

# Media Release

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## **BREAKING NEW GROUND IN FOSTER CARE**

A new model of foster care with the potential to transform the way vulnerable children and young people are supported is to be trialled by the Andrews Labor Government.

The internationally proven model uses professionalised foster carers to provide intensive support for children and young people who experience significant emotional or behavioural problems.

The Labor Government is investing \$5.6 million in the trial, as it transforms the state's child protection and family services system.

Professionalised foster carers would work with at least 28 children over two years, helping them to transition from – or avoid entering - residential care.

Carers provide full-time care for each child or young person, under the guidance of a team of practitioners to stabilise their behaviour. Families and long-term carers are provided with weekly training and support.

Treatment Foster Care Oregon is an evidence-based model, with foster carers taking on a role as primary professional carer to help children and young people experiencing significant emotional or behavioural problems.

The Labor Government has committed \$168 million as part of its ground-breaking *Roadmap for Reform* policy, with more than \$20 million for nine specific initiatives that will be tested in southern Victoria.

OzChild and Anglicare Victoria will recruit and train carers to deliver the specialised Treatment Foster Care Oregon model in the Bayside Peninsula and Southern Melbourne areas.

OzChild and Anglicare Victoria will create at least 14 new, professionalised foster care placements a year, with OzChild to focus on children aged 7-11 years and Anglicare working with young people aged 12-18 years.

The specialised carers will provide intensive support, complementing the essential work of volunteer foster carers by preparing children to return to their placements, or their families. The model has been successful in New York, significantly reducing the number of children and young people in residential care.

### **Quotes Attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos**

*"With the support of Anglicare Victoria and OzChild, the Treatment Foster Care Oregon model has the potential to completely transform the way we support vulnerable children and young people, with life-changing impact."*

*"Nothing is more important than helping our vulnerable children, and professional foster carers will help complement the work of thousands of volunteer foster, kinship and permanent carers across Victoria."*

### **Quote Attributable to Anglicare Victoria Chief Executive Officer Paul McDonald**

*"Through this revolutionary program, we expect the majority of children and young people to be reunited with their families, where safe, or reach their full potential with loving kinship or foster care families."*

**Quote Attributable to OzChild Chief Executive Officer Lisa J. Griffiths**

*“Children and young people do best when in family, or family-like placements, however at present, there are few options beyond residential care for these young people when foster, kinship or family placements break down.”*