



CARING TOGETHER

Information and news for foster and kinship carers in South Australia



Message from the Chief Executive

Dear carers,

It has been a busy couple of months for the department and Issue 5 of *Caring Together* reflects this. It's a bumper edition, packed with stories to keep you informed and supported.

While we can never truly thank you enough for everything you do, we hope the recent Foster and Kinship Carer Week events went some way to showing how we value you in your caring role.

You'll find a re-cap of these events, and photos from across the state, in the pages that follow. Be sure to keep an eye out for a familiar face or two!

Our second ever SA Child Protection Awards held on 9 September, during National Child Protection Week, celebrated the outstanding achievements of key stakeholders across the sector, including carers.

Inside this edition, you'll find the heart-warming stories of the Foster Carer of the Year, Kinship Carers of the Year and the joint winners of the Active Efforts Award which saw them so deservedly take out awards.

You'll also hear from the Minister for Child Protection the Hon Katrine Hildyard MP. Minister Hildyard shares key insights from recent roundtable discussions with carers, which I was also lucky to attend. We truly value the important perspective we gain hearing from you directly.

As we head towards the end of 2022, there are no signs of slowing down.

We're proud to partner with the Australian Childhood Foundation to deliver a new online training program to support you in your care of children and young people who have experienced trauma. It will be available in the coming weeks, and we discuss it more on page 11.

The review of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* is also well underway. We encourage you to share with us what is working and how our legislation can be improved. Information about how you can participate is included within this issue.

We are committed to continuously improving the way we support carers, and this review will play an important part in work of the department moving forward.

Cathy Taylor

Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection

Dear carers,



It has been such a pleasure to meet and talk with many of you, from Mount Gambier to Port Augusta and plenty of places in between. Thank you so much for sharing your insights, I have learned so much from our conversations and look forward to continuing to deepen my understanding of your experiences and ideas for change.

Most recently, I was in the Upper Spencer Gulf as part of the Country Cabinet where I led roundtable discussions with carers. I also attended events there and in the metropolitan area as part of Foster and Kinship Carer Week.

It was incredibly special to say thank you in person to those of you who attended these events.

By opening your hearts and homes to children and young people in need, you make a profound difference; I am so grateful for your generosity and effort.

Throughout my discussions with carers to date, key themes have emerged and include the need to:

- expand access to trauma-informed care training
- improve access to therapeutic support for children and young people
- improve opportunities for sibling contact
- enhance links with the education and health systems
- increasing pathways to permanent care.

Progress is being made. Included in this issue of *Caring Together* is detail of:

- the Department's Disability and Development Program's Regional Disability Consultants
- new trauma-informed training for carers
- an innovative leadership program for children and young people in care
- how to access free or low-cost dental and orthodontic services
- the Department for Education's Children in Care Service.

I look forward to providing more information about progress on the matters you have raised with me. I remain deeply passionate about listening to you and understanding your experiences as carers and very much look forward to meeting with more of you over the coming months.

In the meantime, we would love to hear your views about potential changes to the *Children and Young People Safety Act (2017)*. Visit yoursay.sa.gov.au/cypsactreview for further details.

Thank you very much again for the incredibly positive impact you are making. The lives of children and young people and the fabric of our whole community are strengthened by what you do.

Kind regards,

The Hon Katrine Hildyard MP
Minister for Child Protection



Meet Shona – the new Guardian for Children and Young People

Shona Reid is South Australia's new **Guardian for Children and Young People**.

Shona isn't the legal guardian for children in care but 'champions' their rights, hears what they have to say and follows up on things that worry them about their time in care.

Children and young people can call Shona's office if they feel their rights are not being respected and they are not being listened to. They can talk to her team about any worries they may have and their views on things happening in their life. Children and young people can call Shona's team on **1800 275 664** (free call) during office hours.

For more information about the Guardian, or to view the Charter of Rights, visit the Guardian's website: gcyp.sa.gov.au



Supporting carers to connect with Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA

DCP has been working in partnership with Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA (CF&KC-SA) to support carers to receive information on becoming a member.

CF&KC-SA membership offers opportunities for carers to:

- connect with other carers
- receive information about caring
- access help and advocacy
- discuss issues and receive support from a peer – someone who understands and can share caring experiences.

When you complete a new Carer Agreement, you can now elect to share your contact details with your support worker and they will contact you with information on being a member.

If you would like more information on becoming a member of CF&KC-SA visit: cfc-sa.org.au

feature story

Celebrating Foster and Kinship Carer Week

In September, we celebrated Foster and Kinship Carer Week with a range of events from Ceduna to Mt Gambier, and throughout metropolitan Adelaide.

These events, and the week as a whole, provided a fantastic opportunity to show how much we value and respect you, and to recognise your dedication and commitment in supporting children and young people to reach their potential.

Events

You might spot a familiar face in our event photo gallery online in the **Carer News** section. We've also selected a few from celebrations in Murray Bridge, Kangaroo Island and Adelaide's metro and south to share with you here.

Thank you messages

We received dozens of thank you messages for foster and kinship carers, written by those in the child protection sector and the broader South Australian community. Here are just a couple, but you can also check out more messages online in **Carer News**.

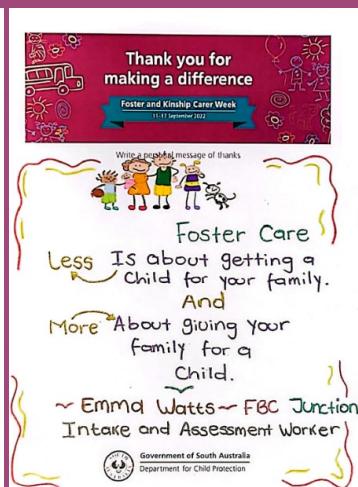
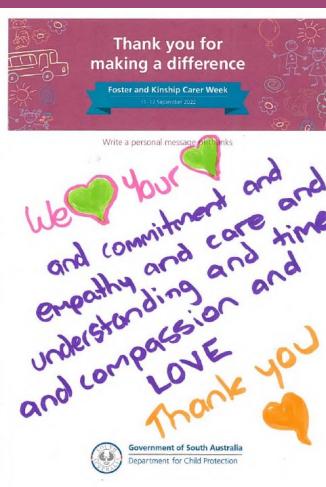
Murray Bridge



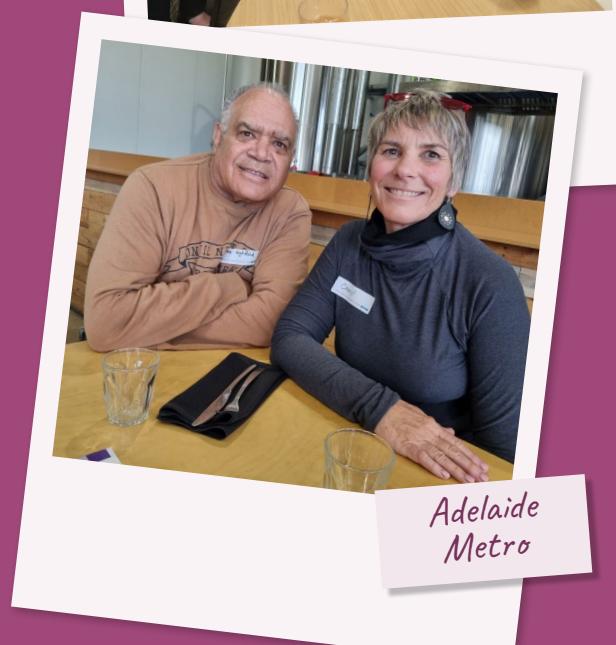
Kangaroo Island



Adelaide South



Adelaide Metro



Powerful learning opportunities at International Foster Care Conference

The International Foster Carer Conference took place in Darwin between 23 and 25 of September 2022. This year's conference celebrated identity, Culture, families and communities, and included interactive workshops with professionals from across the world as well as powerful presentations from young people with a care experience.

Carers from across SA were supported by their support agencies to attend the conference.

Here, ac.care carers from the Limestone Coast, Riverland and Murrayland, and their support staff, share their experiences from the conference.

Kelly, carer, Murrylands

"I am a single long-term carer of a family group. The experience was truly amazing and the international speakers brought learning full of practical and usable strategies, as well as self-care techniques that can be implemented in our daily lives. It also provided an opportunity to talk to other carers from a wide range of agencies and connect over experiences."

Megan, carer, Riverland

"I was able to network with other carers, support agencies, department staff, and key speakers from all over the world. The most moving stories of hope were from children in care and care leavers themselves - this is their story in the journey of foster care."

Rebecca, carer, Limestone Coast

"I was unsure what to expect, but the experience far exceeded my expectations. Within the first half an hour, a young child in care spoke and reminded us that his life was the reason we were there, and his words were so inspiring and moving that I don't believe there was a dry eye in the room. The conference evolved from there, with international speakers discussing topics relevant to all facets of foster care; training, life story work, self-care and many more. I left extremely inspired, with a long list of things to work on, research and consider for my own home, to share with other carers and ideas to discuss with ac.care."



L – R: Megan, Kelley, Rebecca and Brianna at the conference

Brianna, Limestone Coast Placement Support Worker

"One word - WOW! We were fortunate to listen to guest speakers from all over the world, attend informative workshops and most importantly, listen to the voices of our children in care.

A particular quote that was so wisely spoken by a 12-year-old young person is something I will always remember and reflect on. They said:

"Whilst this might be your job, your profession, or your research project. This is my life... I am the author of my own journey."

Through my experience, I hope to empower our valued carers to implement these new frameworks, and further encourage positive changes to the lives of young people in care."

STAY IN THE KNOW

Follow us on Facebook
[f/ChildProtectionSA](https://www.facebook.com/ChildProtectionSA)

Investing in their Future initiatives



We've been busy creating priority access to services for young people in care, and those who have left care, as part of DCP's Investing in their future initiative.

Updates include:

Personal leadership program scholarships

Scholarships for a new personal leadership program, run by DCP and Youth Opportunities, are now available.

The 10-week, self-paced online program is designed to:

- help young people identify and build on their strengths so they can create goals and plan how to achieve them
- build their confidence and motivation.

Young people receive a personal coach to support them and attend online group workshops.

To find out more, and register a young person's interest in the program, email CPReform@sa.gov.au.

Dental health offers

Access to free or low-cost dental and orthodontic services for children and young people who are in, or have been in care, is available through a DCP, SA Dental and Australian Dental Foundation partnership.

Find out more about dental services on our Investing in their Future webpage: childprotection.sa.gov.au/children-care/priority-access-to-services.

Free water safety programs

The summer holidays are fast approaching and VACSWIM is offering free water safety and survival programs to children in care aged 3-12 during December 2022 and January 2023.

The five-day program builds water safety awareness and confidence and is a great way to keep kids busy during the school holidays.

To enrol an eligible child, fill out this online VACSWIM enrolment form: bit.ly/VACSWIM. Enrolments close at mid-day (12:00pm) on the Friday before the program begins.

Long-term Guardianship (Specified Person) Case Management changes

A new, centralised case management team has been created for Long-term Guardianship (Specified Person) (LTGSP) orders, or previously issued Other Person Guardianship (OPG).

Until recently, children and young people on LTGSP or OPG orders have been case managed by local offices. Guardians will receive their payments from DCP as per usual.

Our LTGSP practitioners are contacting guardians. This is a great opportunity to talk about the specific needs of your arrangement, if you haven't chatted about this already.

You can call the team on 1800 974 980 or email them at longtermguardianship@sa.gov.au.

Please note: All DCP-facilitated contact arrangements for LTGSP children and young people will remain under the management of the local office.

New information to support carers on the DCP Carer Platform

The DCP Carer Platform has a range of resources to support you in your vital role.

We are pleased to share some exciting additions including:

- The launch of a new 'On the Couch' page which will provide information and resources to carers on a range of topics. The first topic features videos with Dr Greg Miller, Former President of the South Australian Branch of the Australian Dental Association, who provides a range of important tips on dental care for children and young people. Watch this space as we grow our library of resources.
- Information on identifying concerns about developmental delays for children under 5 years.
- Advice on supporting children and young people before and after family contact.
- Refreshed resources on supporting the psychological wellbeing of children and young people, raising children and child development and supporting healthy sleep.

 You can find these resources at:
childprotection.sa.gov.au/carers/resources-for-carers



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CHILD PROTECTION AWARDS 2022



Government of South Australia
Department for Child Protection

NAPCAN
PROMOTING CHILD SAFETY & PROTECTING CHILDREN

The **2022 South Australian Child Protection Awards**, delivered by the Department for Child Protection (DCP) in partnership with the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), were held during National Child Protection Week, on Friday 9 September at the Adelaide Convention Centre. The awards are an annual event to celebrate the outstanding achievements of children and young people, carers, volunteers, staff and organisations from across South Australia's child protection sector.

A big congratulations to this year's winners. Almost 300 nominations were received throughout South Australia across 11 categories. One in three nominations were for a foster or kinship carer, highlighting just how important you are.



Meet the 2022 Foster Carer and Kinship Carers of the Year



Foster Carer of the Year, Deb Bills

Foster Carer of the Year, Deb Bills, aims to help children build their confidence and self-esteem and to have pride in their "uniqueness, individuality and their culture".

Deb and her partner Adam Price have cared for about 20 children through various arrangements including respite, short term, and emergency care since 2014. They are supported by Life Without Barriers (LWB).

Deb also works as a Home Hub provider in the **MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ program**, which is delivered in partnership between the department and LWB.

The program builds connections between children in care, including strengthening relationships between siblings, and acts as a supportive network for carers in local communities.

"The hub provides a social network so (the children are) getting that sense of extended family and they're getting a group of trusted adults who will enable them to thrive within their community," Deb said.

"My hope is that this award inspires others to join our foster care community," Deb said.



Deb Bills with the Hon Katrine Hildyard MP (left)

Kinship Carers of the Year, Corey and Robert Briggs

Corey and Robert Briggs' inspiring story of taking on the care of three young family members was a highlight of the Child Protection Awards.

The brothers, both aged under 25, are supported by InComPro/Martinthi in their role caring for a sibling's children.

Martinthi Kinship Support Worker Darren Francis said Corey and Robert were "remarkable young men".

"What they're doing for them (the children) is giving them an opportunity in life that I'm sure they won't appreciate yet but as they get older and realise the sacrifices those boys have made it will start to sink in, also for Robert and Corey as well," Mr Francis said.



Corey and Robert Briggs with Martinthi Kinship Support Worker Darren Francis (centre).



with our Active Efforts Winners

South Australian Child Protection Awards

In each edition of Caring Together, our Roving Reporter will interview individuals and organisations who are making a difference in the lives of children and young people and their carers.

This time, we look at how an organisation and an individual are both going above and beyond to support families.

The South Australian Child Protection Awards Active Efforts Award recognises an individual or organisation who has made outstanding active efforts to implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

The 2022 winners were DCP Principal Aboriginal Consultant Jody Satala and KWY Aboriginal Corporation.

Let's find out a bit more about the amazing work they're doing.

KWY Aboriginal Corporation

Chief Executive Craig Rigney

Can you describe an example of an Aboriginal child in care who is being supported to connect with family, culture, community and/or Country?

The KWY Kinship Care program supports amazing carers who prioritise cultural connections of the children they care for. We support a non-Aboriginal carer who has been nominated by community to care for a child whose mob live on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. The carer involves the child in their culture by speaking language at home and is familiar with Aboriginal child-raising practices, through her close involvement with the child's family. The carer regularly takes the child back to their Country where they will remain for a few weeks at a time. These regular trips back to Country provide the child with contact with their family and community, which enables them to engage with and learn through cultural activities.

How has the child benefitted from these opportunities for connection?

The child is provided the opportunity to develop their cultural identity through being raised in their culture, learning cultural ways on Country, speaking language and being part of their community. The child's secure connection to their culture and the carer's willingness to celebrate culture in their home, supports the child during the times they are living away from their Country.

What advice do you have for carers who may be uncertain how to ensure the Aboriginal children or young people they care for stay connected to family, culture, community and Country?

I would encourage carers to be curious about culture and brave to ask their support worker or child's DCP case worker for help in connecting children to their culture. I would strongly suggest carers attend cultural training through their care agency or with an external provider.



Minister for Child Protection Katrine Hildyard, KWY Chief Executive Craig Rigney and DCP Chief Executive Cathy Taylor.

Jody Satala

Principal Aboriginal Consultant, DCP

Tell us about your background in Child Protection.

I am a proud Barunggam Bundjalung woman from Queensland and have lived and worked on both Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna Country in SA for many years. I work as a Principal Aboriginal Consultant in DCP covering our Noarlunga, St Marys, Limestone Coast and Call Centre locations. In 1995, I began my career at DCP, first working in the Anti-Poverty area before moving into Child Protection in 1998.

What does your role as a Principal Aboriginal Consultant involve?

My role focusses on working with Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities involved in the child protection system to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people coming in to out of home care. I strongly advocate for Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making processes to privilege the voice of our families who are the experts in their own lives and are best positioned to make the most appropriate care decisions for their own children. I work alongside and support my non-Aboriginal colleagues to ensure that Child Protection practices are well considered when making any significant decisions for care and safety provisions regarding our Aboriginal children.

How do you help the department support carers?

I provide guidance to carers to ensure children are afforded culturally safe and nurturing home environments where Aboriginal children remain strong in culture and well connected to their families, communities and identity. I aim to achieve this through regular conversations with carers and case managers on how best to develop, implement and follow through with recommendations of a child's Aboriginal Cultural Identity Support Tool.



Minister for Child Protection Katrine Hildyard, DCP Principal Aboriginal Consultant Jody Satala and DCP Chief Executive Cathy Taylor.

Spotlight on...

Regional Disability Consultants

Our DCP Disability and Development Program's Regional Disability Consultants are allied health professionals who work alongside DCP case workers to help meet the needs of children and young people in care who have disability or developmental delays.

What support do they provide?

They provide professional support to make sure children and young people in care with disability or developmental delay are identified and receive the support they require, including support via the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Regional Disability Consultants help DCP case workers navigate the NDIS, including applications to access the scheme, support at NDIS planning meetings, implementing the child or young person's NDIS plan, and transition from care processes. This support is vital to ensure each child or young person with disability or developmental delay reaches their full potential.

Where are they located?

Working as part of DCP's broader Disability and Development Program, the Regional Disability Consultants are located across DCP metropolitan offices and also provide support to case workers in regional and remote areas.

How do I find out more?

If you have any queries or concerns that the child in your care may have a developmental delay or disability, or about NDIS access, chat to the child's DCP case worker.

Reconciliation Action Plan

We are committed to continuing to work with carers to build a system that supports real change for Aboriginal children and ensures we all recognise our role in Reconciliation.

As part of this, we've launched our first ever **Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan**. We encourage you to take a look!



Download your copy
childprotection.sa.gov.au/reconciliation-action-plan

Dreaming in stitches: The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in action

Quilts crafted by the Orange Tree Quilters are weaving Dreaming stories into the bedtime routines of Aboriginal children in care to support connection to culture.

Created by Orange Tree Quilters using Aboriginal prints, the special gifts were presented to Centacare Foster Care in the lead up to NAIDOC Week.

"Each quilt tells a story," Centacare Foster Care Manager Amalie Mannik said.

The giant storm unleashed by two Jangala men, who sang the rain in the Central Desert, is among a collection of Dreaming stories stitched together in quilts for Aboriginal children in care.

"We collated these [stories] into a bedtime booklet to gift to the children so they can get to know the beliefs and mythology represented in the fabrics of their quilt."

"If the children are reunified with family, the quilts go with them, so they become an important reminder of Country, culture, and ancestry."



A City of West Torrens grant funded the purchase of the fabric for the quilts, designed by Warlukurlangu artists.

"This is the second year Orange Tree Quilters have collaborated with us and we are so grateful for their generosity and skill in creating such beautiful keepsakes for the children in our program," Amalie said.

Thank you to Centacare for providing the content of this article and image.

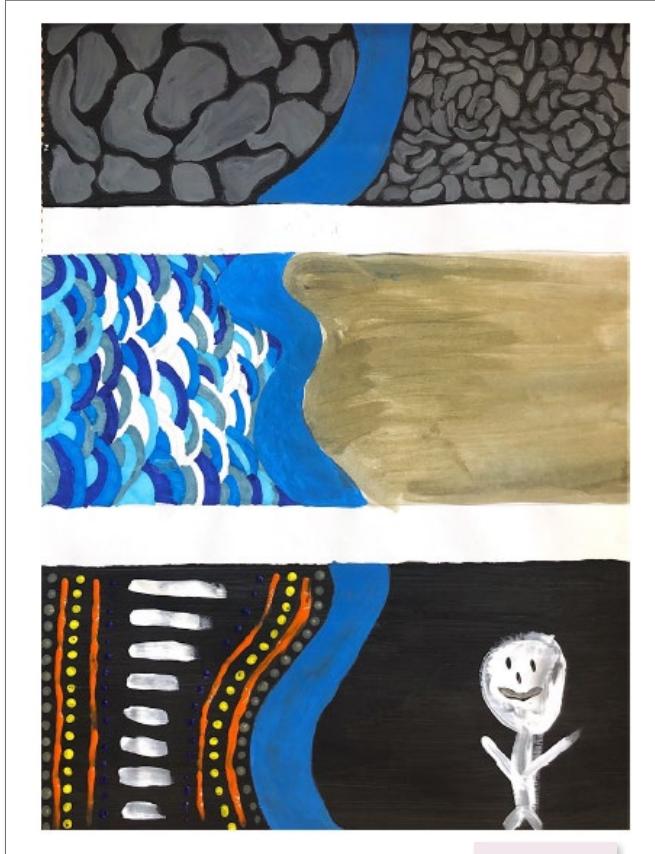
Aboriginal Children's Day colouring in competition winners

We're thrilled to share the winners of DCP and Reconciliation SA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day artwork competition.

Artwork completed by Ajic and Amity are below – and you can see all the winning entries on our Facebook page.



Ajic



Amity

New online training program

The Department values the tireless work of foster and kinship carers in transforming the lives of vulnerable children and young people and giving them a safe place to call home. You are crucial members of the child or young person's care team.

In acknowledgement of the importance of your role and to provide you with further support, DCP has worked in partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) to develop a learning package that will support you to develop your knowledge and skills in providing trauma responsive care. The course will be hosted online by ACF and you can complete it at your own pace.

ACF will also be working in partnership with South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to develop packages that are culturally responsive for carers of Aboriginal children and young people.

Each package will be tailored to the specific needs of foster and kinship carers. You will receive support from your support worker and/or DCP case worker to participate in this learning and development opportunity, including how to put this learning into practice in your day to day caring role.

This course will be available in the coming weeks and details of how to access it will be available via the DCP carer platform, DCP Facebook site, your carer support worker and DCP case workers.

Department for Education's Children in Care Service

The Children in Care service was established within the Department for Education (Education) two years ago to work alongside staff within Education and DCP to improve education outcomes for children and young people in care.

The team of dedicated social workers, with knowledge of both the education and child protection systems, support staff working with children in care to navigate a range of issues including attendance, behaviour, support and enrolment.

The team also supports preschools and schools to think creatively about trauma informed strategies to improve the connection and engagement of children and young people in care in their education.

For more information on the services and supports available, please speak to the child or young person's caseworker.



Child protection legislation

We want to hear from you

A review of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* is underway.

We encourage you to have your say about how we can improve the legislative framework through which the child protection system operates.

Have your say by:



reading the discussion paper online



taking the survey at
yoursay.sa.gov.au/cypsactreview



sending an email submission to:
DCPCYPSActReview@sa.gov.au



posting to: CYPS Act Review,
Department for Child Protection,
GPO Box 1072, Adelaide SA 5001



registering online to attend
a consultation event.

Visit **yoursay.sa.gov.au/cypsactreview**
to find out more.

Building the South Australian
child protection system for the future



Government of South Australia
Department for Child Protection



In the news

Carers from throughout the state were featured in local media during Foster and Kinship Carer Week. Here is a sample of these stories.

Plains Producer

Week puts spotlight on local carers

Mid North couple Wylie and Julie were featured in *The Plains Producer*, 17 September 2022

THE Recorder

Port Pirie carers recognised during Foster and Kinship Carer Week

Maxine and Stephen were featured in *The Recorder*, 13 September 2022.

Yorke Peninsula Country Times

Carers celebrated for their vital roles

Yorke Peninsula couple Les and Margaret spoke of the challenges and rewards of being kinship carers in the *Country Times*, 13 September 2022.



Noticeboard

Electronic communications reminder

Thank you to carers who have transitioned to electronic communications and are receiving their pay slips, and now *Caring Together* electronically.

If you haven't yet made the switch to paperless communications, you can do so by completing our online form, or chatting to your caseworker.



To change your preferences online, visit: bit.ly/carerpreferences

Changes to the way police respond to missing children reports

Carers who report a child or young person in their care missing may notice changes to the way police respond from November 2022.

As part of recent legislative changes, Police Security Officers, instead of SA Police Officers, will now respond.

Police Security Officers were previously called Protective Security Officers and were responsible for the security of State Government buildings.

They have taken on new duties in some areas of operational frontline policing to help support SA Police Officers.

While staff and carers will see officers responding wearing a different uniform, the same duties will be carried out.

Police Security Officers will help locate missing and at-risk children and young people, provide care and help them return to the department, their placement or care home.

They will also receive training in the welfare, care, safety, security and legislation related to children and young people in care.

COVID UPDATE

Updates about COVID-19 are regularly published on the carer platform childprotection.sa.gov.au/carers