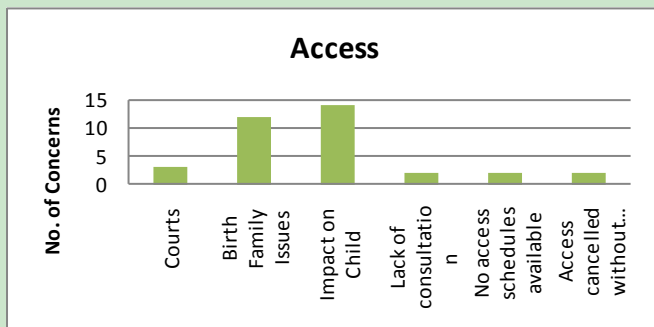
Quality of care concerns dominated the Legal category, with many of the 'Legal—Other' concerns querying how carers can be made party to proceedings.

Changes have been made to the CISS database for 2010/11 to allow for more detailed capture of concerns relating to quality of care which will allow FCAV to provide specific and detailed feedback to DHS on the impact of quality of care for carers.

**Total concerns: 68**

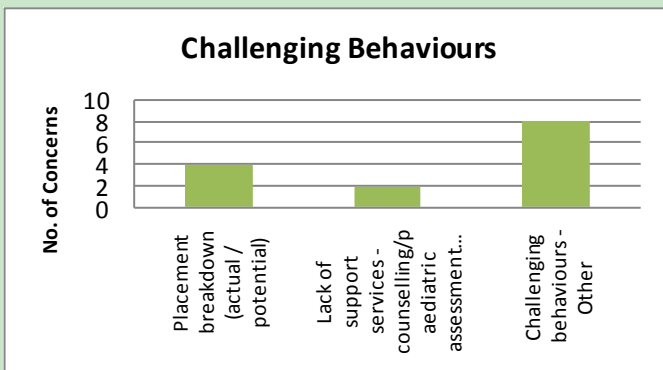
The overriding concerns in the category of Access are the impact of high levels of access on children (particularly children under 5yrs), and the ongoing impacts and challenges of maintaining positive and effective relationships with birth families. Birth family issues also factor quite heavily for those carers either considering or already having transitioned to permanent care.

**Total concerns: 35**



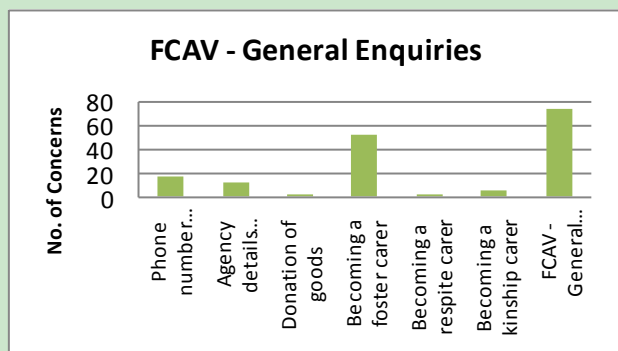
The majority of concerns highlighted in the category of Challenging Behaviours related to permanent care placements, and pertained to adolescent young people in care. Interestingly, **WE** received a few calls from natural parents in the past twelve months, seeking advice and assistance on how to manage the difficult behaviours of their own adolescent children in their care.

**Total concerns: 14**



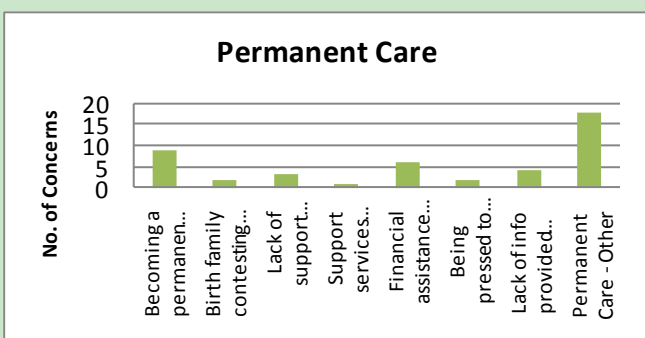
The great news for the FCAV—General Enquiries category is that nearly one third of the calls were from prospective carers seeking further information on how to become a carer! In a year that saw the out of home care sector exposed to some pretty negative press it is heart warming to know there are so many people out there focussed on providing a safe and loving home to vulnerable children and young people.

**Total concerns: 165**



While representing only 7.2% of the total concerns recorded, the category of Permanent Care fell in the top 5 of the category concerns. Given the increase in concerns recorded for this category over the last twelve months, changes have been made to the CISS database to allow for increased data capture and reporting of the issues and concerns facing permanent carers.

**Total concerns: 45**



## Out of Home Care Updates

### Welfare to Work Update

The Australian Foster Care Association (AFCA) has been lobbying our federal politicians for some time now on the issue of Welfare to Work and the impact this has for emergency respite foster and kinship carers, and it looks as though they have had a win!

The *Social Security Amendments Flexible Participation Requirements for Principal Carers Bill 2010* has been passed through the Senate unopposed and sees (among other changes) the following exemptions for emergency and respite foster carers and for kinship carers who have the care of a child under a State or Territory case plan. These changes come in to effect from 1 July 2010:

- A new participation exemption for kinship care in addition to the existing family law order exemption.
- Activity test exemptions for registered and active foster carers—while the exemption for principal carers will be maintained, a new exemption will be inserted in to the Social Security Act for people who are not the principal carers of one or more children, thus incorporating emergency respite cares. The period of exemption in these instances will be the lesser of:
  - a) the period the person is providing foster care plus an additional 12 weeks, or shorter period determined by the Secretary; or
  - b) 12 months.
- Activity test exemptions for kinship care.

To view the [Social Security Amendment \(Flexible Participation Requirements For Principal Carers\) Bill 2010](#), and/or the Social Security Amendment (Flexible Participation Requirements For Principal Carers) Bill 2010—Explanatory Memorandum go to our website [www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au) and review the document/s under Carer Resources/ Articles and Publications/ Other publications of interest.

### DHS/DEECD Update

FCAV are following up with DEECD and DHS regarding the new **Out of Home Care Education Commitment**, (formerly known as the Partnering Agreement). FCAV have been advised that this is in final *draft* stage, and will be officially signed off and launched over the coming weeks. There are a number of components including the learning mentor scheme, the prioritisation of referrals for children in out of home care to services and the Education Expenses Payment for children in out of home care. The first Ed Expense Payment will come out directly to Foster and Kinship carers. It will be a pro rata payment for the second half of 2010. If you need more info regarding this you need to go to the **DHS Caregiver Reimbursement Helpdesk (PH) 1300 552 319**. We will get further information and clarification of this exciting initiative and will circulate to carers as soon as it is launched. **Stay tuned.**

### Grants for young people leaving out of home care



Creating Opportunities for Children & Young People in Care

Watch out for the CREATE CYF grants—if available, they are announced around March/April each year. This grant aims at allowing a small number of care leavers to access funds between \$300 and \$3000 and young people can apply for help with stuff like driving lessons, education and training, travel and conferences.

To make sure that the young person in your care knows when the grants are open, sign them up to Club CREATE and they will be notified via mail the dates to apply. To sign a young person up simply go to [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au) or call CREATE on 1800 655 105.

### Scholarship opportunities for young people in out of home care

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare offers a scholarship program, *Chasing Your Dreams* for young people who are or have been living in out-of-home care, or who are accessing or have accessed support services from the Centre's member organisations.

The scholarships have helped many young people take up a TAFE, college, or university course. Applications **NEED** to be made through a supporting organisation that is a Centre member, and supporting organisations undertake to support young people throughout their scholarship-funded study.

Applications typically close in late November for study beginning the following year.

**For further information, please call 03 9614 1577, or email**

Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.



## Thanks for all you do!

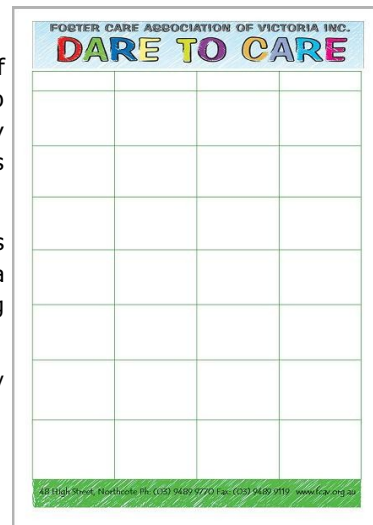
### A gift for Victoria's Carers from FCAV

In the lead up to Carer Celebration month in September, the Board and staff of FCAV want to extend a sincere thank you to each and every foster, kinship and permanent carer out there for the amazing job you do each and every day in supporting and caring for vulnerable children and young people across Victoria.

We hope the magnetic memo board we have included in this month's newsletter mail out will be a handy and colourful addition to your fridge and a constant reminder that your efforts and commitment to children and young people does not go un-noticed or un-appreciated.

The memo board can act as **A** weekly roster, a chores board, a reward/achievement board or just a handy place to scribble, *we need milk!!*

***Thanks for all you do!***



### Victorian Government Carer Card Program

The Victorian Government Carer Card has arrived!

By now you will have heard radio ad's, and hopefully have secured yourself an application form for the new Victorian Government Carer Card. Discounts and benefits will be available to all eligible carer card holders from 1 August, 2010.

Check out the website at [www.carercard.vic.gov.au](http://www.carercard.vic.gov.au) for information of the discounts and benefits available to carer card holders or call toll free on 1800 901 958 for further information.

Eligible carers can apply online or download an application form at [www.carercard.vic.gov.au](http://www.carercard.vic.gov.au).

***Thanks for all you do!***

### Charter supporting care relationships

[A Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships](#) was launched on 23rd June, 2010 by Hon. Lisa Neville, Minister for Community Services, Senior Victorians and Mental Health.

The charter acknowledges the role of carers in our society. It articulates the rights and responsibilities of people in care relationships, and how they can be supported by organisations, governments and the community. The charter also seeks to empower carers to access the services available to them and the person in their care, as well as providing practical assistance such as listing the supports and resources available to assist carers.

Carers include foster, kinship and permanent carers, carers of a person with a disability, a severe or chronic medical condition, a mental illness, or someone who is frail, aged or in need of palliative care.

(Source: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/policy/carers.htm#download>)

***Thanks for all you do!***



## Therapeutic Foster Care

### Helping Good Carers Become Even Better!

Foster carers in the north and west are being invited to become "therapeutic foster carers" with the Circle Program, a new approach to supporting children in care.

The program, run by Anglicare Victoria and Salvation Army Westcare is designed to provide children with the very best care tailor-made to their individual needs. Anglicare foster carer, Dorothy, describes the innovative Circle Program as having "revolutionised" her way of caring for, and relating to foster children. Dorothy, who has cared long term for a 13-year-old, was one of the first carers in the Program. She is encouraging other carers to get involved and do the training which she describes as "**probably the most valuable and effective training I have ever done**". Dorothy describes the program as "**helping good carers become even better ones.**"

The latest international and Australian research emphasises the need for more specialised work with children and young people to help them recover from the hurtful experiences, abuse or neglect that brought them into foster care. At the very start of placement Circle organises a comprehensive assessment of the child and their needs. Therapeutic specialists work with the carer to use the carer-child relationship to promote healing. Extra support and resources are provided to focus on what each child needs. Carers are regarded as equal partners in the care team, receiving detailed information about the child's history, current circumstances, and care plan.

Any child might be cared for in the Circle program: children of any age are randomly allocated to this program on entering care. The program commenced in October 2008 and is now expanding to offer foster carers with other agencies the opportunity to join this new approach to caring.

**Carers interested in finding out more about this new approach and wanting to enrol in the training to be held on August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> should ring:**

Amy Hill at Anglicare Victoria on 93015200 if you live in the north, or Kathryn Eberly at Westcare on 8311 5000 if you live in the west.



## DHS Caregiver Reimbursement Help Desk

### The Caregiver Reimbursement Help Desk (PH) 1300 552 319

This phone number is for any Foster, Permanent or Kinship Carers, Statutory or Non-Statutory, and for any workers to call directly.

Whilst foster carers can usually have queries answered and support provided to them via their Community Service Organisation, sometimes both carers and workers need to find out some quick or specific information about the nature of their caregiver reimbursements.

This DHS Help Desk is designed specifically for this purpose. Help Desk staff can answer your questions about when your payments are starting, when they will cease, whether they are correct, any money owed to you or to DHS, information about back pay, indexation and any special or additional allowances, such as the Education and Medical allowance.

This Help Desk is staffed by DHS Carer Reimbursement team staff. Help desk staff are not part of the Victorian Child Protection program and will not be able to discuss Child Protection related issues.

**Late News:** Check the [FCAV website](http://www.fcav.org.au) for the updated 2010/11 Caregiver Reimbursement Rates.

### Seminar Opportunity: Dr Bruce Perry

**Don't forget to enter our great competition for a chance to win tickets to attend "Transforming Childhood Trauma—Connecting with Empathy and Compassion" with Dr Bruce Perry.**

**Simply email us at [admin@fcav.org.au](mailto:admin@fcav.org.au) by Friday 3rd Sept 2010, and tell us in 100 words or less why you should go to see Dr Bruce Perry!**

# A Message from the Department of Human Services

## Permanent Care - Specific Applications

For some children in foster care, a decision is made that it is not possible for them to return to the full time care of their birth family. At this point a case plan is made to explore permanent care. The road to permanent care is a complex and specialised process because of the intention that a permanent care placement is life long.

Permanent Care provides children with a nurturing environment in which to grow up, and supports them with stable relationships for life. When a Permanent Care Order is made at the Children's Court, it means that a permanent care parent is responsible for all aspects of the day-to-day care of the child, as they would be for their biological child. It means claiming a child as a son or daughter, and being considered as the child's parents into the future, undertaking full responsibility for them, including financial responsibility. It means giving them opportunities and making decisions about things like education, changes in residence, health and employment.

The FCAV and the Department are working together to construct detailed information sheets to answer questions foster carers often ask about Permanent Care. In order to provide the most accurate information, the expertise of the Statewide Permanent Care teams will be sought.

In the mean time, here are some useful points about Permanent Care:

- Permanent care teams exist in each Region. Permanent care teams place children with approved permanent care applicants selected as a match from the pool of approved permanent care applicants, or recruited specifically for the child. Permanent care teams then support and legalize placements with a permanent care order. Six teams are managed by Community Service Organisations and four operate within the department.
- A '**Specific Application**' is when a specific foster carer is assessed to be approved as a permanent care parent for a child already in their care. You may be aware of this process, which is sometimes called a 'conversion' or a 'transition' to Permanent Care.
- As a foster carer, if you are part of a Specific Application, you should consult with your foster care worker to ensure you fully understand the meaning of permanent care. Further, it is important to learn about the processes required in your particular circumstance, as they can vary between regions, agencies, and from case to case. The information sheets will detail these requirements.
- Ideally, foster carers should not be approached by foster care workers or child protection staff about undertaking the permanent care of a child. If however, you wish to provide the permanent care of a child, there are training and information sessions run regularly in all regions by the permanent care teams. You should enquire about these through your foster care worker.
- It is important to understand that being a foster carer is a very different role to being a permanent carer. Being part of a Specific Application does not mean that you will automatically be approved as the best permanent care match for a child. There is a psychological, emotional and practical shift that is required if a foster carer wishes to become the permanent parent of a child.

It is anticipated that the first of a series of FCAV/PPSS Information Sheets on Permanent Care will be ready for release by December 2010.

If you would like to speak to your regional permanent care program, you should contact your foster care agency to request the correct program contact details.

**We're moved....sort of!**  
**The address is the same but you now access the office from the Westgarth St entrance.**

**Foster Care Association of Victoria Inc**  
**ABN 30 747 010 099**

**48 High Street (enter from Westgarth St)**  
**Northcote, Vic 3070**

**Ph: (03)9489 9770**  
**Fax: (03)9489 9119**  
**Email: [admin@fcav.org.au](mailto:admin@fcav.org.au)**

## Upcoming Events

### EID Festival

**11 & 12 Sept, 2010**  
**12pm—9pm (both days)**

Broadmeadows Town Hall, 1079 Pascoe Vale Rd, Broadmeadows (Cnr Dimboola Street at the back of Hume City Council).

*Care with me* will be hosting foster families at this community event. Care (Cultural and Religious Engagement) with Me.

**Cost:** Free to foster carers and their families.

There will be fireworks and rides.

For access to free entry rsvp 1300 829 335 or email [info@cwme.org.au](mailto:info@cwme.org.au)

### "Nikara's Journey"

**An introduction to caring for aboriginal children in out of home care by non-aboriginal carers. (2 day program)**

**12 & 13 October, 2010**

10am—3pm at VACCA Office, 139 Nicholson St, East Brunswick

Cost: \$395.00 (incl GST. Morning tea and lunch provided)

### National Foster Carers Conference

**27-29 August, 2010**

Wrest Point Casino, Hobart, Tasmania

To register and for further information and newsletters contact [conference@fctas.org.au](mailto:conference@fctas.org.au)

### Foster Care Month—Sept 2010 "Rainbow Hair for Foster Care"

### National Child Protection Week 5—11 September 2010

#### Kinship Forum

**October 7 & 8, 2010**

Clocktower Centre  
Junction of Mt Alexander & Pascoe Vale Roads, Moonee Ponds

Further information and early registration to:

Anne McLeish on (03) 9372 2422 or [director@grandparents.com.au](mailto:director@grandparents.com.au) or, Chris Galea on (03)8601 5894 or [christine.galea@ocsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:christine.galea@ocsc.vic.gov.au)

#### Become a carer with VACCA



The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is holding information sessions for prospective foster carers on the following date:

Date: Tuesday August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010

Time: 5.30-7.00 pm

Where: VACCA Training Room, 139 Nicholson Street, East Brunswick

The information session is an opportunity for VACCA to provide you with information about the process involved in becoming a foster carer. The assessment process will be outlined in detail and your questions about fostering children will be addressed. We encourage you to bring your whole family with you.

Thelma Norris or Yolanda Glenn on ph 8388-1855 for further info.

FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC.

## DARE TO CARE



### FCAV VISION

For all Children in care to be Cherished, Connected and treated with Compassion.

### MISSION STATEMENT

To Strengthen foster families and enhance the wellbeing of the children in their care.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Association is established for the public charitable purposes of advancing and promoting the care of children and young people who are fostered or are in other forms of home based care including encouraging contact and exchange of ideas and information between those persons involved in foster care.

### Special Thanks!!

Our sincere thanks to Kelvin & his great team at [Kwik Kopy Printing Centre Coburg](#) at 583 Sydney Rd, Coburg for sponsoring our 'in colour' addition of the FCAV newsletter.

Kelvin and the guys meet our printing needs every time, no matter what.

**Thanks Kwik Kopy—you rock!!**



### Upcoming HOLIDAY Dates

Term 3: Mon 12 Jul to Fri 17 Sep, 2010

Term 4: Mon 4 Oct to Fri 17 Dec, 2010

Term 1 (2011): Mon 4 Feb to 8 Apr 2011