

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12 June 2023

**Long-time foster carer Joan Graham recognised with an Order of Australia (OAM) as part of the King's Birthday Honours list for 2023.**

OzChild are excited to hear that Joan Graham is a recipient of the Order of Australia. As one of the organisation's longest serving foster carers, Joan has dedicated her life to caring for, raising, and supporting hundreds of children over a 40+-year tenure, only retiring from her official role as a carer in 2022.

Prior to joining OzChild more than 40 years ago, Joan and her late husband Brian started their foster care journey 14 years earlier. With four children of their own, Joan and Brian were prepared to make room for more. Their collective commitment to providing a safe and secure home has had a lasting impact on every child who crossed their doorstep.

A primary focus for Joan was keeping siblings together, as well as the reunification of families and connection to culture wherever possible. While there are challenges that come with the territory, Joan took it all in her stride, treating every child equally with kindness and love.

Joan's advocacy extended to other carers in and beyond her network - participating in the OzChild Peer Support Program for several years. A longstanding involvement with OzChild's Carer Focus Group and helping form the Consultation Group cemented Joan's role as a mentor and community leader in the sector. A role many can say has helped them find their feet and be the best carer they can be.

The Order of Australia is dedicated to those who show compassion, leadership and a drive for change in their work and everyday lives. The OzChild team and extended network are immensely proud of Joan's contribution to the sector and on-going voice for children.

"I cannot think of a more worthy recipient of the Order of Australia than Joan Graham. Joan has dedicated much of her life to improving the lives of others. I couldn't be prouder to see her recognised in this way, and the children, young people and families whose lives have been touched by Joan's kindness will no doubt feel the same way," OzChild Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa Griffiths

-ENDS-

**Who can become a foster carer?**

- Anyone over the age of 21
- Anyone with secure accommodation and appropriate space and safety in the home
- Race, gender, marital status, employment, sexuality and religion do not affect a person's eligibility to become a foster carer

**OzChild National Support Office**

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For further information please contact:  
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**OzChild provides full training and on-going support to all carers.**

- 24/7 carer support
- Respite support
- Ongoing training opportunities
- Community building and access to other social events

**Visit [ozchild.org.au](https://www.ozchild.org.au) to find out more**

#### **ABOUT OZCHILD**

For 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 the 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.