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Equity Trustees Foundation supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care

Equity Trustees has announced grants from the company's Foundation to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out of-home care which encompasses foster care, residential care and kinship care.

Across Australia, there is a disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the statutory protection system – 'in care'. Approximately 34% of all children in out-of-home care were Indigenous in 2013¹.

The Equity Trustees Foundation called for applications from charitable organisations that care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care across all states and territories. In particular, projects were encouraged that would support children and young people to maintain or rebuild connection to their 'family, community, culture and country'.

Close to \$68,000 was awarded to three organisations in three states:

- **Save the Children Australia** in WA will pilot a program that provides intensive mentoring to vulnerable Aboriginal young people who have been taken into care by the WA Department of Child Protection and Family Support.
- **The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)** will run four living skills camps for ATSI young people aged 16-21 years who are preparing to leave out-of-home care or who have recently exited care.
- **The Buttery** will take 13-18 year old young Aboriginal people who have complex behavioural problems and live in foster or out-of-home care on nine-day Wilderness Adventure Therapy Treks in northern NSW. Accompanied by youth workers and a psychologist, they will learn traditional bush skills from Aboriginal elders, be taught social interaction skills by therapists and receive intensive counselling.

"We believe these programs will go some way to assisting Indigenous children and young people who have experienced considerable disadvantage," said Tabitha Lovett, Equity Trustees General Manager, Philanthropy.

Frank Hytten, CEO Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) welcomed Equity Trustees' significant contribution to supporting Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care. "It's critically important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care remain connected with their family, community and cultural identity, both while in care and for life outcomes beyond," he said.

"At present, far too many Indigenous children in care lose that connection, at great economic, human and social cost. Equity Trustees' contribution will help redress this serious issue and I look forward to its ongoing support for this work."

Equity Trustees Media Release



“It remains of great concern that today there are over 14,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. This represents 34 per cent of all children in care despite comprising only 4.4 per cent of the national child population.”

“There is much to be done to close the gap between the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. This funding will help to support some of Australia’s youngest and most vulnerable.”

The Equity Trustees Foundation is a public ancillary fund (PuAF). Individual funds, called charitable accounts or sub-funds, can be set up under the umbrella of a PuAF.

“Although there is a perception that charitable trusts are just for the wealthy, this isn’t the case. A sub-fund with Equity Trustees can be set up with as little as \$20,000,” Tabitha Lovett said.

“Donations to sub-funds attract the same tax decision and considerations as making a donation directly to a charity”.

“They are an attractive option as the income generated from the charitable account or sub-fund is distributed year after year to charitable organisations.”

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¹ AIHW 2013. *Child Protection Australia 2012-13*. Child welfare series no. 58. Cat. no. CWS 49. Canberra: AIHW.

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