

The Costs of Caring: A Study of Appropriate Foster Care Payments for Stable and Adequate Out of Home Care in Australia



All carers are entitled to be paid, at least, an amount sufficient to cover the day-to-day direct costs of fostering, rather than a contribution or part payment towards costs. This is because no one who volunteers their time, energy and effort to care for children and who incurs a number of indirect costs (both financial and non-financial), which are rarely ever referred to let alone addressed, should be expected to pay children's basic financial costs. It would be difficult to conceive of any other voluntary position in society which involves the responsibility and care for children seven days a week, 24 hours a day in a carer's home with no relief or respite.

This report is the first national study to compare foster care reimbursement with the "normal" costs of caring for children. It was undertaken by Marilyn McHugh from the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales and provides a landmark study of costs along with key recommendations for improvements in the payments system.

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The Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia,
The Australian Foster Care Association and
The Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies
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