

THE 2023 STATE BUDGET

With the state budget carers awaited news about increases to their payments. Alas, the 2023 budget disappointed once again - there were no ongoing increases to carer payments. Statutory carers were awarded a \$650 one-off bonus which was well received. However, one-off payments are not as helpful as an ongoing increase in payments.

Also concerning are the ongoing cuts to the public service, with a further 4000 jobs cut from across the whole public service.

Prior to the budget, KCV issued a statement forewarning of the unsatisfactory consequences of not supporting carers sufficiently well and on wider community wellbeing due to cuts to the public service.

After the budget, KCV wrote to all Victorian politicians in protest at the lack of due consideration of kinship carers and calling on MPs to make connection with kinship carers in their electorates to listen to carers' stories of financial hardship. As MPs respond KCV is making appointments to brief them. A letter to MPs in the Australian Government was also sent. The letter urged national action to strengthen the public sector across the nation.

KCV is also seeking the inclusion of kinship carers in the Australian Carers Recognition Bill. This will give the recognition necessary to urge better support for carers across the country.

Work to secure financial support for kinship carers via a range of avenues proceeds, with KCV stepping up efforts to get some relief for kinship carers in relation to the cost of education.

Carers have also been encouraged to sign the FCAV petition. Other activities leading up to Budget 2024 are being planned.

Reference – KCV website

<https://kinshipcarersvictoria.org/letter-to-federal-mps/>

<https://kinshipcarersvictoria.org/letter-to-state-mps/>

REVIEW OF CARER ALLOWANCE

In the past few months DFFH has stepped up the rate of review of the Carers Allowance. Many kinship carers are reporting positive outcomes with children now accessing more medical assistance.

EDUCATION INVESTIGATION

The Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People is undertaking a review of education outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care. The costs of education as a barrier to full participation in education has repeatedly come into discussions in the many consultations the Commissioner's office has conducted. The report of this investigation is due to be released in November.

KCV has partnered with the Commissioner's office to sponsor an art exhibition supporting this review.

Further info – KCV website:

<https://995e19.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/CCYP-flyer1.pdf>

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

KCV has joined a campaign to have corporal punishment outlawed. Australia is one of the few UN countries that has not done so.

See the KCV website or call the office on 0499 969 234.

CARER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Carer KaFE program, which provides opportunities for kinship carers to participate in learning and development activities, has started with the new financial year well and with an emphasis on local activities. Submissions for small local activities have been funded. Also, high numbers of kinship carers have applied for funding to attend the national carers conference in Hobart in September 2023.

See Carer KaFE website: <https://www.carerkafe.org.au/>

KCV 2023 - SEPTEMBER 4TH – 7TH

This week celebrating the work of carers in out-of-home care will include local lunches. A list of lunches will be issued shortly and posted on the KCV website.

CIMS REVIEW

These investigations of carers happen when a carer is suspected of not caring for a child well. The investigations are contentious. The department is in the early stages of reviewing the CIMS procedures and KCV is participating.

Contact KCV on 0499 969 234 for further information.

GPV/KCV BOARD ISSUES

In the 2022–23 financial year, the GPV/KCV Board discussed:

1. Mental health
2. Census 2021 data & the Victorian senate and kinship care
3. Self-determination for Victorian First Nations people
4. Senate report into children with a parent in prison
5. Review of Victorian Rights Charter for carers and the drafting of a new charter for children with a disability
6. GPV/KCV social services week and kinship carers
7. Cuts to the Parent Line favoured by kinship carers
8. Adoption
9. The national carers conferences in 2023 and 2024
10. The age of criminal responsibility
11. Parents with an intellectual disability and child protection
12. Play for children with disabilities in kinship care
13. The relationships between permanent, foster & kinship care
14. Voice to Parliament for Aboriginal Australians
15. Refugee support
16. The GPV/KCV Aboriginal reconciliation plan
17. Keeping families together instead of removing children
18. Yoorrook – The Commission on Injustice in the Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems
19. A human rights act and charter for Australia
20. National priorities for a strong Australian community
21. Carer training
22. Corporal punishment of children
23. Legal recognition of carers in Australian law

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