

MEDIA RELEASE

VICTORIA WORKING TO FIX ‘BROKEN HOMES’

15 November 2016

Last night’s Four Corners episode showed a distressing picture of how children are being treated in a number of residential care facilities.

In contrast to this disturbing backdrop, Victoria is leading the way in transferring young people out of residential care. The Victorian government’s model, in partnership with providers, sets the standard for other states to follow – combined with a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention, so struggling families receive support before they reach crisis point.

Victoria’s residential care numbers are below the national average and Victoria’s reliance on residential care is decreasing.

The Andrews government model includes:

- A commitment to reducing residential care
- New models of care that are better alternatives to grouping young people together
- Improving existing residential care services through tough regulation and oversight - including unannounced on-the-spot audits and visits, and a high level of accountability and transparency

This model has seen more than 260 young people in residential care transfer into more appropriate fostering, kinship or their own family care arrangements.

“It is always preferable to see vulnerable children who can’t stay with their own families placed in a family setting as opposed to residential care”, CEO Deb Tsorbaris said today. “Where a family setting isn’t possible or in the best interests of child, there must be a coordinated government response to support the needs of the child.”

“As we saw last night, there is also a desperate need for trained staff employed in residential care and coordinated government regulation of residential care providers. This is absolutely crucial if we are to better protect vulnerable kids in our community.”

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The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare is the peak body established to improve the lives of vulnerable children young people and their families. The Centre works with its members to strengthen the quality and capacity of services across early childhood, child and family support and out of home care. It does this through workforce development and learning, policy development and research for children and families.