

PRESS RELEASE

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VICTORIA'S KINSHIP CARERS ARE PERPLEXED BY THE LACK OF SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The apparent hesitancy within the Victorian Parliament to pass the *Children, Youth and Families Amendment (Supporting Stable and Strong Families) Bill 2025* has carers baffled. This bill has arisen from long-held discussions between the Office of the Minister for Children, the DFFH and agencies across the child protection sector, and has support from kinship carers.

Kinship care is the largest form of out-of-home care in Victoria, with kinship carers raising the vast majority of Victoria's vulnerable children. Therefore, the opinions of kinship carers matter in all deliberations about what is best for children.

In regard to this bill, kinship carers have repeatedly called for high-level and transparent co-operation across all government portfolios to deliver comprehensive support to carers and children in out-of-home care. The challenges facing children in out-of-home care are many and complex. We now know through bitter disappointments that they will never be met by the efforts of one portfolio of government alone.

The effect of each portfolio in government having to act, and being seen to act, in support of vulnerable children will not only be life changing for individual children, it will also establish that Victoria is a state where children really matter.

KCV is particularly pleased at the prospect of the education portfolio making a major contribution to supporting Victoria's vulnerable children. Provision of better education to children in out-of-home care is important to kinship carers. Since 2004, when KCV first made its views about the importance of education known to the public, we have urged for the creation of a new broader framework within which the discourse about the needs of vulnerable children must take place.

It has taken years of incremental steps to get to where we are today – on the brink of a new era of government commitment and responsibility – and yet the bill is not attracting bipartisan support. It is this negativity that baffles kinship carers. After years of discussion across the sector, we have before us a strongly supported bill which in turn promises to deliver strong support to vulnerable children.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne L McLeish".

Anne L McLeish OAM
Director, Kinship Carers Victoria

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