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MEDIA RELEASE



## Foster Care Week 2015 - Foster Carer Celebration Launch Event

The Foster Care Association of Victoria is kicking off Foster Care Week (September 13-19, 2015), with a Carer Celebration Event at Pavilion, Melbourne Arts Centre at 10.30am on Monday 14 September, 2015.

Launching the celebration, Minister for Children, Families and Youth Affairs, Jenny Mikakos and The Foster Care Association are expecting 89 foster carers and over 100 sector and agency staff at the Celebration, which will focus on the work of Victorian foster carers; the ordinary people doing an extraordinary job, every day.

**The launch will also celebrate the Foster Care Association's Foster a Plant campaign, supported by celebrity ambassadors Debra Lawrance and Dennis Coard, which is raising vital funds during September for foster care families.**

"As a family, we've been foster carers for 8 years and I've been President of the FCAV for two. This event is a great opportunity to hear from guest speaker, Christine Nixon, have a cuppa with other foster carers and spend time together," said Nicole Misurelli **Berry Street Foster carer and President of the FCAV Board.**

**Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos said,** "the Andrews Labor Government recognises, celebrates and supports foster carers - they play an essential and invaluable role in communities right across Victoria. Their generosity and compassion in opening their hearts and homes to our most vulnerable children deserves the community's upmost respect and support. I have enjoyed holding foster carer round tables and look forward to working closely with foster carers and the Association on strengthening our support and recognition of foster carers into the future," said **Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos.**

Foster Care Association of Victoria CEO Katie Hooper said she was looking forward to getting together with carers, hearing what they have experienced in 2015 and celebrating their contribution to lives of young people over the past year.

"While it is important to celebrate the terrific work of foster carers, as the peak body representing foster carers in Victoria, the Foster care Association will continue challenging the state government to better support young people and children in out-of-home care, including:

- That current rates of Carer Allowance are increased to fully meet the needs of children and young people in the state's care and the processes in assessing and approving this allowance and other expenditure on children's needs are more easily accessible to carers;
- That the Victorian Government invests in the development and implementation of a comprehensive Carer training framework as a priority to assist the retention of carers throughout Victoria; and
- Improving accessibility to therapeutic guidance and support for all Carers to enable successful ongoing placements of children and young people in foster care rather than in the presently dysfunctional residential care system," said Ms Hooper.

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