

**23 April 2020**

**Leading child welfare agency, OzChild applauds today's announcement from the Andrew's Labor Government of a multimillion-dollar package to support kids through COVID-19 crisis.**

"Across Victoria, and around Australia, families are struggling, children and young people are at greater risk of harm as together we face a crisis unlike any other. News of this boost to funding provides some light at the end of a dark tunnel," says OzChild's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa J. Griffiths.

"I applaud the Andrew's Labor Government and thank Minister Donnellan for his commitment to protecting children and young people during this time.

"Furthermore, the government's commitment to provide relief for carers in financial distress will provide some much-needed support for those caring for some of Victoria's most vulnerable children.

"News of the one-off \$600 payment for carers will be very well received by OzChild kinship and foster carers, I have no doubt this will take some pressure off," adds Dr Griffiths.

For some children in out-of-home care the effects of childhood trauma, neglect or abuse make it difficult to manage their feelings, thoughts and behaviour. It has never been more important to ensure support services are in place to help carers manage and address behaviours brought about by the added pressures of social isolation.

The additional funding announced, which also includes a commitment to expand the Home Stretch program to support all young people in care who are due to turn 18 before December this year will provide some certainty and much needed stability for these young people.

"Times are tough, to expect anyone, let alone a young person in care who has just turned 18, to confidently and successfully transition to independent living during these unprecedented times is unfathomable," says Dr Griffiths.

"I look forward to hearing more from Minister Donnellan on what this new model of family services care will look like.

"To date the decisions being made by our country's leaders to address the Covid-19 pandemic have been evidence-based, I hope the funding provided will be directed into programs and support services that the evidence says work," says Dr Griffiths.

**-ENDS-**

- Dr Lisa J. Griffiths is available for interview upon request
- OzChild foster carer is available for interview upon request

## **ABOUT OZCHILD**

For nearly 170 years OzChild has been committed to delivering quality services which make a real and lasting difference to Australian families to ensure all children and young people are safe, respected and nurtured to reach their full potential.

OzChild is committed to improving the lives of at-risk children, young people and families in our community, through foster and kinship care support and the delivery of evidence-based programs to achieve better outcomes, strengthen and repair relationships to build a brighter future for young Australians.

OzChild is now the largest provider of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs in Australia. Nationally the organisation is delivering multiple evidence-based programs to support children, young people and families, to ensure better outcomes can be achieved.

This includes Treatment Foster Care Oregon, Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare, Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect, Functional Family Therapy for at risk youth, SafeCare®, Multisystemic Therapy for youth justice, and Triple P Positive Parenting Program.

**For further information please contact:**

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