



The Hon. Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 17 February 2012

NEW TEENAGE EDUCATION PAYMENT – HELPING CARERS TO SUPPORT TEENAGERS

Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward today announced another measure to improve outcomes for teenagers in out-of-home care with a new \$6,000 per annum payment to foster, relative and kinship carers to support their 16 and 17 year olds in education and training.

Ms Goward said we need to do better for teenagers in out-of-home care and in particular helping young people stay in education.

“The NSW Government is working on a package of reforms to improve vulnerable teenagers’ futures,” Ms Goward said.

“We are implementing innovative and fresh approaches to improve services:

- Through our \$10m transfer of earlier intervention services to non-government organisations (NGOs) to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people aged 9 to 15 years.
- By developing Social Benefit Bonds that will reduce the number of children entering out-of-home care.
- Reforming out-of-home care contracts together with NGOs to encourage better outcomes.
- Setting up specialist adolescent teams around NSW to better help vulnerable teenagers.

“Education and training are key pathways for every young person to succeed in life. For teenagers in out-of-home care, education and training is even more crucial to prevent disadvantage.

“That is why today the NSW Government is announcing a new Teenage Education Payment to boost participation in education and training for teenagers aged 16 and 17 in out-of-home care.

“The NSW Government knows that education and training are critical pathways into employment and out of homelessness,” Ms Goward said.

Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli said increasing attendance so that more students complete high school or training is a key target of the NSW Government’s *NSW 2021 Plan*.

“This payment will help some of our most vulnerable teenagers to stay in school or training and my department is assisting with the implementation of this reform,” Mr Piccoli said.

Ms Goward said the Ombudsman has reported that engagement in the school system is essential to a young person’s overall development and wellbeing.

“If we can help carers to keep 16 and 17 year olds at school or TAFE, we can better secure these teenagers’ future.”

The initiative will pay an annual payment of \$6,000 for carers of 16 and 17 year olds in out-of-home care who are engaged in education and training.

The payments, which will commence from 1 July, will be paid at the beginning of each school term or TAFE semester to help meet carer families’ costs of education and training.

The receipt of Youth Allowance by 16 and 17 year olds will not affect the ability of carers to apply for or receive the Teenage Education Payment. Carer families will be able to receive both forms of support.

Carer families will need to demonstrate receipt of Family Tax Benefit A when their child is 15 years old. This Commonwealth benefit demonstrates that the young person is in full time education or training.

The Department of Family and Community Services will finalise arrangements in coming months, consulting with carers and young people in out-of-home care as well as non-government organisations and relevant agencies.

Media Contact: Simon Fontana 0467 738 139