



FOSTER & KINSHIP CARERS ASSOCIATION NT June 2018 Quarterly Newsletter



Message from the CEO

Here we are and half the year is done already!

Reflecting on Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT's achievements this week, I note that it is exactly 12 months since we officially launched the Foster and Kinship Carers Charter of Rights!

This Charter of Rights has been one of the most important projects undertaken by Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT, but more importantly, the Charter couldn't have been achieved without the input of you, our Foster and Kinship Carers.

As your Peak Body we canvassed our Territory Carers, we listened to your concerns, we held forums in Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Darwin and we delivered your message to Government – loud and clear.

It is so important to remember that you as Foster and Kinship Carers do have rights. We echo these rights in our discussions at every level.

You have the right to:

- Be informed
- Be consulted
- Be respected
- Be supported
- Feel safe
- Be valued
- Be treated fairly
- Privacy and confidentiality

Without you, we couldn't have developed the Charter! Congratulations to all who worked with us to complete this Charter ... and Happy Anniversary!

On a side note, we've had a change in our Board representation with Kay Eade being elected Chair, and Margie Furber Vice Chair. Congratulations to both of you, I look forward to working with you both and know you'll put the interests of the Association to the forefront.

School holidays are looming so if you're going away for a break, make sure you stay safe and have a wonderful holiday.

Happy June!

Ann Owen



Highlights:

- Charter of Rights one year anniversary
- NDIS - 1st July roll out
- NAIDOC event - Standley Chasm
- Going on holidays
- Our new website is live
- School holiday activity and competition

Empowering Carers through Knowledge, Support & Advocacy



Foster & Kinship Carers
ASSOCIATION NT Incorporated



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Who we are?

Foster & Kinship Carers Association NT is an independent, non-government, not-for-profit agency supporting Foster and Kinship Carers in the Northern Territory.

What we do?

We provide information on carers' rights and services, offer confidential advice and advocate on behalf of Carers. We also contribute to policy and legislation representing the needs and interests of Foster and Kinship Carers.

Our Purpose

"Empowering Carers through Knowledge, Support and Advocacy"

Our Vision

"Confident Carers"

How to get support

At Foster & Kinship Carers Association NT we strive to achieve the best outcomes for our Carers.

If you would like to discuss any concerns you may have, please complete the Advocacy form on our website www.fkca.org.au or call us on 1300 030 928.

Emergency contacts:

In case of an emergency **000**

Territory Families after hours & child protection hot-line **1 800 700 250**

Advocates Update

During May, Cheryl Schmidt, our Operations Manager and I visited Katherine to catch up with our Foster and Kinship Carers.

We also attended the Carer Induction Training, run by Territory Families which gave us an opportunity to talk to Carers about our Association's role and the Advocacy program which is provided free to our members.

While we were in Katherine, we held an information stall at the Katherine Oasis shopping centre with the aim of:

- Talking to the general public about the work that we do and express the need for more Foster and Kinship Carers to meet the diverse needs of children and young people placed in Out of Home Care in the Northern Territory
- Offer support through our Advocacy program to Foster and Kinship Carers

If you are interested in becoming a Carer please contact our Advocates to discuss the registration process, please call us on 1300 030 928 or check out www.fkca.org.au

Recently I have read current Australian Institute of Family Studies research titled "Working Together to Care for Kids: Carers' views - Rewards and challenges" (May 2018). The research explores the thoughts, feelings of Carers of Out of Home Care children about their care experience and highlights the challenges Carers had faced while providing care.

One of the key messages from this research that I thought I may share is that Carers, in general, felt a strong sense of reward in looking after children in Out of Home Care, feeling that they made a positive contribution to the lives of these vulnerable children.

I would like to encourage you to access the research below and please share with us your thoughts: <https://bit.ly/2Mh8aBD>

Have a wonderful week,

Lucja Wajs – Advocate & Practice Manager



**Our Adocates:
Marie, Rosalyn and Lucja**

Going on Holidays

Are you thinking about taking the family on a holiday in the next school holidays or for Christmas?

We highly recommend all Carers wishing to travel with their children or young people in Out of Home Care prioritise and document travel discussion with your Case Manager as early as possible. The Case Manager will ask that you provide details of the proposed travel, the child's whereabouts and your contact details while you are away.

Holiday travel planning and preparation are very important and you should allow up to several months to ensure all plans are approved.

Timeframes for travel permissions:

- Interstate travel - minimum 6 weeks prior to travel
- International travel - 4 to 6 months prior to travel – even when renewing an existing passport

If you are planning to travel overseas with a child in care, plan this well ahead and talk to the Case Manager as soon as possible. Approval to travel outside of Australia may take several months to finalise. Passport applications can also take several months so these timeframes should also be included in your planning.

If you have any issues or questions relating to the travel process, our Advocates are available to provide support, call us on 1300 030 928 or email info@fkca.org.au



National Disability Scheme to commence in Darwin | July 2018

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will be rolled out in the Darwin urban region and Central Australia as of 1 July 2018.

For the first time Foster and Kinship Carers will have a nationally consistent approach to supporting children in care with developmental delay or disability.

Foster and Kinship Carers will be key contributors when it comes to developing, implementing and monitoring their children's NDIS plans. NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency) acknowledge and recognise Foster and Kinship Carers are best placed to provide important information about the child's strengths, interests, goals and required disability supports.

NDIA are committed to a partnership approach for children and young people in care in relation to the NDIS and in all aspects of their care.

With NDIS there will be no change to the fortnightly Carers allowance or high support needs Carers allowance as a result of the NDIS.

The NDIS is new, which means that there will be some bumps along the way. However, the purpose of the scheme



In High School and Turning 18 years' old



One of the biggest issues facing young people in foster care is what their future holds after aging out of the child protection system. By 18 years of age you are legally an adult so for those in the Out of Home Care system, you are able to leave care and live independently.

But what if you turn 18 and you are still in Year 12?

A recent study has outlined a number of challenges young people in care face, one of which is educational disadvantage because of poor early learning experiences and the lower percentage of young people who have been in care completing Year 12.

Recently a number of our FKCA Carer members have raised this matter seeking clarification and in reflection of this added stress for their young person already feeling the pressure off finishing their final year of high school.

As your Peak Body we have begun discussions with Territory Families to seek a clear policy position and consistent practice across all offices and hope to provide you this updated information as a matter of priority.

During a recent meeting, Territory Families CEO, Ken Davies, advised that he is more than supportive of maintaining placements for young people in care to finish their Year 12.

If you have concerns regarding this matter please contact our Advocates on 1300 030 928 or info@fkca.org.au

is to help you! The ultimate goal of the scheme is to allow your foster child to receive high quality intervention to allow them to achieve their full potential. You know your child's needs better than anyone. Don't be shy and don't be afraid to discuss what your child needs with their caseworker.

Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT will continue to facilitate a range of information sessions with the team from NDIS. We encourage members to attend these sessions to ensure they have all the necessary information regarding the scheme as it commences in Darwin & Central Australia from 1 July 2018.

After a recent discussion with Territory Families, they have advised your NDIS point of contact is your child's or young persons Case Manager. **More information about the NDIS can be found here: www.ndis.gov.au**

New referral service available for Carers and families:

Family and Children's Enquiry and Support (FACES) is the new Territory Families helpline dedicated to connecting Carers & families with support services:

Territory Families Connect (1800 999 900)
Territory FACES (1800 999 900)
Child Protection Hotline (1800 700 250)

Charter of Rights - one year anniversary

The Foster and Kinship Carers Charter of Rights was developed by Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT (FKCA) in 2017. The Charter of Rights is the voice of Foster and Kinship Carers, developed by Carers, for Carers in the Northern Territory. This important milestone document was endorsed in May 2017 by Minister for Territory Families, Dale Wakefield and Deputy CEO, Jeanette Kerr from Territory Families on behalf of CEO Ken Davies, as a statement of their strong commitment and recognition of the role Carers play in opening their homes and hearts in supporting vulnerable children in care, and to celebrate and promote their work.

To celebrate our Charter's anniversary FKCA are inviting our Carers to contact the association and provide their valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the Charter and whether Carers rights to be informed, consulted, respected, especially with regard to fairness and openness, have been implemented and followed by Territory Families during professional interactions with Carers.

Communicating the roles and responsibilities of Carers at placement commencement and the ongoing relationships between Case Managers and Carers appear to remain a regular issue and continues to be raised with the FKCA Advocates team.

A recent comment received by the Advocates team was "The casework process should be better explained, and that the case manager should more fully describe the activities that Carers are required to do and their purpose."

Recent research shows that "Case manager communication patterns & foster parent satisfaction reflecting the importance of this relationship" which

highlights the critical need and how to best facilitate healthier professional relationships between case managers and Carers. The article also outlines how the quality and context of the foster parent-case manager professional relationship may affect the Foster or Kinship child's overall quality of care.¹

This relationship may promote challenges but also creates great opportunities for Foster and Kinship families. It has long been identified that when Foster and Kinship Carers feel supported by Case Managers this leads to a more positive outlook toward their role and this increases positive relationships between Case Managers and Carers and significantly increases Carer retention connection they have with the department. Through this positive engagement this research shows Carers have a better understanding of changes, and are more actively involved in the care planning process. On the other hand, when there is ambiguity or conflict between the parties, communication is impacted and has greater likelihood of breakdown.

If you would like to learn more about this research and the strategies to maintain positive professional relationships with your Case Manager and Territory Families, please let us know. We encourage you to share your thoughts on how your experience as a Carer have been impacted by the implementation of the Charter of Rights – positive or negative.

Please email your feedback or call our Advocates, who are available to assist you and can be contacted on 1300 030 928 or email info@fkca.org.au

Reference:

¹ Denlinger, Dorius, Baltimore, and Russell (2016) Case manager communication patterns and foster parent satisfaction

Be informed • Be consulted • Be respected • Be supported • Fee safe • Be valued • Be treated fairly • Privacy and confidentiality

Foster and Kinship Carers Charter of Rights
You have the Right to:

- 1. Be informed**
 - ▶ To have clarity around your role as a Carer
 - ▶ Information regarding the child in your care to assist in your carer role
 - ▶ Be provided with Territory Families Policy and Procedures
- 2. Be consulted**
 - ▶ Value given to your input around the children in your care
 - ▶ Be involved in care planning for the children in your care
 - ▶ Be consulted around decisions that impact on you and your family
- 3. Be respected**
 - ▶ Timely responses to carer communication
 - ▶ Respectful, courteous, and consultative communication
 - ▶ Clarity around meeting agendas and goals prior to attending
- 4. Be supported**
 - ▶ Access to respite and support to enable a sustainable placement
 - ▶ Financial and physical resources to maintain the placement
 - ▶ Access to relevant training, practical advice, resources and tools
 - ▶ Access to independent advocacy to support carers in meetings with Territory Families
- 5. Feel safe**
 - ▶ To receive information identifying risks to carers and families
 - ▶ Policies and Procedures that support carer's safety and well-being
 - ▶ Prompt and forgoted response where carers recognise and raise a risk or concern regarding a child or placement.
- 6. Be valued**
 - ▶ The right to say "No"
 - ▶ To be treated with respect and dignity
 - ▶ To be valued as a member of the Care Team
 - ▶ Respectful interactions with Territory Families with consideration of culture, religion, personal values.
 - ▶ The right to respond
- 7. Be treated fairly**
 - ▶ The right to consistency and fairness in the provision of information and service delivery
 - ▶ To speak without fear of reprisal
 - ▶ To appeal or raise complaints in line with procedural fairness
- 8. Privacy and confidentiality**
 - ▶ Privacy and confidentiality of your personal information
 - ▶ To know that your personal information is treated respectfully and sensitively
 - ▶ Not to be the subject of gossip
 - ▶ The right to be protected from external risks

NAIDOC week

In 2018 the national NAIDOC theme 'Because of her, we can!' focuses on the invaluable and often invisible contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made – and continue to make – to their communities, families, rich history and to our nation.

Their achievements, their voice, their unwavering passion gives their communities strength and has empowered past generations and paved the way for generations to come.

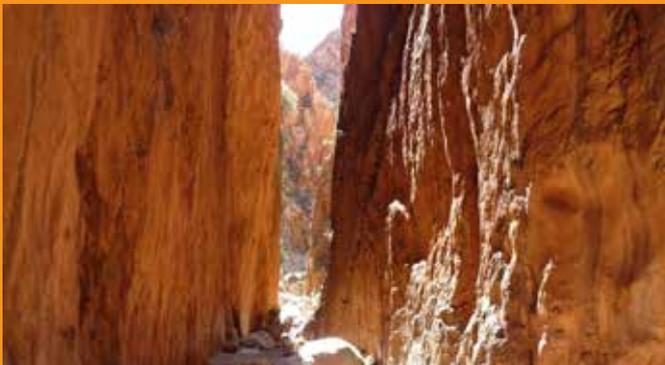
Further information can be found on the website and the National NAIDOC Facebook page. www.naidoc.org.au

To celebrate NAIDOC week we have organised an event in Alice Springs for our Foster and Kinship Carers to attend, more information is provided below.

NAIDOC event - Standley Chasm, Alice Springs

Come and join us for a fun-filled morning during the school holidays at Standley Chasm, one of the many unique and idyllic landmarks in the area. Join our guided walk through Standley Chasm, enjoy a freshly baked morning tea followed by an art activity suitable for all ages. You will also get to meet other Foster and Kinship Carers and children and young people in their care.

Standley Chasm, part of the MacDonnell Ranges, is located in a private flora and fauna reserve, with a lush gully floor that ranges from delicate ferns to tall gum trees. The Chasm is a beautiful landmark with sheer walls that glow from reflected sunlight to create a breath-taking display of rich colour.



School holiday competition:

Email your answer to the question below & you are in the draw to win this school holidays!

Question:

How many cats can you put in an empty box?

Prizes:

Darwin - We have a 2018-19 Entertainment book to giveaway, for use in Darwin, valued at \$60

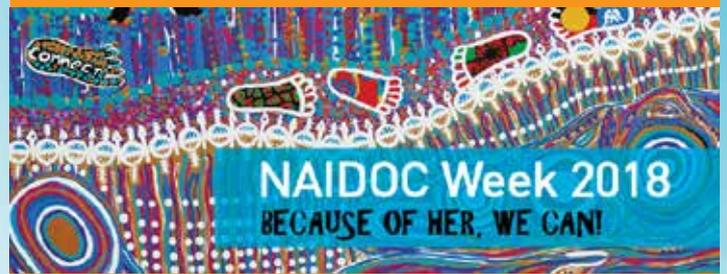
Alice Springs - We have two family movie passes to giveaway valued at \$70 each (donated by Alice Springs Cinema - thank you!)

Email media@fkca.org.au your answer by Sunday 15th July, 2018, to go in the draw!



BECAUSE OF HER, WE CAN!

8-15 JULY 2018



Itinerary for Standley Chasm event - Alice Springs

- 10am** Meet the local guide at Standley Chasm
- 10:10am** Guided walk to Standley Chasm, taking about 30 minutes, return at own pace
- 11am** Enjoy a self-service buffet morning tea of scones and cake. Following morning tea, join the art activity at the campfire/ bowerbird, where you can paint your own bookmark to take home with you

12 noon Event finishes

Cost First 30 members of Foster & Kinship Carer Association NT attend FREE
Non-members \$30 per person

You must RSVP by 4th July & collect a ticket from our Alice Springs office

To RSVP, please call 1300 030 928 or email rosalyn.havard@fkca.org.au

We look forward to seeing you there!

School term & holiday dates in the NT:

Term 2 dates	Monday 23rd April - Friday 29th June
Term 2 break	Monday 2nd July - Friday 20th July
Term 3 dates	Tuesday 24th July - Friday 28th September
Term 3 break	Monday 1st October - Friday 12th October
Term 4 dates	Monday 15th October - Thursday 13th December

Spot the bus and WIN!



Spot the bus competition - great prizes!

To enter:

1. Spot our bus around Darwin - we are bus #195
2. Take a photo of the bus (in a safe area) and post it on our Facebook page or comment on our page where you saw the bus
3. Go into the draw to WIN!

Live outside of Darwin?

You can still enter our competition. All you need to do is like the bus post on Facebook and share our post to enter the monthly draw. You must like our Facebook page as well.

We have great prizes available, perfect for all ages.

Enter here: <https://bit.ly/2GfD1LR>



Coffee cups



Water bottle



Monthly prizes



Cooler bag



Picnic blanket

Get your Discount Card!



Members of FKCA who are Foster & Kinship Carers are able to enjoy a variety of discounts and special offers from participating businesses in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine.

A full list of participating businesses is available on our website.

To get your discount card, call us on 1300 030 928 or email info@fkca.org.au

Just in time for school holidays



Entertainment 2017 | 2018 Memberships

Looking for fun family friendly activities these school holidays? By purchasing an Entertainment Membership not only will you be supporting us and Foster and Kinship Carers in the NT but you will also save big on amazing attractions, activities and holidays (not to mention shopping and dining!)

We are selling all Entertainment Memberships eg: Darwin, Sydney, Melbourne and even New Zealand versions so let your Inter-state family & friends know.

BUY YOURS HERE: <https://bit.ly/2H6BQiy>



Our new website is now live!

After several months of planning, we are excited to announce our new website is now live.

We have built our website with Carers in mind, making it easier to find information. We have also been able to utilise our new images of Millie*, who represents children and young people in Out of Home Care.

We hope you enjoy the fresh look and feel, check it out www.fkca.org.au

**We have changed her name to protect her privacy*



Share your story:
If you would like to share your story on why you became a Foster or Kinship Carer please email media@fkca.org.au or call 1300 030 928.

Free First Aid Training - \$180 value

As part of our commitment to empowering Carers with knowledge we are offering the opportunity for FREE enrolment in the following accredited first aid course worth \$180, in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Darwin.

HTLAID003 - Provide First Aid course

For more information or to make a booking contact Sharni on 1300 030 928 or email us info@fkca.org.au - Conditions apply

Mother's Day Competition Winner:
Congratulations to Kelly McGregor from Katherine who won the \$100 Coles voucher. Thank you to everyone who entered.

Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care to Independence

One of the biggest challenges for all young people is to develop the skills and means to achieve and maintain independent living. For young people leaving out-of-home care, emotional support and practical assistance throughout the transition process are essential to help them develop the necessary skills for reaching their full potential.

Evidence shows that the best outcomes for young people transitioning from Out-of-Home Care to independence are more likely to be achieved when the process is a gradual and well supported one, based on strong preparation and planning, with access to tailored support to consolidate living skills and promote independence, and support after leaving care to foster resilience and stability.

The plan recognises the role relevant parties have to play in supporting the young person to transition from Out-of-Home Care to independence – the young person; Foster or Kinship Carers; Case Workers; family of origin and significant others in the local community network; both Territory and Commonwealth

governments as well as non-government organisations such as the important work of CREATE Foundation.

To ensure this planning process is gradual and the necessary skills developed your young person's case worker must commence this process around the age of 14 to 15 years of age. We encourage all Foster and Kinship Carers to speak to their case workers about preparing for this important next stage.

If you have any issues regarding Leaving Care Plan's, our Advocates are available to support you through this process, please phone them on 1300 030 928 or email info@fkca.org.au

Find out more information about the program 'Go your own way' run by CREATE here: www.create.org.au





School holiday activity: Tea cup bird feeder

The dry season is here and a great way to take advantage of this wonderful weather is to make your own bird feeder.

Get the kids involved by selecting an old tea cup that they can decorate with paint or assorted stickers to attract the birds in your garden.

What you need:

- Plain white tea cup to decorate yourself or you could buy a secondhand one
- Paper plate
- Either a chain, strong rope or ribbon to hang the feeder
- Super glue
- Either glass paint, nail polish or stickers to decorate the cup
- Wild bird seed

How to make:

1. Using the super glue, glue the paper plate to the tea cup leaving half of the space on the plate for the bird seeds to lay out on, as shown in the picture.
2. Paint a design on the cup using paint, nail polish or decorate with stickers.
3. Run a chain or rope or ribbon through the cup's handle, and hang your bird feeder on a tree.

Source: <https://bit.ly/2JcvW3N>

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Go to www.youtube.com and search for Foster & Kinship Carers Association NT.

Contact us



1300 030 928



info@fkca.org.au



www.fkca.org.au

Need to update your details?

Please contact Sharni to update your contact details on

P: 1300 030 928 or
E: info@fkca.org.au

Email your event ideas

If there is an upcoming event you think will be relevant for our Carers, please email us the details on:

E: info@fkca.org.au