



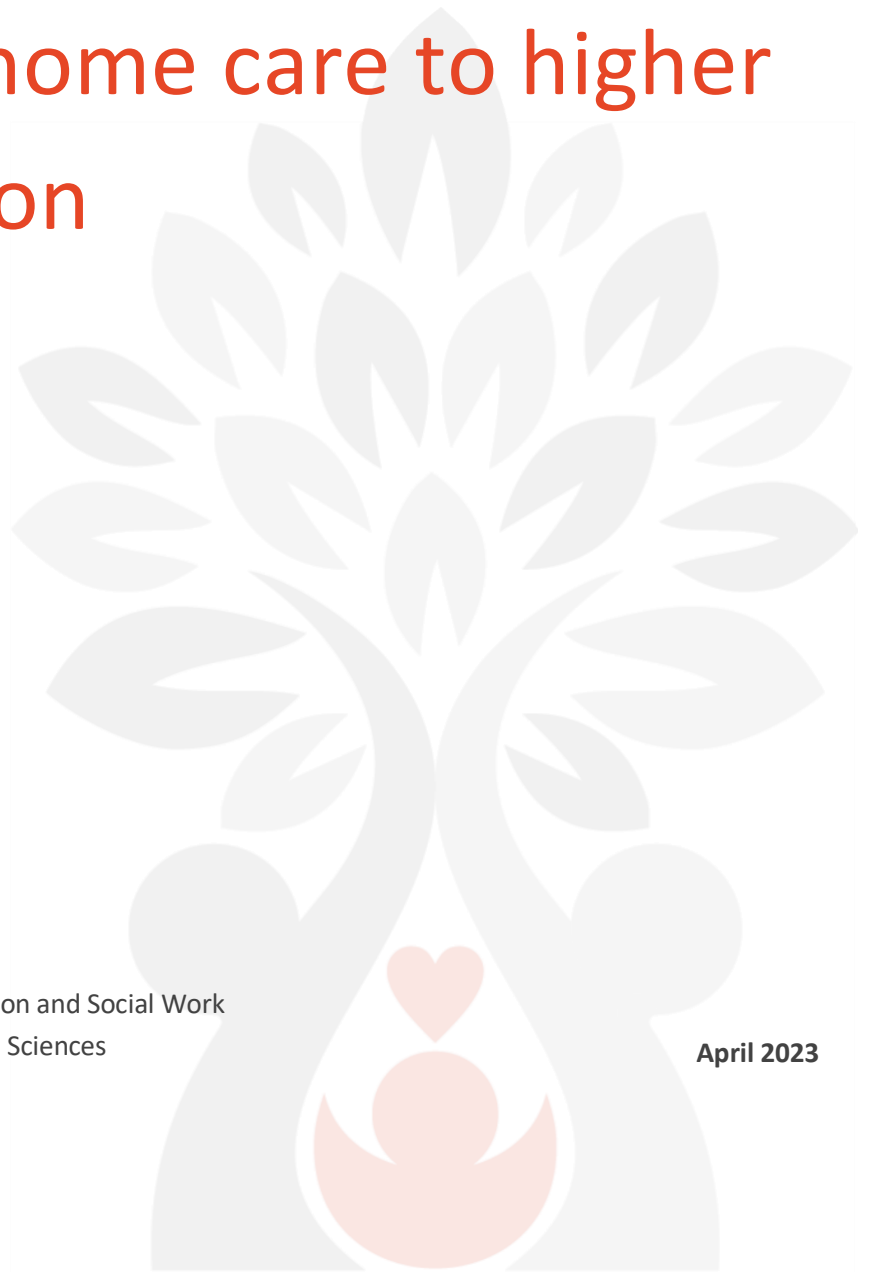
THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

**Research Centre for Children and Families**

# Higher aspirations: Providing pathways from out-of-home care to higher education

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### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the lands we work on, in particular the Wilyakali, Wiljaaliand, Deerubbin, Gandangara, Dharawal, Wiradjuri, Jerrinja, Wandi Wandian, Wonnarua, Darkinjung, Anaiwan, Kamilaroi, Dharug, Gundungurra, Gadigal, Guringai, Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr, Brinja-Yuin, Budawang, Jerrinja, Murramarang, Walbunja, Wandandian, Wodi Wodi, Yuin and Yuin-Monaro People on whose Country the Family Connect and Support Programs operate.

We acknowledge that the historical context of government intervention when it comes to child protection, has had a significant and detrimental impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals' connection to country, land, culture, health, and sense of belonging. We recognise that when not addressed in a culturally safe way, current government systems and supports surrounding family support services can perpetuate the intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities.

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## Introduction

The Australian Universities Accord Discussion paper (the paper) highlights the importance of higher education plays in preparing individuals and society for the challenges of the future. The paper raises important questions about the role of public funding and equity for determining who has access to higher education, including how best to address participation, attainment and impact.

## Increasing access and equity

One of the questions posed by the Discussion paper is:

***How can we ensure all Australians have the opportunity to participate in higher education?***

The paper identifies that meeting a national target for overall attainment that is representative of the whole population will not be possible without strong growth in numbers of students from groups which are currently under-represented in the higher education system. It is noted that in 2021, 17% of higher education students were from a low SES background, 2.4% were First Nations Australians, 21% were from regional or remote areas, and 9% were students with a disability.<sup>1</sup>

It should also be acknowledged that young people formerly in the care of the state (care leavers<sup>2</sup>) are among the most disadvantaged social groups in Australia, and one of the least likely to access higher education. According to The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 2022), around 8 per 1,000 Australian children are in out-of-home care. Most of these children have been in care for 2 years or more. Indigenous children continue to be overrepresented in the care system. At 30 June 2021, 1 in 17 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were in out-of-home care. In NSW in 2021–22, of the 15,895 children in care, nearly half (43%) were Aboriginal children (6,829 Aboriginal children to 9,066 non-Aboriginal children).<sup>3</sup>

While comprehensive statistics are lacking, existing research suggests many care leavers experience significant life challenges.<sup>4</sup> In particular, children who have extended periods in out-of-home care may ‘drift in care’, moving between multiple home-based placements or between home-based and residential care. Care leavers are predominantly from lower socio-economic status (LSES) backgrounds and face significant challenges in their transition to adulthood. These challenges include increased likelihood of social exclusion, psycho-social issues, homelessness, health problems and incarceration.

AIHW reports that young people exiting care were more likely to receive income support, and for longer periods of time, than the Australian population in the same age cohort. The proportion of the OOHC study population receiving income support was highest at the ages they were transitioning from care (18–20 years), followed by a slight decline as they approached age 30. However, despite this decline, the OOHC study population continued to have much higher receipt than the Australian population of the same age throughout

<sup>1</sup> Table A institutions only. Department of Education 2021 b. from the Australian Universities Accord: Discussion Paper, February 2023.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Care leavers’ include: children in foster care, kinship care, residential care, children who are adopted from the child welfare system, and children who are subject to any legal order made by the child welfare system which has led to them remaining out of the day to day care of their parents for a short or a long time (Glushko, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022) *Child protection Australia 2020–21*, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 12 April 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Mendes, P., Michell, D., & Wilson, J. Z. (2014). Young people transitioning from out-of-home care and access to higher education: A critical review of the literature. *Children Australia*, 39(4), 243–252.

their late twenties (54%–55% compared to 14%–16% between ages 25 and 29, respectively), with the difference in receipt between the two populations increasing with age.<sup>5</sup>

Young carer leavers not only face the challenges of lower socio-economic status (LSES), many have also experienced disrupted education history. Due to the itinerate nature of care placements, young care leavers may not have family and other personal networks to support their studies. Lack of role models may lower their aspirations, and they are likely to be subject to low expectations about their options. Additionally, care leavers are generally required to become independent and self-sufficient at a younger age.<sup>6</sup> They are therefore doubly disadvantaged compared to other their peers, given the need to navigate adult responsibilities almost entirely on their own. Often, they lack family support of family for housing, supplemental income, practical assistance such as laundry and meal preparation, and advice or support to navigate higher education. The dramatic over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the care population exacerbates the gap in expected life outcomes when compared to non-Indigenous peers.

## Access to education for care leavers in Australia

There are, however, examples of initiatives in Australia to support carer leavers to access higher education. To date, these have been piecemeal, without being institutionalised through state or national policy. For example, the NSW Government funded a scholarship stipend at Western Sydney University for young people who had experienced OOHC, but it is now closed to new applicants. Yet overall, few Australian universities offer tailored supports to care leavers.<sup>7</sup>

Two models can be found in NSW and Victoria. These are the University of Newcastle *Live, Learn, Grow* program that assists young people in care to access support for accommodation and enrolment options for higher education. In Victoria, the *Raising Expectations* program, a partnership between the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Federation University Australia, La Trobe University and Swinburne University, provides resources, support and services to help young care leavers access higher education. From July 2015 to June 2018 the project was funded by the Sidney Myer Fund. The Department of Education and Training has provided funding for the 2018 - 2019 financial year to enable this work to continue and support additional young people from care and care leavers to access higher education and university.

While commendable, these ad hoc, short-term schemes are unlikely to significantly enhance the number of Australian care leavers able to access pathways to higher education.

## International models

In contrast to the lack of a coordinated Australian approach, there is a range of international initiatives that support completion of higher education for care leavers. North America, Europe and the UK have featured prominent social policy agendas to enhance the welfare of LSES care leavers over the last decade. While there are significant variations in their approaches, all of these programs demonstrated success in increasing the

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<sup>5</sup> AIHW (2022). *Income support receipt for young people transitioning from out-of-home care 2022*

<sup>6</sup> Harvey, A., McNamara, P., Andrewartha, L., & Luckman, M. (2015). *Out of care, into university: raising higher education access and achievement of care leavers*. Report for the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

number of care leavers enrolling in higher education. Overall, the international experience shows that a clear policy directive, combined with a committed partnership among government, Universities and service agencies, can make a difference.

Jurisdictions that have implemented targeted supports have seen significant improvements in the proportion of care leavers enrolling in post-secondary education. For example:

- In England, the proportion of care leavers attending university has increased from **1% to 14% since 2013**
- In Illinois, care leavers are **twice as likely to attend university as their care-experienced peers** in the neighbouring states that do not provide the same level of support
- In California, **almost 50% of all young people in care are now enrolling in university**.<sup>8</sup>

These remarkable achievements demonstrate that investing in higher education access for care leavers promotes equity for a vulnerable population and makes good financial sense for government.

## United Kingdom

In the UK, the Buttle Trust's *Quality Mark* has provided a framework to allow universities and further education colleges to develop their own on-campus support programs for care leavers.<sup>9</sup> Universities and colleges are required to demonstrate that they offer a minimum level of support to care leavers to achieve a Quality Mark.

Although the program was discontinued in 2015, 119 institutions across the UK committed to providing support to care leavers including:

- Financial assistance with living costs and study materials
- Admissions and enrolment assistance
- Priority access to accommodation
- Ongoing pastoral support from a dedicated carer leaver contact.

## England

England legislated support for carer leavers enrolled in higher education to the age of 21 years in 2003. In 2008 the age for support was extended to 25 years of age.<sup>10</sup> The legislation provides support to carer leavers from their Local Authority if they are in full-time education or have a disability. Each young person is assigned a personal adviser who provides them with support for:

- Finding accommodation
- Claiming benefits
- Career and education advice
- Financial guidance for managing their bank account and budgeting.

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<sup>8</sup> Glushko, A. (2017). *An investigation of programs that support the transition of young people in foster care into university*. Canberra: Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.

<sup>9</sup> Boyes, L. (2012) The Buttle UK Quality Mark Model: Working with your institution to support Care Leavers in HE. Buttle UK.

<sup>10</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8429/CBP-8429.pdf>

In addition, carer leavers are eligible for a Higher Education Bursary of £2,000 and a Setting Up Home Allowance of £2,000.<sup>11</sup> Many universities also offer bursaries for care leavers; for example, King's College in London offers grants of up to £1,000, as well as an additional cash bursary of £4,000 for up to three years as well as accommodation bursaries that cover the cost of student accommodation in central London.

The higher education reforms enacted in 2012 allowed universities to increase their fees above the basic level. However, institutions that do so must have an access and participation plan. These plans are reviewed annually and identify the support available for disadvantaged groups, such as care leavers.<sup>12</sup>

While the proportion of care leavers attending higher education is lower (at 14%) than the general population (42%) as of 2021, these reforms have made a significant impact. In 2003, only 1% of care leavers were likely to enrol in higher education.

## Scotland

Since 1995, Scottish law has provided post-care support for care leavers. In 2014, Scotland legislated post-care support from Local Authorities to age 26. Personalised packages of support are assessed on an individual basis. The Scottish Government covers the tuition cost for all Scottish students, with additional financial assistance provided for care leavers, so they do not need to take out student loans.

Under the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*,<sup>13</sup> Scottish universities are named as Corporate Parents, thereby obligating them to prepare and publish a plan which outlines how they will fulfill their obligations.<sup>14</sup> Plans are regularly reviewed and reported to parliament every 3 years. A component of government funding is tied to the provision of support services to vulnerable students, including for accommodation and financial support. The not-for-profit sector works with universities to provide support, with a clear ambition of increasing university enrolments and completions for care leavers.

## North America

In 2015, the US federal *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*<sup>15</sup> obligated state child welfare and education agencies to collaborate with the goal of achieving better educational outcomes for children in care. This includes collecting and reporting (to the federal government) on student achievement and graduation rates for all students in care. There has since been significant federal government investment to improve higher education of care leavers.

### Spotlight on state examples: Washington and California

In Washington State, the legislated *Passport to College* program<sup>16</sup> provides funding to every state-funded university and community college to deliver campus support programs for care leavers. The *Passport to College* program entitles young people to scholarships to assist with tuition on other expenses, and campus

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<sup>11</sup> 4 DfE, 16 to 19 bursary fund guide 2022 to 2023 academic year, 15 June 2022

<sup>12</sup> 1 OfS, Regulatory Notice 1: Access and participation plan guidance, September 2021.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2015/62/contents/made>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.whocaresscotland.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>

<sup>16</sup> Passport to College - <https://www.passporttocollege.org/about>

support services. However, each institution retains autonomy around their program design, overseen by the not-for-profit organisation, College Success Foundation.

One of the better models is the *California College Pathway*,<sup>17</sup> campus-based support programs that have nearly doubled the number of care leavers in higher education. The program provides housing (on or off campus) as well as student support services and bridging courses, including winter / summer schools. These tangible forms of support and encouragement provide practical and relational engagement with care leavers.

The *Guardian Scholars*,<sup>18</sup> offered across all public Californian universities, is a comprehensive program model that provides an array of financial and advising supports, as well as connections amongst young people for peer-to-peer support. *Guardian Scholars* supports students in their transition to the university by assisting them to navigate on- and off-campus resources, build essential skillsets, and successfully acclimatise to a university. Supports include:

- New student program orientation
- Transition seminar: "Foundations for University Success"
- Transitional Peer Mentoring Program
- First-Year seminar: "Becoming the 3%"

The *Guardian Scholars Program* encourages students to plan beyond the degree. The program offers opportunities for students to explore and prepare to pursue their interests in graduate school, professional school, or a career.

## Illinois

Illinois offers the *Foster Progress* and *Chicago Youth Opportunities* program<sup>19</sup> to recruit, train and support mentors for young people in and exiting foster care. Young people are paid for participating in the mentoring program, and these payments go into a fund that may be used for educational costs. Independent program evaluation noted that young people who have participated in the program were found to be 4–6 times more likely to enrol in university than their non-mentored peers. Illinois also provides fee waivers for enrolments at state-funded universities and community colleges.

## Canada

### British Columbia

The *Provincial Tuition Waiver Program* (PTWP) waives tuition fees for BC students attending a BC public post-secondary institution, who meet the following criteria: 19 to 26 years of age (inclusive) and who were in care for two years or more (consecutive or accumulated).<sup>20</sup> The PTWP covers tuition and mandatory fees charged by the institution, include any required in order for the applicant to successfully complete the program/courses in which they are enrolled.

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<sup>17</sup> California College Pathways - <https://cacollegepathways.org/>

<sup>18</sup> Guardian Scholars - <https://www.fosterclub.com/resources/california-guardian-scholar-program>

<sup>19</sup> Chicago Youth Opportunities - <https://chicagoyoi.wixsite.com/chicagoyoi>

<sup>20</sup> Provincial Tuition Waiver Program - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/pay-for-school/provincial-tuition-waiver-program>



## Next steps

These international examples demonstrate that a clear policy directive, combined with a committed partnership among government, universities, and service agencies, can make a difference. Programs offered in North America, Europe, and the UK, while having significant differences in their approach, have all shown success in increasing the number of care leavers enrolling in higher education.

Jurisdictions that have implemented targeted supports have seen significant improvements in the proportion of care leavers enrolling in post-secondary education. In England, there has been an increase from 1% to 14% since 2013 of care leavers attending university. In Illinois, care leavers are twice as likely to attend university as their care-experienced peers in the neighbouring states that do not provide the same support.

These remarkable achievements demonstrate that investing in higher education access for care leavers promotes equity for a vulnerable population and makes good financial sense for government. We recommend collaboration amongst government, universities, and non-governmental organisations in the out-of-home care sector to develop a national approach to addressing the gap in higher education participation for care leavers. Improving higher education access for care leavers fits within current national priorities and strategies and will be of clear benefit to improving higher education equity and access nationally.

The Australian University Accord's review of the higher education systems is a timely opportunity to consider strategies to improve access to higher education for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Since the State has served in 'loco parentis' for young people in care, there is a collective social responsibility to support their successful transition to adulthood.

Care leavers are in a uniquely challenging position as they enter adulthood. Not only do they generally come from low SES backgrounds, and all the uncertainties that entails, but they also need to become 'independent' at a much younger age. While their peers who are not in care are receiving parental support well into their 20s and even 30s, they are on their own. Their educational trajectory is frequently disrupted by multiple care placements and school moves. Consequently, they are the group least likely to access higher education which would likely provide them with a stable future. Yet if care leavers do make it to higher education, research shows that their success is a hard-fought battle. Piecemeal programs currently available to care leavers are insufficient and the overemphasis on TAFE communicates low expectations.

While some Australian states are now providing extended support for care leavers to age 21, this does not provide the support needed for higher education (see Appendix A). What is needed is a systematic, well-informed, 'wrap around' approach that will enable care leavers to reach their aspirations in higher education and life.

## Appendix A

## Australian Extended Care Policy by State and Territory

New South Wales	
<b>Policy</b>	Your Choice, Your Future
<b>Support offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 6 November 2022, NSW announced the 'Your Choice Your Future' package, extending care allowance from this date to young people in foster care between 18–21 years.</li> <li>Young people within this age bracket who have already exited care post 6 November can also apply for this package.</li> <li>From 1 February 2023 the NSW Government will formally offer additional leaving care support for young people transitioning from care until they turn 21.</li> </ul>
<b>Allowance</b>	<p>This package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new 'staying on' carer allowance for young people aged 18–21 remaining with their carer. Carers receive \$544/fortnight in Year 1 (age 18), \$400 in Year 2 (age 19) and \$250/fortnight until they turn 21</li> <li>A new independent living aftercare allowance of \$250/fortnight for young people up to age 21 transitioning to independent living from residential care or their carer's home</li> <li>Capacity boosting the Specialist Aftercare Program to support young people with complex needs, i.e., mentoring and extra caseworkers to help care leavers access the program.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people aged 18–21 years post 6 November 2022</li> <li>Universal eligibility, i.e., foster, kinship and residential care.</li> </ul>
Victoria	
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better Futures Program</li> </ul>
<b>Support offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Better Futures program comprises 3 service components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accommodation allowance paid either directly to the carer for home-based care or to the young person for independent or semi-independent community-based living</li> <li>a Better Futures worker offering casework support</li> <li>flexible funding to help acquire housing, education, employment, health and wellbeing support and community connections</li> </ul> </li> <li>Application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a young person in care should be informed of the Home Stretch program from age 15 onwards, when their transition plan is being developed</li> <li>the Home Stretch program is accessible for young people leaving care from age 16</li> </ul> </li> <li>A Home Stretch application must be lodged no later than 6 months before the young person leaves care.</li> </ul>

<b>Allowance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carers will be paid through the department’s Care Allowance system</li> <li>the allowance paid to carers is equivalent to Care Allowance 13+ Level 1</li> <li>carer reimbursements are \$16,065/year, paid fortnightly. (Amount is indexed yearly under consumer price index (CPI) increases)</li> <li>assistance includes supporting young people to access the private rental market. Accommodation allowance for young people leaving residential care or wish to move on from their care is \$16,065/year per young person, paid fortnightly. (Amount is indexed yearly in line with CPI increases)</li> <li>flexible funding of \$1,599/year per young person, paid monthly</li> <li>a funded caseworker</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>young people aged 18 on permanent care orders from 1 July 2021 are eligible for the Home Stretch extended care package until they turn 21</li> <li>youth exiting residential, kinship, foster, permanent care and sometimes other care arrangements can access an allowance to support them with housing costs up to 21 years</li> <li>the young person must be referred by and associated with Better Futures</li> <li>the young person must be under formal care, including foster, kinship or residential care</li> <li>on/after their 16th birthday, the young person must be subject to a care by secretary order, a long-term care order or family reunification order.</li> </ul>
<b>Queensland</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	No formal policy
<b>Support offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently in consultation phase</li> <li>On 18 June 2022, the Qld Government announced it was extending the care age in Qld to 21 years</li> <li>From 2023–24 the Qld Government will offer an extra 2 years’ foster care allowance for carers of young people living with them up to age 21</li> <li>The Qld Government will also provide financial and caseworker support to young people who do not reside in family-based care.</li> </ul>
<b>Allowance</b>	–
<b>Eligibility</b>	–
<b>Western Australia</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	Staying On subsidy
<b>Support Offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staying On allows young people to stay in their carer’s home until age 21 or when ready to leave.</li> <li>Staying On is different to a foster care subsidy.</li> <li>The young person is expected to cover some personal costs and may contribute to household expenses. This is because they receive an independent income from age 18 through employment or Centrelink income support payments (i.e., Youth Allowance).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program aims to ensure a smooth transition into the Home Stretch WA program for young people aged 17.5 and continued support until age 21.</li> <li>• Staying On ensures young people know their rights and can independently access eligible support until age 25.</li> <li>• The program provides young people with a youth worker who offers 1:1 flexible coaching towards independence.</li> <li>• Young people can be supported to stay in their carer’s home to ensure a stable living arrangement until age 21. This includes financial assistance and support to family and foster carers.</li> <li>• The young person is expected to contribute their independent income towards living expenses.</li> </ul> <p>Young people can be supported to access a housing allowance to help them to afford a wider range of living arrangements.</p>
<b>Allowance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$450/fortnight (Year 1 rate from 1 July 2022)</li> <li>• regular payments Year 2 – 75% (\$337.50) and Year 3 – 50% (\$225)</li> <li>• the housing allowance for young people leaving residential care or who cannot stay with their carers is \$450/fortnight</li> <li>• \$2,500/year brokerage for other things like laptops, education etc. per young person</li> <li>• a funded caseworker</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 1 July 2022, youth aged 18 living in a family or foster care arrangement in the metropolitan area will be eligible for the WA Staying On subsidy until age 21.</li> <li>• The young person and carer must consent to the Staying On arrangement, then develop and sign the Staying On agreement. The Staying On subsidy is paid to carers directly.</li> </ul> <p>The Staying On agreement is reviewed yearly.</p>
<b>South Australia</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stability in Family-Based Care (SFBC) program</li> </ul>
<b>Support Offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program allows the young person to stay with their primary family-based carer after their youth court order or long-term formal agreement expires on their 18th birthday. The carer receives extended care payments until the young person’s 21st birthday.</li> <li>• The carer and young person must mutually commit to staying in the family foster home.</li> <li>• Extra payments received before age 18, i.e., access to respite care, activity grants, incidental expenses, and special needs loading cease at age 18.</li> <li>• From age 15, the young person will be involved in transition from care planning, where SFBC arrangements will be introduced.</li> <li>• The young person can apply to the program 6 months before turning 18.</li> <li>• Other than the Centrelink carer payment, if the carer receives extra payments for the young person’s care, they are not entitled to the SFBC program.</li> <li>• The young person is longer provided with guardianship case management services after they turn 18.</li> <li>• They will liaise with the department instead, which occurs at least quarterly. This service provides referral information and support to access other relevant services.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the SFBC arrangement ends, they will ensure the young person can access suitable accommodation and relevant services.</li> </ul>
<b>Allowance</b>	<p>The carer continues to receive their fortnightly carer payment, indexed annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carer reimbursements: \$784.40/fortnight</li> <li>Education Grant: \$258/quarter</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>Program eligibility is based on fulfilling the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The young person was covered by one of these arrangements until 18 years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>guardianship/long-term guardianship (including specified person) order</li> <li>family care meeting agreement</li> <li>other long-term formal agreements where the minister or chief executive bears some legal responsibility</li> </ul> </li> <li>The young person is required to have turned 18 on/after 1 July 2018 and wishes to continue living in your home full-time post 18th birthday.</li> <li>The young person’s earnings do not exceed carer payments. If there is a change in circumstance affecting eligibility, the carer and young person must report these to the department within 7–14 days.</li> <li>The young person and the carer must sign the SFBC program application, including a statutory declaration of eligibility, which must occur annually.</li> <li>It is considered in the young person’s best interests to stay in the family home.</li> <li>The young person must reside in the family home 4 nights/week min.</li> <li>Young people residing in foster, kinship or residential care are eligible for the allowance.</li> </ul>
<b>TAS</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	Transition to Independence Program
<b>Support offered</b>	–
<b>Allowance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extended carer payments are based on the rates for young people aged 12–17. Board payments reduce yearly to reflect the young adult’s increasing responsibilities as they transition to independence.</li> <li>18 years – payments are maintained at existing 12–17 age rates.</li> <li>19 years – payments are reduced to the foster care base rate.</li> <li>20 years – payments are reduced to 50% of the base rate until the young adult turns 21.</li> </ul>

<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-based only</li> <li>• After the young person’s Care and Protection Order expires at age 18, formal kinship carers, foster carers and third-party guardians may be eligible for extended carer payments to support the young person until their 21st birthday.</li> <li>• The young person must be in a family-based care arrangement under a Care and Protection Order immediately before their 18th birthday.</li> <li>• Extended carer payments are only offered to young people aged 18 until their 21st birthday.</li> <li>• The young person and their carer must agree to the young person remaining in the formally approved primary carer’s home after turning 18.</li> <li>• The young person must reside in their carer’s home full-time, i.e., 4 nights/week min.</li> <li>• The young person and their carer have signed the ‘Application for Extension of Carer Payments’ form.</li> <li>• An application can be submitted for extended carer payments if the 18–20-year-old young person returns to the primary carer home after living independently.</li> <li>• To ensure payment continuity, the ‘Application for Extension of Carer Payments’ form must be submitted at least 6 weeks before the young person’s 18th birthday.</li> <li>• Payments will be made after the young person turns 18 and once forms are processed and verified.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Territory</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	Transition to Independence Policy
<b>Support offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people living independently before age 18 until age 22 will have continued support to maintain their independent living arrangement.</li> <li>• Young people who choose to stay with their carer family will have continued support until age 22. Financial assistance is provided to the carer and foster-family and community connections financial to help the young person receive training, further education, health care or pursue job opportunities.</li> <li>• The young person must be informed about their entitlement and how to apply when they turn 18.</li> </ul>
<b>Allowance</b>	–
<b>Eligibility</b>	–
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	Next Steps for Our Kids
<b>Support Offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next Steps provides access to extended care for youth aged 18–2</li> </ul>
<b>Allowance</b>	–
<b>Eligibility</b>	–