



**Where Are All the
Children Now?**

**A report on outcomes for the 196 children and young people in the
KCV Longitudinal Study of Kinship Care 2011**

Liana Buchanan, Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People, said in an occasional paper derived from a speech to kinship carers at a KCV function held on 4 August 2017,

We know that children who remain with kin are less likely to experience the trauma of separation and far more likely to remain connected to their families, friends and cultures. They are more likely to enjoy protective factors associated with a strong sense of identity and place, which, in turn, promotes their resilience. Managed and supported well, kinship care is best placed to support the rights and wellbeing of children requiring care.

Megan Mitchell, National Children's Commissioner, said in an occasional paper derived from a speech to kinship carers at a KCV function held on 15 May 2015,

There is no doubt that it is grandparent and other kin carers that are helping to ensure that the rights of our most vulnerable children are protected and upheld. They are making sure they [the children] get a good education, understand their identity, remain healthy, are free from violence and abuse, and are listened to and valued.



Kinship Carers Victoria is supported by the Victorian Government.

14 Youlden Street Kensington 3031
Telephone: (03) 9372 2422
Email: director@grandparents.com.au
www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org.au



About KCV

Kinship Carers Victoria (KCV) is a statewide network of kinship carers. It was established in 2011 to promote kinship care, to ensure that the care is well supported and that it leads to positive outcomes for the children and young people raised in kinship care placements.

About the KCV longitudinal study of kinship care

In 2010 KCV established a longitudinal study into the lives of 113 kinship carer families. Each year the carers share news about their lives and the lives of the children/young people for whom they care.

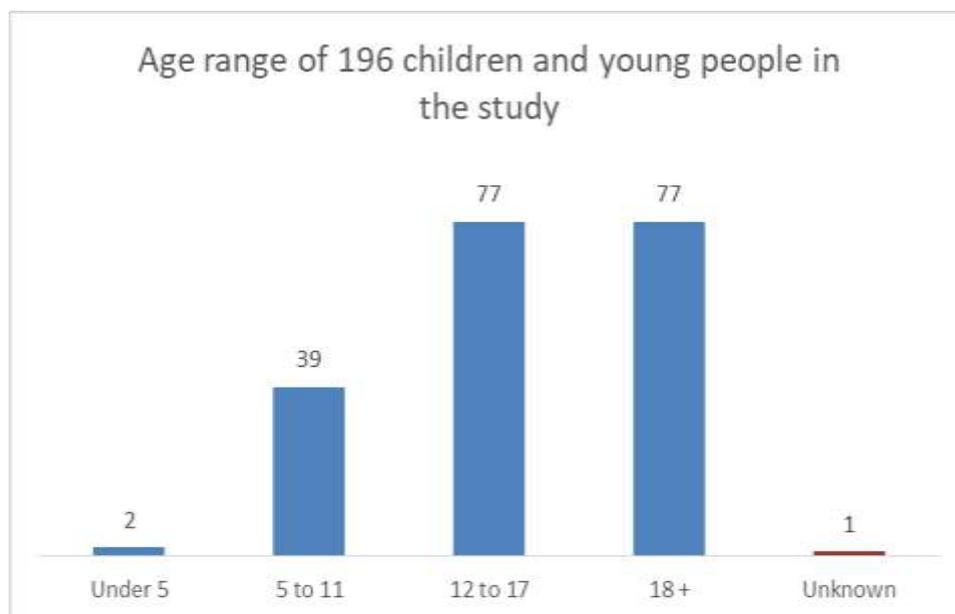
The outcomes of the study inform both the work program of KCV and discussions with a range of decision-makers who have the authority to make decisions that affect the lives of kinship carer families.

About the Where Are All the Children Now? report

Early in 2017, the GPV (Grandparents Victoria)/KCV Board expressed interest in finding out how the children in the longitudinal study were faring, particularly those who had turned 18.

This report traces the current circumstances of the 196 children and young people who are the subject of the KCV Longitudinal Study of Kinship Care. As at October 2017, these children and young people fall into five age categories:

- Under 5 years old (2 children)
- 5–11 years old (39)
- 12–17 years old (77)
- 18+ years old (77)
- Age unknown¹ (1)



¹ The one young person whose age is unknown was being raised by a carer who registered for the longitudinal study but would not provide specific details about the child being raised. Contact with this carer was lost early in the life of the study.

This report draws on three levels of information:

1. **Current information** arising from interviews with kinship carers in September 2017 (88 children and 47 young adults aged 18+)
2. **Recent information** arising from examination of past data collected in previous recent years (13 young adults aged 18+)
3. **Historical information** arising from cases where contact was broken some years beforehand (30 children, 17 young adults aged 18+ and one person of unknown age)

In most cases there is enough information available to draw conclusions about a young person's current situation. Where this is not possible, this is stated so in this report.

Contents

1. OVERALL OUTCOMES	6
1.1 Living arrangements	6
1.2 Work and study	7
1.3 Criminal activity	8
1.4 Reunification with parents	8
1.5 Parenting	9
1.6 No reason for complacency	9
1.7 Recommendations	9
1.8 The <i>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	10
2. DETAILED OUTCOMES FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18+	12
2.1 Living arrangements	13
Living with their kinship carer(s)	13
Living with a partner	14
Living alone or with housemates	14
Living with extended family	14
Living with foster carers	14
Living in unspecified circumstances	14
2.2 Work participation	15
2.3 Study participation	16
3. DETAILED OUTCOMES FOR THE CHILDREN AGED UNDER 18	18
3.1 Living arrangements	18
Living with their kinship carer(s)	18
Living and reunited with parents	18
Living with extended family	19
Living in residential care	19
Living in unspecified circumstances	19
3.2 School/training participation	19
Not yet attending any form of schooling	19
Attending mainstream primary school	20
Attending mainstream secondary school	20
Attending special school	20
Not regularly attending school	20
Attending TAFE	20
Undertaking an apprenticeship	20
Unspecified	20

1. Overall Outcomes

Overall, the outcomes for the children and young people in the longitudinal study are remarkable, especially when considering the barriers to learning and the challenges in life that they have to overcome.

When considering their work, schooling, education and living arrangements, there are only three children in the study for whom GPV/KCV holds ongoing concerns. These are two teenagers, aged 15 and 16, who are in residential care, and one other, aged 16, who is living with her mother. These three teenagers are not regularly engaged in schooling or training, are not employed, and in two cases have been known to engage in criminal behaviour.

There are other young people in the study who are facing challenges. However, whether they are over or under 18, with the support of their kinship carers they are making progress towards a healthy and happy future.

When compared with other studies tracking outcomes for large numbers of children who are leaving all forms of out of home care (OOHC), the results of this study show that young people aged 18+ leaving kinship care are far less likely to experience homelessness, teenage pregnancy, or juvenile justice issues, and are slightly less likely to face unemployment or mental illness.

1.1 Living arrangements

Living in a stable arrangement is an important base from which children in kinship care can achieve positive outcomes. All carers are committed to providing such stability for the children in their care. At times this has even led carers to cooperate with shifting living arrangements for the child/young person in their care away from their own homes.

The living arrangements of 29 children and young people could not be confirmed for this report. However, of the remaining 167:

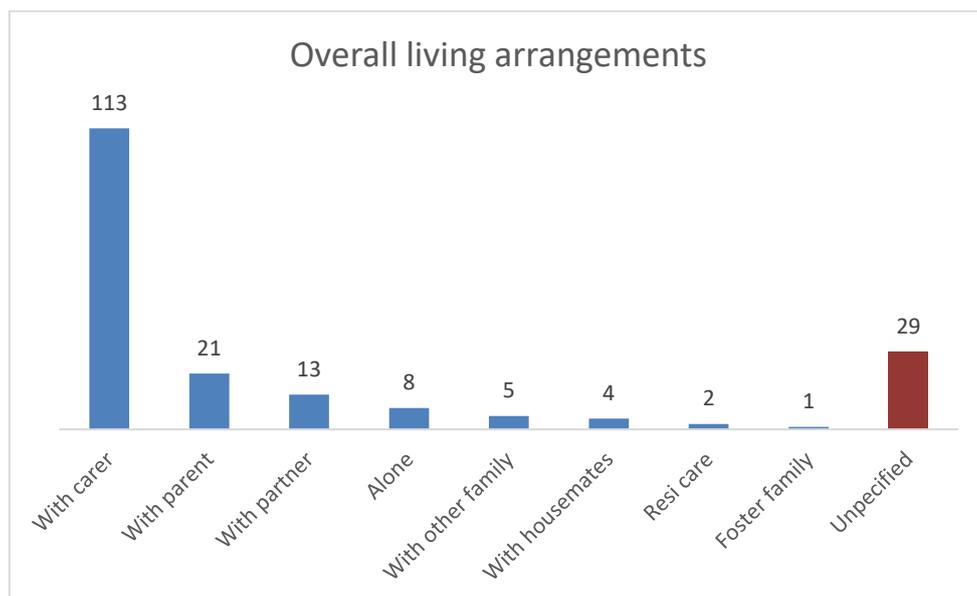
- 113 remain living with their kinship carer(s), including 18 adults aged 18+
- 21 live with a parent
- 13 live with a partner
- eight live 'in their own place'
- five live with family members other than the carer or parent
- four live with housemates
- two live in residential care
- one, aged 18+, remains living with a foster family

This means that:

- **99% of children and young people about whom we have up-to-date information in the study are living in home-based arrangements²**
- **1% live in residential care³**

² This figure does not include the 20 young people about whom GPV/KCV has no specific information in regard to this matter.

³ It has been noted that although two young people were listed as living in residential care on the day of the census, only one of the two was accounted for in the longitudinal study. This is because the longitudinal study counts children only as either 'with their kinship carer' or lists the first accommodation they have gone to after



1.2 Work and study

Participation in work and study (including schooling) is an important pathway to independence and a fulfilled life. All carers want the children in their care to have meaningful and enjoyable working lives and to be able to study to fulfil that ambition, if study is required. Furthermore, they want the children to be happy.

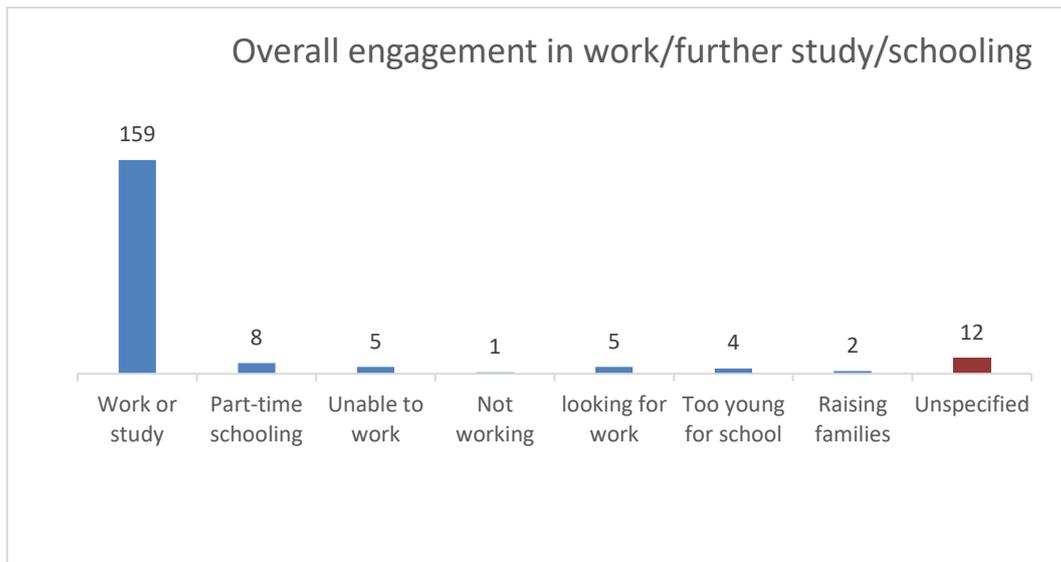
Overall, 192 of 196 children and young people in the study are of school age and beyond. Whilst the current occupations of 12 children and young people could not be confirmed, of the remaining 180:

- 63 are at secondary school, including two aged 18+
- 34 are at primary school
- 31 are working
- 18 are engaged in post-school education, including one undertaking an apprenticeship
- 10 are at special school, including one aged 18+
- eight are not regularly attending school
- five are unable to work
- one is not working
- five are looking for work
- three are either working or studying, but GPV/KCV was unable to determine which activity
- two are raising children

leaving their carer. One young person went directly from their kinship carer to residential care, while the other was placed in residential care after an unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation with a parent.

This means that 88.4% (159 of 180) of the children and young people in the study of school age or beyond about whom GPV/KCV has up-to-date information are currently fully engaged in work, post-school study or schooling. Of those not engaged:

- 4.5% (eight of 180) are attending school on a part-time basis, or ‘rarely attending’
- 3.3% (six of 180) of children and young people who are neither working nor studying are experiencing either mental health issues, or a physical or intellectual disability
- 2.7% (five of 180) have been unsuccessful in finding work, but are still looking
- 1.1% (two of 180) are raising families.⁴



1.3 Criminal activity

It is noteworthy that only 1% (two of 196) of children and young people in this study are reported to be involved in the juvenile justice system. Both of these young people are still under the age of 18, and were no longer in the care of their original kinship carer when they began to get into legal trouble – one is in residential care, and one is living with their mother.

The validity of this finding is borne out in a report by Victorian Legal Aid (VLA), which states that 30% of children and young people whom they have represented in child protection cases (and who have been subsequently placed in out of home care) later return for assistance with youth crime matters. Of charges in these matters, 83% are laid within the first 12 months of the child being placed in OOHC.

1.4 Reunification with parents

This report lays out many positive outcomes arising from kinship care. None is more powerful than the reunification of children with their parent(s). The possibility of such reunifications needs to be kept at the forefront of our minds when making decisions about the placement of children. No person wants children put at risk. However, it is clearly possible, given the reunifications that have already taken place within this small study, for reunifications to take place and succeed.

⁴This figure does not include the 12 young people about whom GPV/KCV has no specific information in regard to this matter, and the four children who are too young for school.

If the community offered reunification services that gave ongoing support to reunified parents and children, we could see many more children back with their mothers and or fathers, with grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins playing support roles.

1.5 Parenting

In the study eight young people are, between them, the parents of 10 children. Of these:

- three young men have fathered four children between them, with two fathering one, and one fathering two
- five young women have given birth to six children between them, with four giving birth to one child, and one giving birth to twins. Two of these young women are now expecting a second child.

Of these young parents:

- two are married to the co-parent of their children
- one lives in a stable de facto relationship with the co-parent
- two are experiencing less stable relations with the co-parent
- two young women have remained living with their kinship carers after the birth of their child
- one young woman now lives with a friend, after having broken up with the co-parent of her first child

In all but two of these cases, the families circumstances are happy and stable.

1.6 No reason for complacency

These positive outcomes do not mean that GPV/KCV can be complacent about letting kinship carers continue without additional support. Such positive outcomes are the result of sustained effort and enduring hardship, with many carers reporting that they face financial stress, as well as physical and mental illness, as a result of the additional burden of raising these children and young people to adulthood. In fact, some of the carers in this study, who have achieved significant positive outcomes for the children in their care, have registered serious complaints about the lack of support they have received and these complaints are the subject of ongoing resolution processes.

The imbalance between the outcomes resulting from kinship care and the support offered to kinship carers gives rise to a number of recommendations that GPV/KCV believes should be urgently implemented. Some of these recommendations merely ask that the child protection service to *do its job*, according to its own guidelines.

GPV/KCV will continue to argue for improved support for kinship carers, whose efforts and continued positive results alleviate strain on both the OOHC system now, and the welfare and justice systems into the future.

1.7 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) implements training for all child protection staff about the nature and benefits of kinship care. Such training is to focus on the benefits to the family and the community-at-large of keeping children and young people connected with their biological families.
- Each of the DHHS areas appoints a staff member to be a leader in establishing best practice for supporting kinship carers and to liaise with KCV.

- DHHS staff be required to implement proper and timely handover procedures, according to their own guidelines. Whilst child protection staff currently place most children in Victoria in kinship care, the handover of the children and young people leaves much to be desired – *practice has not made perfect*. Most kinship carers report that they are not informed of their rights and responsibilities, and that the payments they receive do not in any way sufficiently help meet the health needs of the children and young people in their care.
- DHHS staff be prevented from making hasty assessments of the appropriateness and needs of kinship placements. It is becoming increasingly the case that DHHS closes cases that are subject of court orders without any assessment of the carer's or child's needs being undertaken. Creation of informal cases this way is unconscionable and risky.
- DHHS ensure payments are awarded to eligible carers immediately placement commences, even if this necessitates the payment of a one-off establishment grant while paperwork is completed.
- DHHS establish a complaints process to enable kinship carers to have the level of support they receive from DHHS reviewed by an independent authority which includes DHHS representatives as well as experts in child development, community development and individuals' rights.
- The government implement a thorough internal review of the decision-making procedures surrounding kinship care. Such a review is to take into account the independent evaluations completed by the KPMG auditing firm and the Victorian Ombudsman.
- DHHS and the DEET together ensure each *Lookout Centre* is awarded brokerage funds to enable the purchase of services for children in need of additional education tuition, etc. GPV/KCV recognises early outcomes arising from the Lookout Centres, which have been established to assist children in OOHC to achieve better outcomes in school.
- DHHS support a range of innovative peer support strategies to enable kinship carers to self-select the support they need, and to connect with a community of other carers and across the wider community.
- The government establish an ongoing state-level committee to set strategic directions for kinship care which acknowledge the role this care plays in the observance of children's, parents' and families' rights, as established within:
 - *the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*
 - *the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (2010)*
 - *the Victorian Charter for Children in Out of Home Care (2007)*
 - *the Victorian Carers Recognition Act (2012)*

1.8 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The articles of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) underpin much of the work of GPV/KCV. These cover diverse topics, ensuring that children's rights to physical and emotional safety, and to having their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter provided, are met, that children have access to education and information that affects them, and that they have a connection with their family and culture, leading to a strong sense of identity.

The Commonwealth Government and the Victorian State Government both have room for improvement when it comes to upholding the articles of this convention within their respective sets of legislation.

Three documents arising from KCV-hosted functions attest to the relevance of the CRC. The Woking Declaration on Kinship Care (2013)⁵, a speech by Megan Mitchell, National Children’s Commissioner (2015)⁶, and a speech by former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia the Hon. Alistair Nicholson (2016).⁷ All of these papers quote, or refer to, articles from the CRC (see below) that are particularly important in the context of child protection and kinship care.

Article 27 (cited by all three sources), says that children have the right to an adequate standard of living, which should be provided by children’s parents or guardians, with the assistance of government programs if required.

Article 19 (cited by two) says that children have the right to be protected from mental or physical violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Article 18 (cited by two) says that both of a child’s parents should share responsibility for the raising of a child, unless this is not in the child’s best interests, and that states should offer assistance programs if needed.

Article 12 (cited by two) says that children who are capable of having an opinion should have the right to express their opinion freely, and this opinion should be listened to by the adults around them. This is particularly important in issues affecting children’s future, such as legal proceedings.

Article 20 (cited by the Woking declaration) says that if a child is deprived of his or her family for any reason, due care must be given to ensuring that the child is placed in a situation which will provide him or her with a continuity in his or her ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic background.

Article 9 (cited by Nicholson) says that a child should not be separated from his or her parents unless this is absolutely necessary for the safety and wellbeing of the child. This article further says that such separation must be subject to review, and that all parties (including the parents and the child) should be able to make their views on the situation known.

Articles 7 and 8 (cited by the Woking declaration) say that a child has the right to an identity, including a name which is registered with the relevant government immediately after birth, and the right to a nationality. A child has the right to retain his or her name and identity, and the relevant government has the responsibility to assist with re-establishing a child’s identity if it becomes lost.

Article 3 (cited by Nicholson) says that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the children must always be the primary consideration.

⁵ The Woking Declaration arises from a GPV/KCV-sponsored meeting of representatives from five nations held in London in 2013.

⁶ Delivered to a KCV forum held at Melbourne Town Hall in 2015.

⁷ Extract from a speech delivered at a Children’s Matters forum in Melbourne in 2016.

2. Detailed outcomes for the young people aged 18+

Of the young people in the study, 77 are over 18 years of age. The outcomes for this age group are difficult to track because not all are currently living with, or connected to, their carer(s). However, enough information has been gathered to be able to claim positive outcomes for the age group.

GPV/KCV is aware of the findings arising from two national surveys outlining the outcomes for young people aged 18+. The outcomes for the young people aged 18+ in the KCV longitudinal study compare most favourably with the outcomes arising from these two other studies.

2009 CREATE Foundation survey on care leavers (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2010)		
	CREATE results	KCV results
Homeless in the first year after leaving care	35%	0%
Boys involved in the juvenile justice system	46%	0%
Unemployed	29%	21%

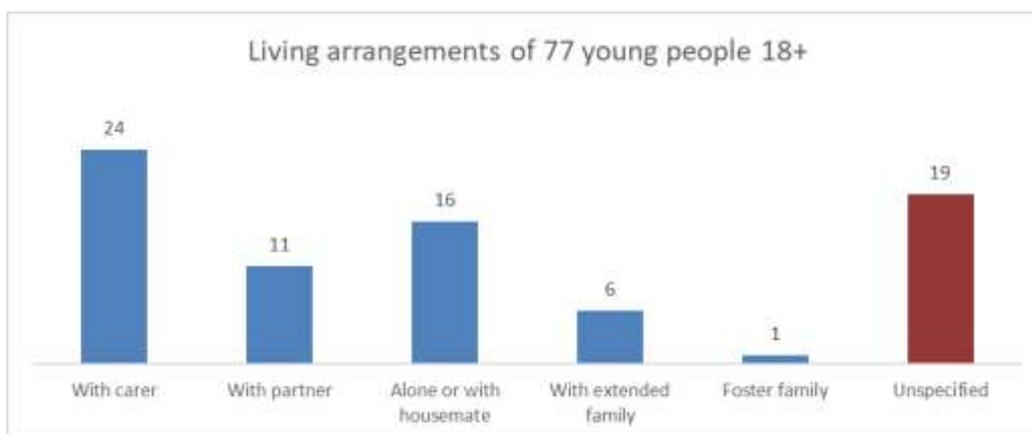
2008 Care Leavers Australia Network survey on care leavers		
	CLAN results	KCV results
Pregnant during adolescence	41%	3%
Poor mental health outcomes ⁸	43–65%	16%

⁸ (including depression, anxiety, PTSD, panic attacks and sleep disorders)

2.1 Living arrangements

Of the 77 young adults aged 18+ in the study:

- 24 are living with their kinship carer(s)
- 11 are living with a partner
- 16 are living alone or with housemates
- 6 are living with extended family members
- 1 is living with foster carers
- 19 are living in unspecified arrangements



Living with their kinship carer(s) (24 of 77 young adults)

Of young people over the age of 18, 31% are currently living in the home of their carer(s). Whilst not all of the reasons for this were made available to GPV/KCV, it is known that:

- Two young adults have disabilities and mental illness such that they will never be able to live independently
- eight remain in the carer home to relieve some of the costs/stresses associated with study, and aspire to live independently when they commence working
- two young adults who had previously been living independently recently returned to the kinship home due to changes in personal circumstances (relationship break-up and unemployment)
- three young people continue to live with their kinship carer(s), despite having children of their own (one of these young people is the non-custodial parent of the child)

The majority of carers have indicated that they are happy to continue having the young adults remain in their home whilst the young adults are establishing themselves with further study or seeking employment.

It is because such a high proportion of young people will have to continue to live with their carer(s) and remain dependent on them after the age of 18 that GPV/KCV supports the Anglicare Homestretch campaign and notes that:

There have been a number of calls to consider the extension of care, including those in the findings of the Victorian 2012 Vulnerable Children's Inquiry. However, such reform is yet to be either trialled or instituted comprehensively in any jurisdiction in Australia. Given the growing evidence reporting on poorer outcomes experienced by young people leaving care at age 18 years compared with those aged 21 years, it is timely and topical to re-open the discussion of extending care.⁹

The *Homestretch Campaign* aims for all state and territory governments to provide an option, whereby the provision of care can be extended to any young person needing or seeking care, until the age of 21, much like the circumstances in a majority of other family settings in Australia. GPV/KCV believes that giving young people in state care an extended care option will provide them with the platform to make the right start in life and enjoy a better long-term life outcome.¹⁰

Living with a partner (11 of 77 young adults)

Of the 11 young adults known to be living with a partner, it is also known that some of the young adults are married, while others are in de facto relationships. Several of these young people also have children of their own.

Living alone or with housemates (16 of 77 young adults)

These young people are living 'in their own place', although it cannot be assumed all of them live entirely alone.

Living with extended family (six of 77 young adults)

Six young adults were known to be living with relatives other than their kinship carer(s).

- In two cases young adults were known to be living with siblings
 - In one of these cases a young adult was living with a brother and sister prior to the death of his carer
 - In the other case a young adult had since become the kinship carer for a younger sibling, after the death of the grandparent who had been raising both of them.
- In three cases a young adult was living with one of their parents
- In one case a young adult was living with an uncle who is not their kinship carer.

Living with foster carers (one of 77 young adults)

One young person left the kinship family home to live in foster care whilst still under 18. The new placement was a great success, and the young person has remained living with the foster family since turning 18.

Living in unspecified circumstances (19 of 77 young adults)

⁹ Raising Our Children: Guiding Young Victorians in Care into Adulthood. (Report by Anglicare)

¹⁰ <http://thehomestretch.org.au/about/>

GPV/KCV was unable to confirm the current living situations for 19 young adults. In most cases this was because GPV/KCV could not contact the carer, although in several cases the carer had not remained in contact with the young adult.

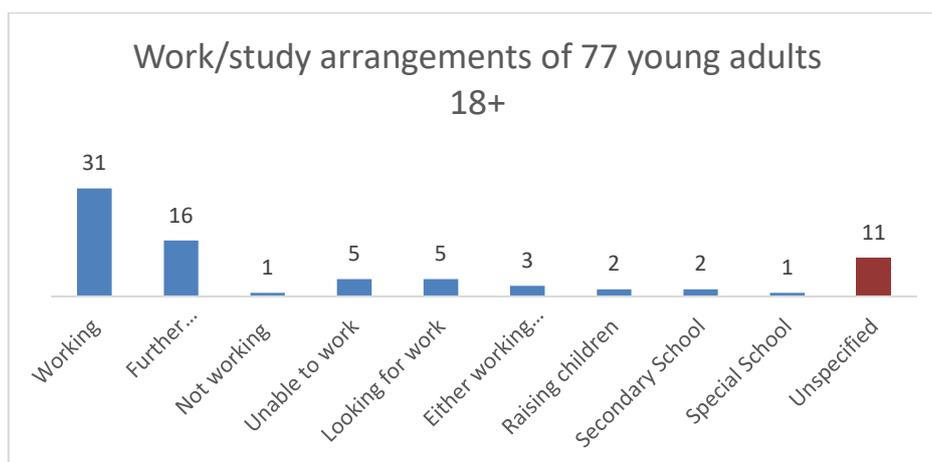
After considering the numbers of 18-year-olds still living with the carers, as well as those who have moved on to alternative living arrangements, it can be stated that 55% of young adults currently live with, or lived with their carers for some time, after they turned 18.

2.2 Work participation

Of the 77 young people aged 18+ in the study, GPV/KCV was unable to determine the occupations of 11 of them, whilst two are raising families, with no indication as to whether they are, or have been engaged in, work or further study. Three other young people are very likely to be on the pathway to work or study, on the basis of historical information available; however, the details of what they might be doing for this work or study is not clear.

This study was able to account for the work/study occupations of 61 of the young people aged 18+.

Of the young people in the study 77 are aged 18+. Of the young people 18+,79% are currently involved in either work or study.¹¹



Of the 61 young people aged 18+ whom GPV/KCV was able to determine are participating in work:

- 31 are known to be in full- or part-time work, with two of these currently on maternity leave
- one is not working
- five are currently looking for work
- five are unable to work

¹¹ This figure does not include the 11 young people about whom GPV/KCV has no specific information in regard to this matter.

The 31 young people currently in the workforce are engaged in a range of occupations. Across the life of the study occupations and industries engaged in by the young people have included:

- Aircraft construction
- Auto-wrecking
- Bricklaying
- Cleaning trucks
- Commercial laundry
- Computer technician
- Dairy Farming
- Electrician
- Food production and packaging
- Hospitality work
- Psychology
- Retail sales
- Security guard
- Traffic management work

Larger numbers of young people aged 18+ in the study are working in the hospitality and retail industries than in any of the other industries.

In several interviews it was reported that although the young person is currently engaged in paid employment, they are not happy in their current position and are looking for other opportunities.

Not working

One young person did not seem to be interested in looking for work.

Looking for work

Five young people are known to be actively looking for employment. In several cases, the young person in question was on their way to a job interview or trial period on the day of the survey. Another young person was participating in a return-to-work course through the Salvation Army.

Unable to work

For the majority of the six young adults who are not working there are barriers to their finding gainful employment such as them having ongoing mental health issues, or a permanent disability, either physical or intellectual.

2.3 Study participation

Of the 61 young adults aged 18+ for whom GPV/KCV was able to determine are participating in study, 19 are engaged in full- or part-time study, including two who are attending secondary school, and one who is attending special school. One of the 19 is studying at TAFE while raising a family of two children.

The 19 young people currently engaged in full- or part-time study aspire to undertake a range of careers. Across the life of the study, young people have expressed interest in the following:

- Archaeology
- Childcare
- Federal law enforcement
- Law
- Medicine/surgery
- Midwifery
- Professional sports
- Teaching
- Working with animals

Sometimes it is not possible for young people to continue studying in their preferred field. In one example in this study, a young adult had left his university studies to become a carer for his ill grandfather, who had raised him since childhood. The young adult did not return to the same course



when his grandfather recovered, but transferred to a different field, in which he is now working full time.

Either working or studying

At last contact these three young people were studying and it is expected that they would now be working. However, GPV/KCV was unable to confirm this.

Parenting

The two young women whose occupation was listed as 'raising children' are expecting the birth of a child in the near future. One of these women is a single mother who already has one young child, and is expecting the birth of a second in January 2018. The other has only recently turned 18, and is expecting the birth of her first child very soon.

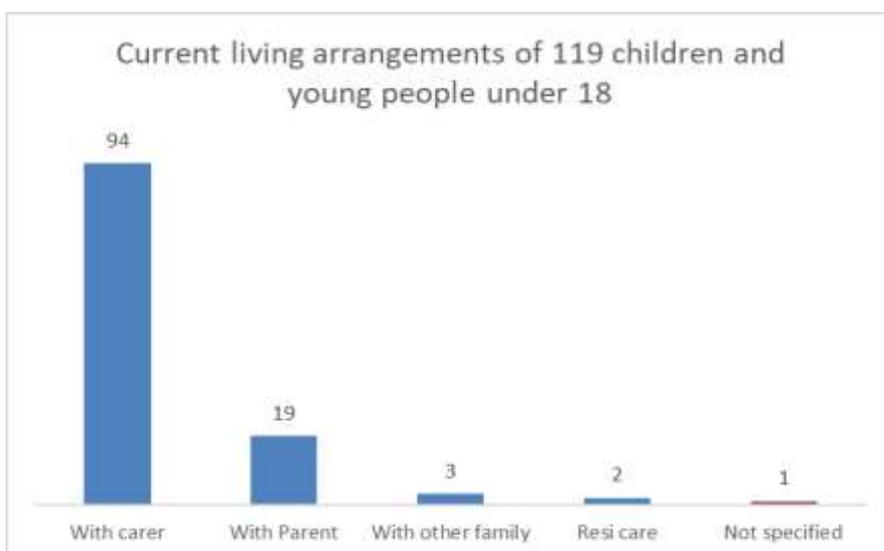
3. Detailed outcomes for the children aged under 18

Of the 196 children and young people in the study, 119 are under 18 years of age, with 115 being of school age.

3.1 Living arrangements

Of the 119 children and young people aged under 18:

- 94 are living with their kinship carers
- three are living with extended family members
- 19 have been reunified with a parent
- two are living in residential care
- one is living in an unspecified arrangement



Living with their kinship carer(s) (94 of 119 children)

Sixty-nine children are known to be still living with the same kinship carer family they were in when they first entered the study. These families have become very stable, and it is likely that these children will remain with their kinship carers until they turn 18. Historical data indicates that another 25 children under 18 are likely to be still living with their kinship carers.

Living and reunited with parents (19 of 119 children)

Nineteen of the 22 children under 18 who are living with family members other than the surveyed kinship carer have been reunified with a parent. Kinship carers retain a keen interest in the welfare of the children who were formerly under their care, and report that for the most part report that the parents are successfully raising their children with a little outside support.

For 15 of the children who have reunified with a parent, the recent survey has confirmed that these reconciliations remain stable. One young person moved in with an aunt after reunification with her mother failed. Historical data further indicates that three more children under the age of 18 are likely to be living with a parent.

Living with extended family (three of 119 children)

Three children under 18 are now living with uncles after leaving their original kinship carer families. One of these cases was confirmed in the current survey, while the other is referred to in historical data. Historical data also indicates that one young person is living with an older sister.

Living in residential care (two of 119 children and young people)

On the day of the survey, two young people under the age of 18 were known to be living in residential care. In both of these cases, the young people had mental health and behavioural issues that were beyond the care capabilities of their kinship carers.

For one of these teenagers, it seems likely that they will remain in residential care until they reach the age of 18. The other young person was expected to return to the kinship carer's home on the day of the census, but had not yet done so.

It has been noted that although two young people were listed as living in residential care on the day of the survey, only one of them was accounted for in the longitudinal study. This is because the longitudinal study only counts children as either 'with their kinship carer(s)' or lists the first accommodation they go to after leaving their carer. One young person went directly from their kinship carer to live in residential care, while the other was placed in residential care after an unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation with a parent.

Living in unspecified circumstances (one of 119 children and young people)

GPV/KCV has no information about this young person. See footnote on page 5 of this report.

3.2 School/training participation

Ninety-three percent of children of school age are involved in regular schooling or other training.

Those who are not attending school on a regular basis are mostly attending at least part-time – either for a number of days or hours per week.¹²

It is expected and hoped that children under 18 years of age are engaged in schooling or training. The overall participation rates for the children under 18 in this study are excellent.

Of the 119 children and young people under 18:

- 61 are attending mainstream secondary school
- 34 are attending mainstream primary school
- nine are attending special school
- eight are not regularly attending school
- four are not yet attending any form of schooling
- one is attending TAFE
- one is undertaking an apprenticeship
- one child's situation is unspecified

Not yet attending any form of schooling (four of 119 children and young people)

Four children were not yet attending school. Two of these were under the age of five, and two were five years old, but not starting school until 2018.

¹² This figure does not include the one young person about whom GPV/KCV has no specific information.

Attending mainstream primary school (34 of 119 children and young people)

Thirty-four children under 18 are regularly attending mainstream primary school. However, carers noted that five of the 34 children attending mainstream primary schools were struggling academically, and would benefit from one-on-one assistance or additional tutoring. In some cases this was being provided, but not in all five.

Attending mainstream secondary school (61 of 119 children and young people)

Sixty-one children and young people under 18 are regularly attending secondary schools.

- Six of these children are struggling academically, and would benefit from one-on-one assistance or tutoring. In most but not all cases, this was being provided
- Six of these children were having difficulty coping emotionally with school, due to either mental health issues or bullying

Attending special school (nine of 119 children and young people)

Five children under 18 were confirmed by the current survey to be regularly attending a special school. Of these, one is also receiving additional tutoring. It was suggested by historical data that a further four children are also likely to now be attending a special school. Carers noted that children attending special schools are generally very happy at school and enjoy attending every day.

Not regularly attending school (eight of 119 children and young people)

Eight young people surveyed are attending school sporadically. A combination of learning disabilities, mental health issues and trauma-related behavioural issues has made it difficult for them to integrate into a regular pattern of schooling. These young people comprised the following:

- Four who are aged 16 are all described as 'rarely attending' school
- three are aged 15, of whom two are attending part-time, with one attending 'rarely'
- one, who is aged 11, is attending for only two hours a week due to a combination of learning disabilities and mental illness.

Two of the young people not regularly attending school are those who are living in residential care.

One of the four 16-year-olds who are not attending school regularly is known to have engaged in criminal behaviour. The other three have all developed severe mental illnesses, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attachment or detachment disorders.

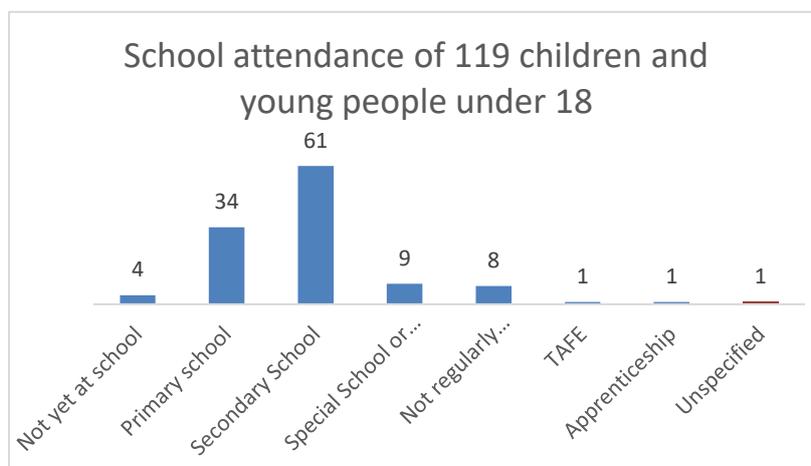
Attending TAFE

One young person is attending VCAL courses at TAFE.

Undertaking an apprenticeship

One young person is an apprentice bricklayer.

Unspecified - one of 119 children and young people ¹³



¹³ The one young person whose age is unknown was being raised by a carer who registered for the longitudinal study but would not provide specific details about the child being raised. Contact with this carer was lost early in the life of the study.