

# Media release

27 September 2018

## **MacKillop welcomes the Victorian Government's commitment to extending state care up to the age of 21**

MacKillop Family Services welcomes the announcement by Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, to extend supports for young people in care until 21 years of age.

The Victorian Government has committed \$11.6 million over five years to extend foster care through to 21 years of age in the first half of 2019, a move which will see 250 young people supported to make a successful transition from state care to independent living.

Welcoming the commitment, MacKillop CEO, Robyn Miller, commended the decision by the Labor government to extend care to 21 years for young people.

"This is a critically important step in helping young people transition from care to independent living. Currently, young people in care have many of their supports cut off at the age of 18, which is in stark contrast to the general population where the majority of young people stay in their family homes well past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"Research both nationally and internationally indicates that a high proportion of care leavers end up homeless, in the criminal justice system or unemployed, within the first year of leaving care. In countries like the United Kingdom, where care is extended until the age of 21, education participation doubles and homelessness rates are halved."

MacKillop is one of 200 community organisations who supported the Home Stretch campaign over the last two years, calling for this important reform.

"The welfare of young people is at the heart of everything we do and it's great to see a policy introduced that will support vulnerable young people to successfully transition to adulthood. This reform shows that the voices of young people in care and those who support them have been listened to.

"We look forward to helping the young people in foster, residential or kinship care in Victoria to take the right steps towards successful adulthood. MacKillop also works with young people in Western Australia and New South Wales and we would look forward to seeing support to the age of 21 extended to everyone in care in all states and territories of Australia," added Dr Miller.

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