



MEDIA RELEASE

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REFORM THAT SHOWS THE STATE CARES

Mallee Family Care has congratulated the State Government for its Budget commitment to provide extended care to every young person living in out-of-home-care, up to the age of 21. Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Teresa Jayet said today that this announcement heralds the most significant child welfare reform in recent memory and will change the lives for thousands of young Victorians.

“This reform is something that Mallee Family Care has been advocating for over a number of years and it is enormously gratifying to see the needs of our young people being prioritised.”

Through the new funding allocation, as of January 1st 2021, an accommodation allowance will allow a young person in care to remain living with their carer, or to transition into a supported independent living arrangement.

“This is a watershed moment for our most vulnerable children and for the state of Victoria. Up until this pledge, young people in care were often left with nowhere to go and without support, upon turning 18.

“Thoughts of continuing education would be set aside as they were forced to find work and pay for their expenses. The program will give children in care, options and support to slowly navigate the transition from childhood and dependence to adulthood and independence. They will be able to pursue study, have aspirations, believe in a better future and critically, create a better future for themselves, as a result of this commitment.”

Ms. Jayet says the \$64.7 million Program will have notable positive impacts for children living in the Mallee and she believes it will drive a significant reduction in youth homelessness.

“I have no doubt that we are going to see a substantial improvement in education and employment engagement and in health and wellbeing for children in care, as a result of this funding – all research clearly demonstrates that every extra year of care that a young person receives beyond the age of 18, improves their life opportunities and outcomes.”

In making this announcement, the Andrews Government places Victoria at the forefront of child welfare reform and with young people disproportionately affected by COVID-19 through job losses, home-stress and under-employment, Ms. Jayet says the funding commitment is crucial.

“I extend my deep thanks to the Government for recognising the importance of supporting and investing in, all Victorian children. A better world for them, is a better world for us all.”

ENDS



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