

STRONG CAREERS CHILDREN

Kinship Carers Week Victoria

8 to 14 September

CELEBRATING VICTORIA'S KINSHIP CARERS

Statistical summary:

- 14 morning teas enjoyed by over 450 people
- 2 luncheons attended by over 50 people
- 2 seminars attended 40 people
- 2 meetings with MPs attended by 10 people
- 3 KCV documents launched
- 7 media engagements, 5 radio interviews and 2 newspaper articles
- \$5000 in prizes distributed



Messages of greeting were sent

Some people offered written greetings .A sample of them are scattered throughout this newsletter.

I want to give my heartfelt acknowledgement, respect and support to kinship carers across Australia. Kinship carers provide a safe and loving environment for children who can't live with their parents. Kinship carers are vital to maintaining connections to family and community. Both informal and formal kinship carers need more support to undertake their important roles. I would like to especially acknowledge First Nations kinship carers who help children maintain connections not only to their family, community, but culture and country. I would like to thank kinship carers for all the amazing love and support you give to the children you love and care for.

Senator Rachel Siewert, Australian Greens



Celebrations commence and conclude in electoral offices

The first and final events to mark Kinship Carers Week 2019 were held outside the official week. The first was a meeting with Minister Luke Donnellan in his electoral office and the last was in the electoral office of the Shadow minister, Nick Wakeling in Narre Warren.

Small groups of carers attended these meetings to talk in detail about topical issues confronting kinship care.

True to the spirit of Kinship Carers Week both the Minister and Nick Wakeling were keen to thank the carers and reiterate their understandings of the strengths of kinship care, not the least of which was the connection to family it affords children. Both hosts reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening kinship care and spoke in detail about their aspirations for all children in out of home care.



Kinship Carers Week is another week that is fast approaching. Held from 8 September to 14 September, the inaugural week recognises the work of kinship carers who raise children in out-of-home care. Their love ensures vulnerable children are taken care of.

Councillor Rose Hodge, Mayor, Surfcoast Shire



The Minster joined carers for the official launch

The opening event for the official week was the launch attended by Minister Luke Donnellan in Kensington.



Sixty people, carers and people who offer kinship carers close comfort and support, were in attendance to enjoy relaxed conversation with the Minister and each other.



Family, including the extended family are so important for the healthy development and growth of children. For Aboriginal children extended families play an even more important role in their upbringing especially from a cultural point of view. At VACCA we encourage all our carers including kinship carers to be connected to the Aboriginal culture and family of the children they care for. Most Aboriginal children in care are usually in the care of family and it is heartening to see family members step in to look after their children – their nephews, nieces, grandchildren. I want to thank kinship carers for their hard work and determination. Your caring is invaluable to all of us.

Professor Muriel Bamblett

CEO, Victoria Aboriginal Child Care Agency

Prize draw

Attendees at all functions throughout Kinship Care Week were invited to enter the draw for major prizes:

- **Three \$500 gift vouchers** went to participants from Geelong, Cranbourne and Mildura
- **Four \$250 gift vouchers** were won by carers from Melton, Lilydale, Bendigo and Ballarat
- **Five \$100 gift vouchers** went to carers from Shepparton (2), Mildura, Cranbourne, and Warrnambool

In addition to these prizes, door prizes were distributed at each of the functions held across the state.

Morning teas were enjoyed across the state

14 Morning teas in 13 locations were enjoyed by over 450 people. Many photographs were taken to mark the events. Presented on the following page is a sample. Events not pictured were held at: Mount Martha, Warrnambool, Wallan, Rosanna, and a second event at Bendigo.





Altona



Geelong

Lunch for some

In two locations, thanks to local sponsorship, lunches were held.



Cranbourne



Lilydale

Seminars for some

Although the week was planned as a celebration free from any specific messages about kinship care two seminars were offered and well attended. The one in Pakenham featured a guest speaker talking about Emotional Intelligence. The seminar in Kensington addressed issue that carers never tire of talking about – education. This workshop also featured a guest speaker and resulted in many plans being made.



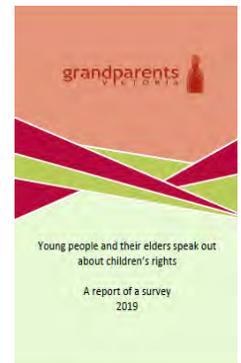
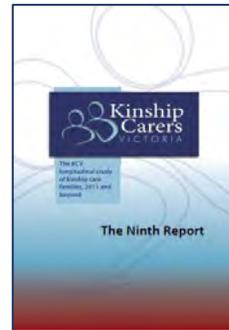
Pakenham



Kensington

Three key documents were launched

- **Kinship carers wellbeing magazine #3**
...A magazine helping kinship carers to focus on their own health and wellbeing.
- **The 9th report of the KCV Longitudinal study of Kinship care**...Tracking changes in the lives of kinship care families.
- **Young people and their elders speak out about children's rights** Survey Report detailing the most pressing issues facing children's rights in Australia according to respondents from different demographics.



Kinship carers and their families come in many different forms, and we are very lucky in Victoria to have so many incredible families stepping in to support the children and young people who need it most.

We are privileged to know and support kinship carers across Victoria, and we know that many of you have committed to caring for the children and young people in your lives without a second thought. My colleagues and I are in awe of the dedication, commitment and care you provide – and we know it isn't always an easy job.

To all the grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews and friends who step in to help children and families - we thank you for all the incredibly amazing work you do, and for putting the best interests of the children you support first. The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare is proud to represent and work alongside kinship families to ensure that you receive the best support possible, and are recognised for the tremendous work you do. We are proud to celebrate Kinship Care Week alongside you, and wish you all the very best.

Deb Tsorbaris, CEO
Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare