



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6AM, WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY

A NEW GUARANTEE FOR KIDS IN CARE

A bold new concept aimed at improving the lives of over 10,000 children in out-of-home care in NSW is being released by a coalition of seven major community agencies this week.

Members of the *Every Kid* campaign have developed a “Guarantee” which ensures that every child and young person in care in NSW receives the supports and services that they need to thrive. *Every Kid* urges the NSW State Government, who hold the ultimate parental responsibility for children in care, to commit to the new Guarantee.

“This Guarantee acknowledges that if the State is to fulfil its role as a ‘good parent’ then it must provide to children and young people in care those things that a good parent would be expected to provide,” says *Every Kid* spokesperson, Andrew McCallum from the Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies.

The Guarantee covers four key areas: education, health, transition to independence, and the pursuit of opportunities and interests. It outlines the minimum service commitment to children, including: designated liaison officers within public schools to coordinate support for children in care; at least two GP and dentist visits per year for all young people in care; life skills education including budgeting or cooking for all 15-17 year olds; and a yearly allowance to help children and young people in care participate in at least one recreational activity.

“Studies show that many children in both kinship and foster care have poorer health, social and educational outcomes than children in the general population,” Andrew explains. “There is a disproportionate link between homelessness and people who have been in care, and unemployment rates for people who have been in care are alarmingly high,” he continued.

“Investing in our children now can minimise future economic and social expenses, both for the child or young person, and our community,” says Andrew.

Every Kid states that both internationally, as well as in other states of Australia, governments are beginning to invest in similar commitments to children in care.

“In the UK, the Blair Government is moving towards such a pledge,” says Andrew. “In South Australia, a whole of government approach has been adopted whereby children in care are priority listed by all relevant government departments. Children in NSW deserve no less!”

The *Every Kid* campaign was formed last year to prompt action on issues of poverty and exclusion faced by disadvantaged children and young people in NSW.

Interviews: Andrew McCallum, Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies.

Opportunities to speak to young people who have been in care are also available. To arrange interviews, or to receive a copy of the Guarantee, call Ingrid van Steenwyk on 0438 294 938.

Working together to make NSW a place for every child & young person to thrive www.everykid.net

