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Equity Trustees backs kids looking for a place to call home

Equity Trustees has awarded its first grant under its new \$10m *Empowering change* philanthropy granting program to the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare for a project to bring together information and stakeholders to plan better ways to support young people in state care, with a particular focus on supporting them to make the transition to adulthood.

The project supports recent calls from Anglicare Victoria to raise the age that young adults in out of home care remain supported, and responsibility of the state, from 18 to 21 years. Anglicare Victoria commissioned the report [Raising our children: Guiding young Victorians in care to adulthood](#) which showed there were clear social and economic benefits in ensuring young people remain supported in out of home care until age 21, and has launched [The Home Stretch](#) initiative to advocate for change.

“It is difficult to imagine what it might be like to be a child or young person without the anchor and safety of family. Those who grow to adulthood in out of home care are at an extraordinary disadvantage when they must exit the system and fend for themselves as adults,” said Mick O’Brien, Equity Trustees Managing Director.

Mr O’Brien said from his personal experience volunteering in this area in Victoria, which gave him the opportunity to see the problems first hand, it was heartening to see Anglicare addressing the issue.

“As an organisation able to channel the combined resources of around 450 charitable trusts, philanthropic families and individuals, we recognise that if we are to do better as a community in addressing these issues, we must collaborate. I congratulate the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare on this grant – our first under the ‘Place to call home’ section of this stream,” he said.

The grant of \$60,000 is funded under the Children and Young People granting stream of *Empowering change* which has an allocation of \$1.8m out of the total pool of \$10m annually.*

The project will be overseen by a committee, which will include Victorian Government policy advisers, key researchers and leaders from community organisations which support young people at risk.

Equity Trustees General Manager of Philanthropy, Tabitha Lovett said: “This is a targeted strategy to work with a leading peak organisation with expertise, experience and connections in the field. We hope this financial contribution will help develop the blueprint for the state care system to better prepare and support young people in the government’s care as they transition to adulthood.”

“Most people reflecting on their own maturity and preparedness at age 18 to live independently without family networks and financial support would appreciate the vulnerability of this group and the need for a systemic response to ensure they don’t fall through the cracks,” Ms Lovett added.

The project the Centre has been funded to complete will include the development of a white paper on how philanthropy can better support the out of home care sector, to be developed in consultation with the sector and Government.

“In Victoria, more than 8000 children and young people are in out of home care – usually because of very difficult and complex issues. Each year about 800 of those kids turn 18 and their care ends,” said Deb Tsorbaris, CEO of the Centre.

“They then have to make the transition to adulthood with little support, including finding accommodation and employment, and for some, continuing with their education,” she added.

“Children in the care of the state have experienced significant trauma in their young lives and as a community we need to ensure they have ongoing support so they get a decent start to adulthood. When you consider that more than half of 18 – 24 year olds in Australia still have the safety net of living at home, it’s crucial that we spend more time thinking about, planning and implementing better supports for young people in care so they can successfully transition to independent living,” Ms Tsorbaris said.

[Click here](#) for more information about Equity Trustees Philanthropy granting program, and [here](#) for more about the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.

** Equity Trustees has restructured its granting program to direct more than \$10m of annual discretionary charitable giving into five key areas: Children and Young People, Medical Research and Health, Ageing and Aged Care, Animals and Environment, and Partnerships Program. Discretionary distributions are possible where Equity Trustees has been appointed as the sole trustee of a charitable trust and given discretion to choose the charities and causes to receive funding. This is distinct from the other charitable trusts Equity Trustees manages which were established with specific instructions regarding how the income is to be granted or are managed in collaboration with co-trustees. An additional \$60m of charitable distributions are made each year from those trusts that have specific directions and co-trustees.*

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