

# Media Release

**The Hon Luke Donnellan MP**  
Minister for Child Protection  
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Saturday, 3 April 2021

## CALL FOR VICTORIANS TO OPEN THEIR DOOR FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

The Andrews Labor Government is encouraging more Victorians to open their homes and their hearts to foster children by making the fostering process easier.

Minister for Child Protection and Carers Luke Donnellan today met Vince and Kym – who have been foster carers for more than 20 years. They have cared for more than 70 children and currently provide long-term placement for three teenage boys.

While there are challenges and ups-and-downs, Vince and Kym believe the experience of caring for a child is always worth it – and there is a lot of support when you get started.

The Labor Government has committed \$5.8 million over four years to continue the *Fostering Connections* program to promote the benefits of foster caring and make the recruitment process more accessible for Victorians.

Run by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Fostering Connections* provides a centralised service that connects prospective carers with foster care agencies, helping Victorians find the right agency in their area.

*Fostering Connections* also provides accurate and detailed information about the process of becoming a foster carer and answers any questions people might have about fostering before they contact an agency.

At any given time, about 1,700 children are being looked after by foster carers or are waiting for a placement.

While the coronavirus pandemic has placed significant stress on many families across Victoria, it has also demonstrated the enormous goodwill of Victorians to support each other during hard times.

The Labor Government is working to ensure all children get the help they need -- investing more than a billion dollars in services and supports for children and families in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*.

This includes \$64.7 million over the next four years and ongoing funding for the *Home Stretch* program, to extend state care and supports for young people in care from 18 to 21 years old. This means young people can stay with their kinship or foster carer for longer, or transition to supported independent living arrangements.

The government has also invested \$10.3 million in the Better Futures program, which helps young people in care prepare for life after care, including education, employment advice and life coaching.

Training and supports are available to foster carers through the Carer KaFE initiative and Client Support Funding. To sign up or learn more about foster caring, visit [fosteringconnections.com.au](http://fosteringconnections.com.au) or call 1800 013 088.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Child Protection and Carers Luke Donnellan

*"Fostering a child can enrich their life and yours – and I encourage anyone with care and support to give to open their doors to a child in need."*

*"Becoming a foster carer is open to people from all walks of life, including couples, single people, families, and people working full time."*

### Quotes attributable to Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare CEO Deb Tsorbaris

*"The COVID-19 pandemic has placed enormous pressure on many Victorian families who are suffering financial hardship and stress, so we are urging everyone to open their hearts and homes."*

*"We know that children thrive when families have access to the support they need, and foster carers can play a key part in that support system."*

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