



# FOSTER CARE WEEK

8-14 SEPTEMBER 2019

## The value of carers



#fostercareweek19

#valueofcarers

#fosteringvalue

Quarter three | 2019



**fcafv**  
foster care  
association  
of victoria

## Carer Information and Support Service:

The Foster Care Association of Victoria's Carer Information and Support Service (CISS) provides a confidential, independent support hotline to all foster carers in Victoria. Are you a current foster carer? Do you have questions about your role? Are you having issues you need to discuss with someone?

Call **9416 4292** or access carer support online:  
[www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au)

**Cover Image:** FOSTER CARE WEEK 2019 is dedicated to recognising the value of carers for the special role they have caring for Victoria's children and young people in care.

## In brief...

- **Permanent Care and Adoptive Families** - Information and support via the peak body for permanent carers -  
**Call: 9020 1833**
- **Kinship Care Victoria** - Information and support via the peak body for kinship carers -  
**Call: 9372 2422**
- **New financial support information for carers** - A new fact sheet for foster and kinship carers about Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) is available on the departmental website under 'Resources' on this page:  
<http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>
- **Foster Care Week is 8-14 September 2019.** Check out the FCAV website for the growing **Calendar of Events** celebrating foster carers this year: [www.fcav.org.au/news-events/foster-care-week-2019/event/122](http://www.fcav.org.au/news-events/foster-care-week-2019/event/122)
- **Melton and Wyndham Carers** - have you "liked" **@capssmeltonwyndham** - Children and Parenting Support Service on Facebook? The CAPSS facebook page is a great source for FREE training and information for carers in your local area.
- **Victorian Protecting Children Awards Finalists** will be announced shortly! Stay tuned...



*The FCAV is funded through the State Government of Victoria and is grateful for the support of agency subscribers and our generous donors.*



The FCAV is grateful for the continuing support of the Cummins team who donate in kind to the mailout of this newsletter



## MESSAGE from the CEO

Hello members! After a great handover with Katie, I have gained insight into the work of the Foster Care Association, its dedicated Board and staff and most importantly you, our carers. I'd like to thank and congratulate Katie on 10 and half years of dedicated support to carers. I'm excited and honoured to take up that mantle.

I come to the FCAV with nearly 30 years' experience in the Victorian public sector, and 5 years experience as a board member at Kidsafe Victoria. I have been a carer for over 14 years now.



**Above:** Sam was recently acknowledged amongst 21 prominent women Leaders in Law for the 21st century by The Law Institute of Victoria - [www.liv.asn.au/Staying-Informed/LIJ/LIJ/August-2017/21st-Century-Leaders-In-Law](http://www.liv.asn.au/Staying-Informed/LIJ/LIJ/August-2017/21st-Century-Leaders-In-Law)

Some of my most recent roles include CEO of the Coroners Court of Victoria, after establishing and then managing the Court's Coroners Prevention Unit. Prior to the Court, I worked with the Department of Health and Human Services for 16 years, initially as a child protection worker and later in various managerial positions. During this time, I appeared as a senior court officer at the Children's Court of Victoria for many years and worked as a senior policy advisor with the Office of Children, Child Protection and Family Services. I have also worked as a counsellor at the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect and in other counselling positions in women and children services.

As a long term member of the FCAV I have met many of you at events over the years and that sense of connection between carers is an important community for the FCAV to continue to facilitate.

I look forward to working and walking with you, as the FCAV builds influence, making changes our carers need and deserve on behalf of our precious young people. I'm more excited than ever to begin the work of improving the conditions under which we care and continuing the advocacy and support by which the FCAV is so well known. I also look forward to meeting many of you during Foster Care Week in September.

Thank you for a warm welcome and be in touch!

**Samantha Hauge,**  
*Chief Executive Officer, Foster Care Association of Victoria*

# CARER GIVEAWAYS! ENTER NOW TO WIN...

## SELF-CARE PAMPER PACKAGE – PRIZE GIVEAWAY!



Caring is a demanding and a challenging role and despite the rewards, it can also be quite stressful. It is important to know how to take care of yourself and recognise how your role impacts on you and the need to recharge your batteries.

We have 4 x \$100 self-care pamper packages to help you

feel relaxed and rejuvenated! To WIN tell us how you would spend the money pampering yourself! Winners will be reimbursed up to \$100 for a pampering experience of your choice!

Email: [competition@fcav.org.au](mailto:competition@fcav.org.au) by Friday 6 September 2019, use the subject header “Pamper package” and in the body of the email tell us a how you would spend the money, along with your full name, phone, address and agency. Good luck!

## A DAY AT THE ZOO!

Family zoo pass give away!

This prize is valid for a day trip to either **Melbourne Zoo, Werribee Zoo** or **Healesville Sanctuary** and includes free entry to the zoo for your family.



**Competition Question: How would you like to spend the day at the zoo if you won this prize?**

Email: [competition@fcav.org.au](mailto:competition@fcav.org.au) by Friday 6 September 2019, use the subject header “Day at the Zoo” and in the body of the email tell us which animal is your favourite, along with your full name, phone, address and agency. Good luck!

# THE FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

Invites you to the 2019 Carer Celebration and AGM during foster care week

## The value of carers

This year's theme is “Value of Carers” recognising the value of carers, providing the stepping stones of hope for young people in our community and the value of that contribution to the whole community.

Carers are invited to the FCAV Annual Carer Celebration and Annual General Meeting on Friday 13th September in the Hotel Windsor's Grand Ballroom. We look forward to seeing you there.

**Friday 13th September 2019**

**Morning Tea**

**at**

**The Hotel Windsor**

**111 Spring Street, Melbourne**

Register at: [www.eventbrite.com/e/foster-care-association-carer-celebration-annual-general-meeting-tickets-59680615327](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/foster-care-association-carer-celebration-annual-general-meeting-tickets-59680615327)



**Foster Care Week is 8th -14th September 2019**

Check out our website for the growing **Calendar of Events** celebrating foster carers this year:

[www.fcav.org.au/news-events/foster-care-week-2019](http://www.fcav.org.au/news-events/foster-care-week-2019)

**WHERE DOES FCAV  
FIT INTO YOUR  
SUPPORT NETWORK?**

See our *About Us* on [fcav.org.au](http://fcav.org.au) for how our support is independent from DHHS and your agency.

This newsletter is produced quarterly by the Foster Care Association of Victoria to provide information and support to Victoria's foster carers.

To view past editions please visit our website at: [www.fcav.org.au/newsletters](http://www.fcav.org.au/newsletters)

# Carer Information & Support Service

☎ 9416 4292

🌐 [www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au)

The **Carer Information and Support Service (CISS)** at the Foster Care Association of Victoria provides free, confidential and independent advice and advocacy for Victorian foster carers, covering all areas of foster care. You do not need to be a member of the Association to access CISS, however we recommend all foster carers become members to ensure you receive all the information, assistance and resources available to you.

If you would like more information, contact the CISS team 9am-5pm, Monday to Thursday and 9am-4.30pm on Friday: **9416 4292** or visit our website: [www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au) under Carer Resources to see the FCAV's range of Information Sheets. [www.fcav.org.au/carers-support-service](http://www.fcav.org.au/carers-support-service)

## INSIDE CISS SUPPORT: Dual carer allowances for respite care

In recent times we have had a number of carers ring through to our **Carer Information and Support Service** stating that they have not had their carer allowance funded whilst the child in their care, is in respite.

The FCAV believes that all carers should have access to respite care as a mechanism of self-care, avoiding compassion fatigue and burnout.

The current DHHS business rules for dual respite allowances applies to:

- **Registered foster carers** of children subject to child protection involvement being cared for within funded home based care placements
- Assessed and **approved kinship carers** where respite is part of an endorsed case plan.

Where a Community Service Organisation (agency) intends to seek dual reimbursements for **registered foster carers** caring for a child with child protection involvement, dual reimbursement provision must first be negotiated with the regional DHHS Placement Coordination Unit (for any respite placement greater than 7 days) before the relevant forms are submitted to the department's Caregiver Reimbursement Helpdesk for processing.

For assessed and approved **kinship respite carers**, dual reimbursements must be approved by a Regional Unit Manager.

Further to this:

1. **Respite placement up to 7 days:** reimbursements to both the primary and respite caregiver will be made.
2. **Respite placements for 8 – 28 days:** require specific approval for a dual care allowance and is based on a case-by-case discretion, however, it is anticipated payments to both caregivers will occur other than in situations where the reason for the respite placement is that the primary caregiver is travelling for a holiday.
3. **Respite placements for 29 days or more:** payments to the primary caregiver will cease for the period of respite other than in exceptional circumstances. This again needs to be advocated by the agency on your behalf.
4. **Respite will not be funded** for an extended vacation.

It is very important to let your agency know prior to making any commitment to respite, so that there are no adverse impacts. Before entering into respite arrangements please discuss your plans with your agency worker.

The process for options 2. and 3. requires the Community Service Organisation and the Child Protection Unit Manager to recommend that dual payments are warranted. This is done on a case-by-case basis. The Placement and Support Manager will be required to endorse the decision to make a dual payment in these circumstances. This business rule applies to all agency home-based care placements.



## WHO CARES? PODCASTS FOR NEW CARERS

Specifically designed for foster carers starting on their carer path, this podcast series provides guidance and tips straight from other carers and staff who work in out of home care in Victoria.

Hear from carers discussing their personal experiences, including the ups and the downs. Whether you want to feel more prepared for your first placement, or are just after some reassurance that you're not alone in your journey, we hope you listen and enjoy!

Visit [www.carerkafe.org.au/online-learning](http://www.carerkafe.org.au/online-learning) or via the soundcloud app.

- Ep #1** Expectations, Challenges and Reality – Tips for new carers. Carers share their family's journey.
- Ep #2** Debunking myths – Home truths from foster carers.
- Ep #3** Families who care – How does caring impact your biological children?
- Ep #4** Intake and first placement – That first night.
- Ep #5** Therapeutic care - What is therapeutic care?
- Ep #6** Who Cares? - Why we care and you can too.

### Dear carers, staying in touch is important.

Moved? Changed agencies? New phone number? Please visit our website, call or email us to provide your new details so we can stay in touch...

**Ph:** 9416 4292  
**E:** [admin@fcav.org.au](mailto:admin@fcav.org.au)  
**W:** [www.fcav.org.au](http://www.fcav.org.au)

# BUILDING AND SUPPORTING VICTORIAN FOSTER CARERS - Minister for Child Protection, Luke Donnellan MP

With **Foster Care Week** around the corner, it's a significant time to reflect on the amazing and selfless work that carers do to improve the lives of many vulnerable children and young people.

I also want to take this opportunity to share some of the initiatives the Victorian Government is undertaking to support Victoria's kids in care, and the resources and education we are offering carers as you undertake your important role.

Through the Roadmap for Reform, we are committed to ensuring vulnerable children and families have access to quality services, by supporting evidence-based approaches to prevent child abuse and neglect and providing better supports to carers.

As part of this we are working closely with carers, service providers, the Foster Care Association of Victoria, Kinship Carers Victoria and Permanent Care and Adoptive Families to develop a **Carer Strategy**.

The Carer Strategy, driven by carers, will improve the experience of kinship, foster and permanent carers and the children they care for, by calling out the changes needed for carers and putting action plans in place to make sure they happen.

The Victorian government is investing \$476.8m to make Victoria fairer and stronger by improving services for those

who count on them – including children in care, people with disabilities, the elderly and their carers.

We continue to provide flexible training and learning opportunities for foster carers through **Carer KaFE program**. Carer KaFE continues to support the development of carers enabling them to provide the best possible care to vulnerable children and young people.

We are also initiating an extension of the leaving care age through our Home Stretch program to make sure more young people can successfully transition from care to independence.

Through the **Home Stretch program**, young people and their kinship and foster carers will have the option of the young person remaining with their carer up to the age of 21 years, supported by an accommodation allowance.

I would like to thank you for your immeasurable contribution and look forward to meeting many of you at this year's Foster Care Association of Victoria's Carer Celebration and AGM on 13 September.

Before I finish, I would like to acknowledge Katie Hooper's hard work and dedication with the FCAV and championing the voice of carers in her role as CEO.



**Above:** Luke Donnellan MP, Minister for Child Protection

I am certain she will be missed when she commences her new career chapter in August this year. I look forward to continuing Katie's good work with Samantha Hauge, who I congratulate on her appointment as the FCAV's new CEO.

My sincerest thanks again for your commitment and care. We would not be able to improve the lives of so many vulnerable young children and young people without your support.

**Luke Donnellan MP,  
Minister for Child Protection**

## HOME STRETCH UPDATE



The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has released general factsheet and frequently asked questions on the Home Stretch implementation Home Stretch Fact Sheet and Home Stretch FAQ.

The FCAV has recently worked with the DHHS to provide a carer specific update for young people and their carers to access more information about the Home Stretch.

**Carer's FAQ** <https://bit.ly/2Kf374u>

DHHS has also released a general factsheet and FAQ's on the Home Stretch implementation in Victoria.

**Fact Sheet** <https://bit.ly/2OpvTo3>

**FAQ** <https://bit.ly/30Z1kqJ>

A promotional image for the Home Stretch Symposium. It features a young man with dark hair sitting on a skateboard at a skate park. He is wearing a light grey t-shirt and blue jeans. In the background, there are trees and a clear blue sky. The Home Stretch logo is in the top right corner. Below the image, the text reads: 'THE HOME STRETCH SYMPOSIUM 27 - 28 AUGUST - INTERCONTINENTAL SYDNEY INFORMING AUSTRALIAN POLICY DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION TO EXTEND CARE TO 21.'

**THE HOME STRETCH SYMPOSIUM**  
27 - 28 AUGUST - INTERCONTINENTAL SYDNEY  
INFORMING AUSTRALIAN POLICY DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION TO EXTEND CARE TO 21.

**The Home Stretch National Symposium** will take place in August, informing a national approach to extending care to 21. International experts and evidence will be showcased.

Sam Hauge, FCAV CEO, will present on the themes and comments arising out the

recent **Carer Survey** to the international audience. Thank you to all Victorian carers who responded. Carer engagement is critical to the program.

We look forward to updating you on the next steps coming out of the Symposium.



**Above:** Anne Manne, writer and social commentator, addressing the forum

The Foster Care Association of Victoria co-hosted a “Meeting the Needs of Children in Care” sector forum with Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare on 22 July, 2019 with a focus on reform to the client expenses reimbursement mechanism for carers.

The **Client Support Funding Framework** is used to pay for essential education, health and recreational services and to reimburse carers for the everyday out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of meeting the needs of children in their care. Carers have consistently identified problems with getting access to this fund as an issue that needs to be urgently addressed. As well as the complex and time consuming administrative processes associated with funding applications, the failure to address inadequate funding issues makes carers feel undervalued and unrespected for the valuable volunteer contribution they are making.

“The kind of skills that foster carers require go well beyond the norm. Those people are very special. Surround them with support,” said Ms Manne.

Drug use, violence and dispossession is leading children to a connection with child protection in increasing numbers. Meanwhile the number of carers available is falling which is hardly surprising. “We don’t reward care. We don’t respect it. We don’t fund it.” Ms Manne said.

“Foster carers are so important in a community, we must respect and recognise that and make sure they do not suffer the economic care penalty. It’s not enough to simply recognise it.

We need to reset it. Those people should not become less well-off as a result of caring for our young.” Ms Manne said.

Carers, the FCAV, The Centre of Excellence and agencies all agreed that funding and administrative reforms are required to improve the operation of the fund and to ensure that it fulfils its purpose to deliver timely access to services that are essential for children in care.

Participants agreed that these changes will go a long way towards providing the funding certainty and flexibility required to address carer concerns and to support case planning objectives and essential services access.

Claims on the Client Support Funding Framework are increasing due to the steady growth in children in care and under DHHS supervision:

**Kinship care:** 5581 children - Increase of 71% between 2014-2018

**Foster care:** 1673 children - Increase of 11% between 2014-2018

Main categories of client expenses expenditure include:

- child care
- transport
- counselling
- medical

The FCAV has since confirmed a meeting with Minister Donnellan to discuss the Client Support Funding Framework.

## FORUM FOR YOUNG ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN OUT OF HOME CARE

Under the actions of Wungurilwil Gagapduir (Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement), the Commission for Children and Young People hosted the inaugural forum for young Aboriginal people in the out of home care system on Tuesday 2 July 2019 at the Aborigines Advancement League, Thornbury.

The day was an opportunity for the young people to engage in fun activities, develop as young leaders, strengthen culture and resilience, and network and develop connections with other young people with similar experiences.

Around 15 young people attended the day, coming from all regions of Victoria – including Mildura, Warrnambool, Ballarat, and Morwell, to name a few.

The participation and enthusiasm of the young people in the range of activities was fantastic to see. We had really positive feedback and look forward to hosting future forums!

**Jidah Clark**  
Senior Policy Adviser, Children and Families, Koori Advisory & Engagement Team, Commission for Children and Young People.



# Carer COMMUNITY & SKILLS



Kinship and Foster Care Education

## CARER KAFE ONLINE OFFERINGS

We understand that carers lead very busy lives and sometimes find it difficult to make it to our face-to-face sessions which is why we have developed a suite of online training and tools to support you. Access training, webinars and podcasts anytime, anywhere!

Topics include:

- Overcoming compassion fatigue
- Identifying and responding to drug use
- Protecting young people online
- Trauma informed care
- Caring for an aboriginal child or young person

Plus many more!

## WEBINARS

We have produced a number of webinars which you can access online, including:

- Children's voice in child protection hearings
- Cultural support plans
- Permanent care conversion

## PODCASTS

In collaboration with the FCAV, we have produced "Who Cares?" – a podcast series for new foster carers, providing insights and tips from other carers and staff who work in out of home care.

Go to the **Online Learning** section on the Carer KAFE website to learn more and to register for our mailing list and online training modules at [www.carerkafe.org.au](http://www.carerkafe.org.au).

## VICTORIA LEGAL AID WEBINAR: CHILDREN'S VOICE IN CHILD PROTECTION HEARINGS

If you missed our webinar on how to advocate for your kinship/foster child during child protection hearings in Victoria, or would like to watch it again, it's available on our website along with the slides from the presentation.

View online:

[www.carerkafe.org.au](http://www.carerkafe.org.au)



**Congratulations - Raising Expectations** has received a significant funding boost from the Victorian government. More than \$1 million over 3 years will go towards supporting people who have spent time in out of home care to go on to higher education and training.

We know that young people who have experience of the out of home care system can face a culture of low expectations, and structural barriers to education. Raising Expectation is there to support young people to achieve their dreams and change those expectations!

For information on Raising Expectations go to: [www.cfecfw.asn.au/raisingexpectations/](http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/raisingexpectations/)

**Contact:** [Joanna.humphries@cfecfw.asn.au](mailto:Joanna.humphries@cfecfw.asn.au)

Or check out the Centre's Education Guide at [www.cfecfw.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Education-Guide\\_June-2019.pdf](http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Education-Guide_June-2019.pdf)



## FREE Workshop for Foster & Kinship Carers

Berry Street is delighted to partner with ANZ to offer this FREE workshop for foster & kinship carers.

Whether you are looking to create a budget, reduce your debt or start saving, MoneyMinded has something for everyone! The program has been designed to help you develop your financial knowledge and improve your money management skills.

MoneyMinded can also play an important role in equipping you to be financial mentors for the children and young people in your care.

The workshop will include topics such as planning, budgeting, saving and spending and includes activity sheets, group discussions and handouts.

**Date:** Tuesday 10th September 2019 **Time:** 10:00am – 3:00pm **Venue:** Berry Street Richmond Office, 1 Salisbury Street, Richmond

To register visit our website <https://learning.berrystreet.org.au/training-development/events/moneyminded-workshop-carers> (search under training & development for MoneyMinded Workshop)

For more information contact the Berry Street Professional Learning & Development Team on:

**9421 9362** or email: [learning@berrystreet.org.au](mailto:learning@berrystreet.org.au)

Please note: In recognition of the important role you play as a carer Berry Street will be providing every attendee with a \$50 Coles/Myer Gift Voucher to help offset the cost of attending this day.

