

Fact Sheet

Out of Home Care

Achievements in 2008-09

- A new strategic framework for Out of Home Care was finalised in consultation with key stakeholders.
- The standard reimbursement rate for Foster Carers has been increased by \$10 per child per week from July 1 2008.
- A residential practice consultant has been appointed to work with government and non-government carers and organisations to improve standards of care, help bring care plans up to an appropriate standard, supervise the accreditation of foster carers and follow up any incidents involving out of home care.
- Out of home care staff are receiving intensive professional training and development in recognition of their need for better skills and supervision
- House supervisors have been appointed to work with rostered carers and make sure that staff receive the support they need and the quality of care to children in rostered care is improved
- Much needed maintenance has been undertaken on residential care facilities used to accommodate children in out of home care. 85% of these properties have been upgraded and there will be further major upgrades for the remaining buildings this year.
- The Australian Childhood Foundation has been appointed through a procurement process to provide a specialist treatment service to children who exhibit or are at risk of developing severe emotional or behavioural disturbances caused by abuse or neglect, from July.
- The *Real Carers Really Needed* Foster Care recruitment campaign has been developed and was launched earlier this month, attracting considerable interest and generating a wave of enquires from potential foster carers. This will provide a new pool of carers for our children.
- New case planning documentation has been developed and the Carers Handbook has being updated.
- Legislative amendments have been passed to ensure that when it is in the best interests of the child, permanent guardianship can be taken over by a carer to provide stability to care arrangements and reduce disruption in children's lives.
- A *Be Heard* program has been created and funded to provide a voice for children in care through the CREATE foundation and an empowerment program has also been funded to build self esteem through a variety of methods.
- A professional development program for teachers of children in care, called *Calmer Classrooms* will be implemented later this year. It will assist teachers to engage with and improve learning outcomes for children in care impacted by trauma.

Key areas for 2009-10

- The Government has quarantined the reform of Out of Home Care announced last year from budget cuts and the reform will proceed according to the previously announced budget commitments.
- Transfer the provision of out of home care to community sector providers. This process is expected to commence with advertising of the tender in October 2009.