



20 June 2023

The Hon. Lizzie Blandthorn
Minister for Child Protection and Family Services
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MELBOURNE VIC 3000
By email: lizzie.blandthorn@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon Tim Pallas MP.
Treasurer
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EAST MELBOURNE Vic 3002
By email: tim.pallas@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Ministers

RE CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE CARE ALLOWANCE

I am writing to let you know about the launch of the Foster Care Association of Victoria's (FCAV) and Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCAF) *Campaign to Increase the Care Allowance* (the Campaign) on Friday 9 June 2023. The Campaign was launched following the disappointment of the Government to increase the real value of the Care Allowance in the 2023/24 Budget, which has lost real value because of substantial increases in the cost of living.

Foster and Permanent carers are accredited volunteers who provide temporary, short-term, long-term and permanent care to children and young people who are unable to live with their families. All carers receive a Care Allowance which is meant to cover everyday expenses of raising a child.

Victoria has the lowest Care Allowance of any State in Australia and consequently, many volunteer carers are forced to use their own money to pay for day-to-day care expenses¹, which they should never be asked to do because of inadequate funding. Approximately 60% of carers report having to use their own finances to pay for the costs of care, and because over 80% of carers are female, this has a particularly high impact on women.²

Interstate comparisons demonstrate the problem. A Victorian carer of a child up to 7 years of age only receives \$213.50 per week to cover general household, education and health expenses.³ It is impossible to raise a child on \$213 per week. A NSW carer of a 6 year old child receives \$304.50 per week.⁴ That's \$91 more per week than a Victorian carer receives.

¹ Not including South Australia which has a Care Allowance payment structure that makes inter-state comparisons impossible.

² <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/strong-carers-stronger-children>

³ Level one Care Allowance rate

⁴ Standard care rate





Permanent
Care and
Adoptive
Families



The low Care Allowance is causing poor carer morale and is impacting recruitment and retention of carers. Recently published data from the FCAV 2023 [Carer Snapshot](#) and the recent [AIHW Child Protection Report](#), supports this trend.

The [Foster Care Association of Victoria](#), and [Permanent Care and Adoptive Families](#) Campaign includes an online petition with direct submissions being made here: bit.ly/43lfBbJ

We encourage you to review the over 1000 submissions provided in the attached document, and shared on FCAV's, PCAF's and some of our associate Agency's facebook, twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages, which provide an invaluable insight into the lived experience of providing foster care and permanent care to our state's most vulnerable children and young people. The campaign will run until the end of December 2023.

If you have any questions about the Campaign, please contact s.hauge@fcav.org.au or phone 0437 122 068.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Hauge
Chief Executive Officer
Foster Care Association of Victoria

Wendy Mason
Chief Executive Officer
Permanent Care and Adoptive Families

