



MEDIA RELEASE
For immediate release
15 August 2024

Statement regarding Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Bill

Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA, the state's peak body representing the rights and interests of foster and kinship carers, welcomes the draft new Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Bill, saying it will significantly improve the child protection system and better support the lives of children, young people and their families.

Fiona Endacott, Chief Executive Officer of Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA (CF&KC-SA), was briefed on the draft Bill earlier this week by The Hon Katrina Hildyard MP, Minister for Child Protection.

"This Bill is transformative and clearly embeds the voice of carers, children and young people in legislation, something that we as the peak representative body have been advocating for since before the 2022 state election," Fiona says.

"It is evident that consideration was given to material provided by the peak body through consultation in drafting this important Bill as it clearly and meaningfully considers the needs of children and young people in decisions that relate to their care and protection across all jurisdictions.

"As the peak body representing South Australian carers, we have tirelessly advocated for improvements to the legislation and we are relieved to see the majority of our recommendations to government have been not only considered but included. We thank the government for its collaboration.

"Through the peak body's submissions and responses, participation in committees and reference groups, research and surveys, and long-standing relationships with Ministers and policymakers, we have been able to support systemic change for our members and the broader carer community."

Fiona says the CF&KC-SA recommendations that have been incorporated into the draft Bill will vastly strengthen the rights of the state's 4,000 foster and kinship carers.

"We are pleased to see care concerns included in the Bill, now known as Quality of Care Reports, which ensure department decisions can be reviewed to ensure justice and procedural fairness," she said.

"The Bill also defines what is and what is not a reviewable decision, providing clarity for carers and accountability for government.

"For approved carers, they will be provided opportunities to be heard in court and participate in decision making regarding their child or young person and have access to an independent complaints pathway.

"In our recommendations at the last State Election, we asked for a whole of government approach to ensure all departments work together for the best outcomes of young people in care. In this Bill, through the development of a state strategy for children and young people, the Minister has the power to direct Chief



Executives of the health, education and human services departments to meet to enable an inter-agency support response if required.

“The Statement of Commitment to Foster and Kinship Carers, a document spearheaded by CF&KC-SA that outlines how the Department for Child Protection can work in partnership with peak bodies, has also been enshrined in the draft Bill.”

CF&KC-SA strongly encourages foster and kinship carers to review the draft Bill and provide their feedback during the four-week consultation period.

“The Bill is extensive and we are still considering the full document and look forward to consulting with carers in due course,” Fiona says.

“A fast passage through Parliament will be vital, given the lengthy time taken to produce this draft Bill.

“All amendments will need to be supported by strong policy foundations, which we expect to be thoroughly consulted on in the very near future.”

South Australian foster and kinship carers can review the draft Bill and provide their feedback here:

<http://www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/>

Background:

In late 2022, CF&KC-SA provided a submission to government regarding the review of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, outlining 12 proposed amendments to further embed the carer voice into legislation, increasing placement stability and support for children and young people in family-based care.

In 2022, CF&KC-SA lobbied parliamentarians prior to the state election, identifying seven election asks and the need for a whole of government approach to addressing the needs of children and young people in care, as well as the urgent need to amend the legislation to include procedural fairness and care concerns as a prescribed function.

About CF&KC-SA:

Established in 1999 by carers, Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA (CF&KC-SA) is the independent, peak representative body for foster and kinship carers in South Australia. The peak body was formed to advocate for carers and help ensure their rights are upheld, whilst they care for children and young people.

For media interviews or further information:

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