

Media Release

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A Brighter Future for Foster Care

A new national poll released to mark Foster Care Week (14 – 20 September), gives hope for the future when it identified that Gen Z and Millennials are 25 per cent more likely than Baby Boomers to consider becoming foster carers.

The study, conducted by YouGov in partnership with MacKillop Family Services, reveals **that 57 per cent of Gen Z and 55 per cent of Millennials** say they would consider fostering, compared to just **32 per cent of Baby Boomers**.

This growing interest in providing care for children unable to live with their own families is especially strong among families with children of their own. Families with children under 18 are significantly more likely to consider foster care (57%) than those without (36%).

Geelong based carers Rachael and Mat Buck are Gen Z carers who had started their own family before embarking on their journey as carers.

Rachael works as a primary school principal and Mat is the Carlton AFLW coach and they open their home to kids who need a safe place to stay.

“We’ve been carers for over ten years now, and it’s something our own kids have grown up with,” Rachael says. “When we realised there is a need for carers and we could do something about it, we decided to investigate.”

“We are short-term carers which means we look after kids for a few days or a weekend. However long they are with us, they know they are welcome in our home and we can be the support they need,” Rachael added.

Barriers to Foster Care

The poll also reveals key barriers that stop people from becoming carers, even when they are open to the idea:

- Nearly half (48%) say their current home or personal situation isn’t suitable.
- One in three (34%) feel they don’t have the right skills or experience.
- One in four (26%) say they would find it too emotionally difficult when a child leaves their care.
- One in four (26%) admit they simply don’t know enough about how foster care works.

Support Makes a Difference

Encouragingly, the research shows that the right support can significantly increase the likelihood of Australians becoming foster carers - by over 20%.

Training (55%), a financial allowance (54%), ongoing guidance and support (55%) and access to a mentor program with other carers (53%) were identified in the poll as supports that would make them more likely to foster in the future. Alana Umbers, MacKillop’s Carer Recruitment and Development Coordinator, agrees that prospective carers often don’t realise that there is a team of professionals ready to support them to care.

“There’s a whole process of training and accreditation which plays a large part in readying people to become carers. Some people think foster care is dropping off a child, then leaving the individual, couple or family to care for them on their own. That’s simply not the case.

“We build a support system around carers, with case managers, therapeutic specialists, a 24/7 hotline, and an online Carer Learning Hub as just some of the resources that support carers to build their confidence and skills to care for a child who has experienced trauma. A financial allowance also offsets the cost of the care provided.

“One of our biggest assets is our pool of existing carers. Through peer-to-peer mentoring, valuable advice and lived experience is passed down to new carers, and it’s always lovely for a new carer to chat to someone who knows exactly what is involved,” added Alana.

Preparing Our Hearts: A Foster Care Journey

One of MacKillop’s latest carer resources was initiated by the agency’s carers who identified the ongoing challenge of saying goodbye when child left their care. A podcast series, [Preparing Our Hearts: A Foster Care Journey](#) is a five-episode series which highlights the real voices, stories, and experiences of foster carers and their biological children as they navigate the loss and grief that are part of the foster care experience.

Taking the next step

“Australians want to help, but many feel unsure or overwhelmed. What this poll tells us is that with the right support, training and community around them, many more people would open their hearts and homes to children who need them. “Foster Care Week is a time to celebrate our amazing carers – but it’s also a call to action. The supports asked for are supports that are provided. This Foster Care Week, we encourage those interested to take the next step and find out more,” Alana added.

About the Survey

This national survey was conducted online by YouGov between **25–27 August 2025**, with a **representative sample of 1,020 Australian adults aged 18+**. The data was weighted by age, gender and region in line with ABS population estimates and conducted to **ISO 20252:2019 standards**. The poll was commissioned by **MacKillop Family Services** to inform foster care awareness and policy.

[MacKillop Family Services](#) is a leading provider of specialist services for children, young people and families. We are a child-safe organisation committed to protecting and advocating for the best interests of children and families across all our programs.

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