



Katrine Hildyard MP

Member for Reynell

16 March 2022

Fiona Endacott
Chief Executive Officer
Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA

Via Email: fiona@cfc-sa.org.au

Dear Fiona

Thank you very much for what your organisation does to ensure South Australia's most vulnerable children are protected and enabled to thrive.

Every South Australian child being loved, safe, and healthy matters to Labor and to the South Australian community. A child's starting point should never limit their future.

Labor understands that collaborative, concerted effort across government and the community is needed to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of South Australian children.

A Malinauskas Labor government will focus on improving the lives of South Australian children by putting the welfare of children at the centre of our decision making and actions. In doing so, Labor is prepared to tackle some of the most difficult and complex social issues impacting children and their families, in partnership with children, their families and their communities.

Our actions on child protection will include:

Giving Children A Voice

Labor will improve advocacy and support for children and young people in care and leaving care. If the child protection system is going to do the job the community expects of it, it must be open for scrutiny and the people most involved – the children and the carers – must be able to speak up.

A Malinauskas Labor government will:

- Invest in the Create Foundation to work with children and young people in care to identify and develop future housing, work and study pathways and to develop a model for better sibling connection for children in care and improved rights for siblings.
- Ensure the Guardian for Children and Young People is funded to be the Community Visitor for children in residential care.
- Empower the Aboriginal Children's Commissioner to create an Aboriginal-led group, in conjunction with Aboriginal children, families and organisations, that will ensure Aboriginal voices are heard and acted upon in relation to all child protection matters involving Aboriginal children and young people.
- Work with the Create Foundation and the Guardian for Children and Young People to establish a mechanism for the Minister to directly hear from children in care on an at least quarterly basis.

We have moved to 114 Beach Road, Christies Beach SA 5165

PO Box 127
Lonsdale DC SA 5160

T 8382 0409
E reynell@parliament.sa.gov.au

f /katrinehildyardforreynell
t @KatrineHildyard



Supporting Carers, Grandparents and Extended Families

Labor understands that vulnerable children often have many adults who care for them – foster families, kinship carers and, often grandparents. Supporting these carers is often the best way to support children.

A Malinauskas Labor government will:

- Support advocacy and advice group *Grandparents for Grandchildren* to support grandparents to take a greater role in supporting their grandchildren when their parents are struggling.
- Support the identification of Aboriginal children's kin, the most culturally appropriate placements and the involvement of Aboriginal family members and supporters in family conferencing through the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People.
- Prioritise family conferencing at the earliest opportunity prior to children at risk being born and throughout periods of difficulty for families.
- Enable Aboriginal children, their families and communities to lead decision making processes.
- Increase resourcing for carer advocacy services.
- Legislate faster response by the government to complaints by carers and to ensure complaints processes are effective.
- Have the Minister for Child Protection hear directly from carers on a quarterly basis.

Keeping Children Safe: Prevention and Early Intervention

Growing up safe and loved in your family is the best start to life, and Labor will work to improve the chances of families staying together safely for all children.

A Malinauskas Labor government will:

- Work with the universities to include the understanding of complex trauma and trauma related behaviours and responses in teacher training and training for work in other related departments.
- Bring together experts from Health, Education and other departments to ensure that all arms of government are identifying and supporting families that are vulnerable in a cohesive way that puts the needs of children at the centre of decision making.
- Develop accountability mechanisms and clarity in role, remit and deliverables for the departments working in any aspect of child protection.
- Ensure expeditious and safe sharing of data within and between government departments and community organisations in order to identify children and families at risk and to provide wrap around support at critical times.

Breaking the Cycle

Too often children in care become parents caught up in the child protection system; breaking the cycle is tough to do but essential. Labor will put every effort into breaking the cycle. That means supporting families to stay together where possible and guiding young people as they leave care so they don't repeat their experiences.

A Malinauskas Labor government will:

- Ensure priority housing is available to children leaving care as young adults.
- Use the power of health care and education services to target and support families that are struggling so that children and their families have the best possible chance of thriving.
- Develop a comprehensive support program with a non-government partner for young people leaving care to become independent adults despite not always having families able to offer ongoing support.

Addressing the Child Protection Workforce Crisis

It is essential that the child protection workforce is better supported. The crisis in child protection has been felt deeply by workers in residential care and across the department.

A Malinauskas Labor government will:

- Fill existing job vacancies.
- Develop a workforce plan, in consultation with workers and their unions and community organisations, to ensure sustainable, safe staffing levels for the future.
- Initiate a campaign to connect students and other job seekers with work in child protection.
- Ensure at least quarterly meetings between the Minister and the relevant Unions to hear about staffing issues that need to be addressed.

Labor will also review legislative and policy settings so that responsibility for children's safety and wellbeing is taken and so that policies and practices work effectively for children, their families, carers, workers and communities.

Above all else, Labor will always prioritise the South Australian children who most need us to hear their voices, to see their experiences and to act.

Kind regards



KATRINE HILDYARD MP

Member for Reynell

Shadow Minister for Child Protection

Shadow Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Shadow Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing

Shadow Minister for Arts