

Media release
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Providing a home for vulnerable young people

For Victoria's most challenging child protection cases, residential care is provided for over 600 children and young people who have experienced significant trauma and abuse.

Tomorrow (27 May), the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare will host **Resi Rocks** at the MCG, an event for the residential care workers across Victoria who take care of these vulnerable children.

The Centre's chief executive officer Lynette Buoy said the job of a residential care worker was not an easy one, each work day was filled with emotionally charged interactions with the young people who live in each unit.

"Most people work in an environment where they can log off or down tools at the end of a day's work," Dr Buoy said.

"These people are exposed to a raft of complex and often distressing issues on a daily basis.

"How do residential care workers down tools and go home when they have spent their working day hearing stories of abuse and neglect, or having faced incidents of aggression and violence from the young people in their care? It's a challenging and emotional landscape to work in."

"We need to help these workers, care teams and organisations, to support and care for each other through the stress they are facing on the job.

"We know that 36 per cent of all WorkCover claims in this sector are stress claims, which is concerning when we compare that figure to the national nine per cent average for stress claims.

"For this reason, we have themed this year's Resi Rocks around self care, helping residential care workers to look after their own mental wellbeing and to look out for their colleagues wellbeing as well."

Dr Buoy said the importance of the job residential care workers did for the community was often overlooked, undervalued and under-resourced. Many workers left the job because of the exposure to aggression and stress at work.



She believes Victoria can't afford to continue undervaluing this workforce, and said there will always be children and young people whose families will cause them emotional damage.

"Sadly, there are some families in Victoria who have so many problems that they simply can't look after their children, and where repeated exposure to violence, anger, drug and alcohol abuse and sexual abuse has left some very affected young people in our society.

"For this reason we need to make an investment in the emotional wellbeing of these workers, and celebrate the contribution they make".

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