



# Connecting Foster Carers – SA Inc

The peak body for foster and kinship carers in South Australia

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## MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 10 September 2017

South Australian children who are unable to live with their biological family need greater access to stable, secure living arrangements, according to Connecting Foster Carers SA chief executive Amanda Porter.

Ms Porter says there should be a simpler, clearer pathway to Other Person Guardianship, which provides a stronger sense of permanency for both children in care and foster and kinship carers.

“OPG offers greater security to children and carers,” Ms Porter said, “and allows stronger development of family-style relationships in care households.”

She said there needed to be greater appreciation, by both government and the community, of the valuable contribution to child wellbeing by carers.

“This is a 24/7 commitment that often requires complex parenting skills, compassion, empathy and dedication. In addition, carers save the State millions of dollars every year.”

Speaking at the intersection of Child Protection Week (last week) and Foster & Kinship Carer Week (the coming week), Ms Porter said foster and kinship carers should be “treasured, acknowledged and recognised” for their care of children who’ve been removed from their biological family, and for their financial commitment to vulnerable children.

Referring to this year’s Child Protection Week slogan of “Play Your Part”, she said more than 1500 South Australian families were playing their part by caring for approximately 3000 children. “Those families have chosen to care, and as the peak body for care families in this State we salute them.”

She said many of these families - and the children they cared for - would like to strengthen their care arrangements via the greater permanency of OPG, which allows increased independence, responsibility and decision-making in the lives of care families.

“What we’d like to see is a legislative framework that allowed for care families to access OPG directly after designated timeframes had elapsed, and it was determined that the circumstances of a child’s biological family wouldn’t allow reunification.

“In those circumstances, a child’s best chance of a stable and secure home environment is with the care family that wants the child to reach his or her full potential.

“The best interests of the child should be at the heart of every decision made in child protection, and unfortunately that’s not always the case.”

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