



The peak body for **foster & kinship carers** in South Australia

CFC-SA aims to improve the lives of children and young people in care through provision of services addressing the key themes:

advocate - support - connect - inform

CFC-SA's services value and support Carer families to sustain strong and positive relationships in homes across South Australia

CFC-SA Term 3 E-Newsletter

Welcome

Dear South Australian Foster and Kinship Carers,

Welcome to the first online edition of Connecting Foster Carers – SA Inc newsletter. We hope this communication reaches you during **Foster and Kinship Carer Week**, where we celebrate, acknowledge and give thanks to you and your families for your incredible contributions and provision of care the whole year round.

In this edition, we invite you to join us for the **Recharge 2017 Event**, provide updates on **child protection reform** and the **new Act**, and forward a communication from Cathy Taylor regarding **complaints**. We also provide a summary of results from the **2017 Foster & Kinship Carer Survey** distributed in July – and again, thank all who provided us with their feedback.

We hope you enjoy this Term 3 edition. If you have suggestions for future editions, please send them through to us at admin@cfc-sa.org.au. In the meantime, keep up the great work!

Amanda Porter

Chief Executive Officer

Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers - SA Inc

Invitation to CFC-SA's Recharge 2017 Event

We invite foster carers, kinship carers, support workers and caseworkers to join together and “recharge” at this year’s Recharge event.

Attending either the day **OR** evening session, guests will hear from international and inspirational guest speaker **Nathan Mikaere Wallis** on therapeutic care plus other guest speakers, and enjoy ample opportunity to connect with others over a delicious lunch or dinner meal.

Date

Friday 20th October 2017

Time

Day Session

10.00am – 2.30pm with free crèche facilities (day session only)

OR

Evening Session

6.00pm – 10.00pm

Venue

The Arkaba Hotel, 150 Glen Osmond Road, Fullarton

Cost

FREE event for registered CFC-SA Members

\$25 for current foster and kinship carers

(non-CFC-SA Members - [click here to become a Member for free](#))

\$65 for support workers/case workers

For further information, or to book your ticket,

visit the [CFC-SA Events webpage](#)



Thank You - Foster & Kinship Carer Week 2017

On behalf of the Board of CFC-SA we would like to say whole heartedly:

“Thank you! We value your care, commitment and love to the children and young people who need it. As Carers ourselves, we know the time, the challenges, the great unknown all members of Carer families face – and we know it is worth it for every success along the way.”

Donna Scott

Vice Chairperson

Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers - SA Inc

Thank you from the Minister for Education and Child Development

Please [click here](#) to view a letter from the Hon Susan Close MP for Foster & Kinship Carer Week.



Peer Support Network Project

CFC-SA welcomes Jane Horton to the role of Volunteer Coordinator. Jane will be delivering the Peer Support Network Project and working with CFC-SA to have high quality volunteer processes which meet national standards for volunteering.

The project is designed to support foster and kinship carers (Carers) in their caring roles through the provision of peer support.

The Peer Support Volunteer may offer a 'listening ear' and help Carers to debrief, gather information, join in with other Carers or community events, and explore various aspects of caring for vulnerable children and young people.

For more information please visit the CFC-SA "[volunteer with us](#)" webpage.

Foster & Kinship Carer Survey

During July CFC-SA received feedback from 246 foster & kinship carers in SA who completed the 2017 Foster & Kinship Carer Survey - [click here](#) to read a Summary of the findings.

Preliminary data shows 80% of responses were from foster carers, with 20% kinship carers, and 1% identifying as 'both' foster and kinship carers.

77% of responses surrounding **OPG** and 64% of responses surrounding **adoption** identified Carers maybe interested, were pursuing or had been granted these more permanent care arrangements. CFC-SA will be using this information in our systems advocacy efforts with DCP in the coming months.

When asked whether Carers felt they had formed **attachments** and strong parent/child relationships, over 90% reported they were satisfied or very satisfied.

Many Carers reported **they worry** about whether the children will be removed.

When Carers were asked their **motivation** for continuing to care, various themes centred on 'love', 'the children', 'my/our family' and their wants for the children to be 'happy', 'safe' and 'healthy' emerged. In their words...

"Knowing that you have given a child a happy, healthy and normal life and you have surrounded them with love and positivity"

"Being a strong Aboriginal person and having the skills to give children love, care, culture and support"

"To be part of [their] life as mum and dad are not allowed much time with them."

They are my grandchildren”

“The sound of happy laughing kids, who don't have to worry about anything other than being a kid”

Books for children and young people to connect with Carers

CFC-SA is pleased to have received a grant from the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion and Grants SA to purchase and distribute books that aid communication and connection between children and young people in care with their Carer families.

We will be purchasing a supply of Colour My Story and Untwist books for distribution to Carer families and to promote their use at upcoming events.



Bill Update

On 6 July 2017 the Bill was passed and we now have a Children and Young Persons (Safety) Act 2017 (SA). This is great cause for celebration for foster and kinship carer families who now have rights and protections under the new legislation.

This is also a culmination of CFC-SA's work over the past few years at the systems advocacy level and on behalf of CFC-SA, I thank and congratulate all

who have been involved, particularly past and present Board members. As you know, this work doesn't happen in isolation – CFC-SA wishes to make special mention of Kelly Ryan, Megan Hender and Amanda Porter to acknowledge, thank and share our sincere appreciation for their time and expertise during recent lobbying efforts.

This was acknowledged in Parliament on 5 July 2017 with the following Hansard excerpt moved by The Hon. P. Malinauskas:

“Over the last few weeks, the government has met with stakeholders to further discuss measures in the bill, in particular Connecting Foster Carers-SA Inc. On behalf of the government, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge that group and thank them for their work on behalf of carers in this state. The government accepts that it is important to carers and important in terms of their retention and future recruitment that the bill provide an external review mechanism to allow decisions of the CE to either remove a child or change conditions as to their status as an approved carer.”

With the introduction of new legislation comes an increased urgency for SA's Carers to have access to the carer advocacy service recommended by Commissioner Nyland (**R.116**) and associated education materials (**R.117**). CFC-SA continues to seek a response from the Department for Child Protection in relation to the KPMG Carer Advocacy Services review, and remains hopeful we will receive resources to expand our services shortly.

Child Protection Reform

CFC-SA is actively involved in various aspects of child protection reform, raising the profile of foster and kinship carers across child protection networks and widening our involvement and influence across the sector. Recent work includes:

-) providing contact details for two Carer representatives to be involved in the DCP recruitment panels for the Carer Relationship roles and the Complaints Manager role;
 -) meeting with DCP representatives to discuss the ongoing issue of 'abrupt' removals;
 -) attending the CAFS Permanency Reform Working Group, South Australia Workshop facilitated by Ernst & Young to identify potential initiatives to build kinship care as a more stable and permanent placement option which can lead to national actions for permanency reform – supporting national focus on initiatives aimed at reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the care system;
 -) providing feedback on the Out of Home Care Program Charter and draft Engagement Plans;
 -) Joining the DCP Out of Home Care Oversight Group to provide oversight for the development and implementation of Nyland recommendations relating to Out of Home Care, and Out of Home Care Strategy
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Communication from Cathy Taylor, DCP

Dear Carers

As you would be aware Commissioner Nyland recommended, and the government accepted, that a centralised system for receiving and resolving complaints, would occur.

I am pleased to announce the establishment of a complaints unit within the Office of the Chief Executive. Placing the complaints unit in my office has been a very deliberate strategy to demonstrate my personal commitment to ensuring matters are dealt with at the highest level and are resolved both for the individual complainant and for the improvement of service delivery and practice where it is demonstrated that a complaint is part of a broader system issue.

We are pleased to welcome Tracy Quinney as the Manager of the unit. Tracy comes to us having most recently been Manager, Child Safety/Child Protection in the Department for Health and Human Services in Tasmania and is a registered Psychologist with the Tasmanian Board of Psychologists. Prior to this Tracy has worked in child protection services in the Northern Territory. Joining Tracy as a resolution and assessment officer is Lucas Abbot. Most recently Lucas has been working in DCSI as a senior project officer and prior to this has held various positions within DCP (DECD) including working in residential care.

We are currently in the process of recruiting a second assessment and resolution officer. The team will report to Leah Cassidy in my office.

With immediate effect all complaints that require a central resolution pathway should now be directed to the complaints unit via the already established [online form](#) or by calling [1800 003 305](tel:1800003305) or sending an email

to: DCPComplaintsandFeedback@sa.gov.au

Should you wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact Leah Cassidy leah.cassidy@sa.gov.au / 8463 6346 or Tracy Quinney tracey.quinney@sa.gov.au / 8226 3953.

Regards

Cathy Taylor

Chief Executive

Department for Child Protection / Level 1, 31 Flinders Street, Adelaide SA 5000

PLEASE NOTE: CFC-SA remains available to advocate, connect, support and inform Carers with issues relating to foster and kinship care, including making contact with the newly formed complaints unit.



CREATE's 2017 National Survey

An opportunity for children and young people aged 8 to 25 years to have their say in CREATE's 2017 National Survey, covering important areas like housing, education, family connection, health, how much people are involved in decision making and how happy they are feeling. CREATE will write to children and young people inviting

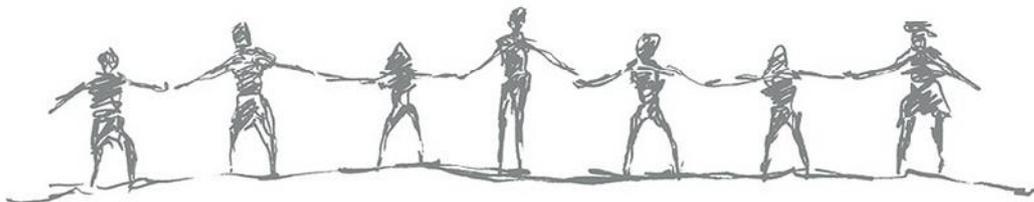
them to be part of this important research. More information is available on the [CREATE website](#).

Supporting Australian grandparent and kinship carers

The Raising Children Network, in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) recently announced the release of new resource guides for carers and service providers. One guide assists grandparent and kinship carers in their caring roles. It also explains how to set up support groups and connect with useful services. The other guide is for service providers who work with grandparents and kinship carers. You can download them here:

[Supporting grandparent and kinship carers: a guide for service providers](#)

[Being a grandparent or kinship carer: a guide](#)



Become a CFC-SA Member

Members play an important part in shaping the future of CFC-SA and improving the system for all foster and kinship families in South Australia.

CFC-SA welcomes new Members and invites Carers and other persons interested in making a difference to the lives of children and young people in care to join in this important work.

Reasons to Join:

-) Contribute your ideas and opinions
-) Help make CFC-SA's voice stronger
-) Receive invitations to special events
-) Connect with other Carers
-) Be notified of policy developments and research
-) Member benefits such as discounted fees and special offers from organisations

It's FREE and easy to join online ([click here](#)), or call 1800 732 272 to arrange Membership over the phone.