



PRINCIPLES

1. Government has the responsibility to ensure that the rights of children are upheld according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
2. Early intervention *in the family unit* is critical to ensuring that children and young people receive the best possible start in life and to mitigate the significant costs to the community of adverse outcomes.
3. Government should ensure that all children and young people are properly cared for and protected from violence, abuse and neglect.
4. Laws and actions affecting children and young people should put their best interests first, and should take into account the wishes of the child on an age-appropriate basis.
5. Children and young people should not be separated from their parents unless the risk of harm outweighs the risk of being removed, and have a right to stay in contact with their parents, siblings, and extended family as long as it is safe to do so.
6. Children and young people who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who understand, respect and support their religion, culture and language.
7. With respect to children and young people from Aboriginal communities, every effort should be made to uphold the principle of Aboriginal self-management and self-determination, with appropriate consultation of Aboriginal agencies.
8. Children and young people should not be disadvantaged on the basis of where they live within Victoria.
9. The state should ensure that children and young people in care achieve parity with their peers in educational outcomes and standards of physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
10. Young people leaving care should have capacities and opportunities that are comparable to those of their peers, with every effort made to reduce the number who enter the juvenile or adult justice systems, become unemployed or homeless, or fall to substance abuse and addiction.
11. Forgotten Australians, that is, older Australians previously in care and who may have suffered abuse and neglect, should have access to a reparation fund and targeted access to universal services such as health, housing and education.

AIMS

The Australian Greens Victoria will work towards:

Child Protection

1. Existing early intervention programs should be strengthened through better funding and increased staffing.
2. The Child FIRST system should be reviewed and its capacity increased to meet demand.
3. Successful innovative placement prevention programs should be identified and replicated around Victoria.
4. Creation of an effective long-term human resources plan for Child Protection services.
5. Strong support for ongoing improvement of operation of the CC and DHS, including adequate funding and timely processes.
6. Increase in the level of guidance and support provided to parents in meeting the requirements of the Court and enabling family reunification.
7. Continued support for the independence of the Child Safety Commissioner.

Out of Home Care

8. All care provision delivery to be based on evidence of the effects of trauma on child development and wellbeing.
9. Significant increases to the financial support of carers and staff to meet the needs of children and young people in their care.
10. Reduction in the number of children and young people, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, who are placed with carers who do not share their cultural or religious background.
11. A significant increase in number and support for trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.
12. Expansion of effective therapeutic care programs across the Victorian Out of Home Care system, including residential care.
13. All children and young people entering care to receive physical and psychological assessments and ongoing health services including counselling as required.
14. Siblings are placed together in care wherever possible and appropriate.



15. Financial reimbursements provided to foster, kinship and permanent carers properly and fairly represent the true cost of providing care.
16. Establishment of a carer intake service to recruit, train, assess and support foster, kinship and permanent carers in a more cohesive manner, and able to service urban, regional and rural areas of need.
17. Development of an Out of Home Care Learning and Development Strategy that provides ongoing training to carers and staff involved in Out of Home Care service provision.
18. Development of more efficient permanency planning processes for children and young people in Out of Home Care, including streamlining the conversion process from foster or kinship care to permanent care.
19. Provision of a secondary consultation and training service to raise the cultural and linguistic competence of carers and workers involved with children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Leaving Care

20. Development and implementation of specific strategies for support and care of young people who have left care up to the age of 25.
21. To ensure that all young people aged 15 and over have appropriate care transition plans to allow them to transition successfully from care to independence as adults.
22. Provision of free tertiary education and life skills programs to young people who have experienced care.
23. Ensure that young people exiting care have safe and appropriate housing options.

Forgotten Australians

24. Establishment of a reparations fund for the victims of neglect and abuse in Out of Home Care.
25. To make counselling and therapy services available to all Forgotten Australians.
26. To ensure that the experiences of Forgotten Australians inform current and future Child Protection and Out of Home Care policy.
27. To coordinate with other states to ensure COAG recognition of, and commitment to, Forgotten Australians and their needs.