



Mick Gentleman MLA

MINISTER FOR PLANNING
MINISTER FOR ROADS AND PARKING
MINISTER FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR AGEING

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

MEDIA RELEASE

Carers informed first that ACT Together are ready to *Step up for our kids*

Minister for Children and Young People Mick Gentleman today announced at the ACT Carers awards ceremony that children in care will have more straightforward, complete support following the outcome of a major tender under *A Step Up for Our Kids*, a \$16 million additional commitment with a total investment of \$39 million over four years for our most vulnerable children and young people.

“Children and young people in foster and kinship care need support that is responsive to their needs and provides them with long-term stability,” Minister Gentleman said.

“This service will bring greater stability for carers and children and young people by bringing together all the service elements designed to support children and young people in care. It means that a child or young person who is in long-term care will have just one organisation responsible for their care over the course of their time in care.

“I am pleased to announce that the consortium, ‘ACT Together’ will be doing this important work as part of the next stage of our implementation of *Step up for our Kids*. This consortium comprises some of Australia’s leading organisations in the area of children in care, led by Barnardos Australia in partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation, OzChild, Premier Youth Works and Relationships Australia.

“Barnardos have a long and proud record of providing services to children and young people which, in Australia, can be traced back to 1921 when they commenced working with child migrants. Barnardos have a good understanding of what it takes to prevent children entering the care system as well as providing innovative and collaborative services to support children if they cannot live in the family home.

“For foster carers Transition arrangements are being developed in collaboration with all agencies so that carers, young people in care and their records can be transferred seamlessly to the new providers. Existing service providers will also be funded to July 2016 to facilitate a smooth transition.

The new ACT Together services are due to begin from early 2016. The tender process called for supports that reduced duplication between different government and non-government agencies and provided children and young people with continual support throughout their time in care rather than a series of different agencies.

“I want to thank all the other organisations that tendered for the role and thank Marymead for the role they have played in providing both residential and foster care. The ACT Government looks forward to working with them into the future, including their current roles in disability support and note their increasing cross border role.

ACT Legislative Assembly

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“Importantly, I have requested that new providers first consider suitably qualified employees from existing providers when expanding their services, so that we retain and build a high quality workforce in the sector, allowing for a seamless transition.

The new service will also mean much greater autonomy for service providers in providing long term, stable homes for children.

Annette Kelly-Egerton, spokesperson for ACT Together, said the new services represented a major step forward in supporting vulnerable children and young people.

“We know that with support, children, young people and families can recover from the impact of trauma through a supportive caregiving system, access to effective treatments, and service systems that are trauma-informed.

“We are committed to working together so that children, young people and their families can get the help they need when they need it.

Minister Gentleman said the role of foster carers in our community is a vital part of the out of home care system.

“Foster care is very rewarding. Carers are at the very heart of this system, and provide children and young people in care with the support and stability they need to build productive, happy lives”

For more information on how to become a foster carer in the ACT, please contact (02) 62289500 or www.barnardos.org.au/wecare

Statement Ends

Date: 24th November 2015

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