

News Release

Young people in Out-of-Home Care have had their voices heard. The age of leaving care now extended to 21

6 November: Sydney, Australia The Advocate for Children and Young People, Ms Zoë Robinson welcomes today's announcement by the NSW Premier to raise the age of young people leaving out-of-home care to 21 as part of the *Your Choice Your Future* package.

"Today's announcement to raise the age of leaving out-of-home care from 18 to 21 is a positive step in the right direction to support better outcomes for vulnerable young people in NSW," Ms Robinson said.

In August Ms Robinson launched the *Voices of Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care* report, detailing in-depth interviews with 99 children and young people with lived experiences of the care system. A key recommendation of this report was to, *extend the age of leaving out-of-home care to at least 21 years.*

"Young people themselves have asked for the age of leaving care to be extended. In August I called for government to listen to children and young people in care and take action and today we see this action come to fruition. I applaud the government for listening to children and young people and responding to their voices," Ms Robinson said.

A young person, who participated in the report consultations, when thinking about leaving care at 18 said, *"I feel as though the day I turn 18 I'm being pushed off a cliff because there's all this support and I feel so supported as long as the money's there, but once it's all gone, no one wants to help. So yeah, that's painful because like I'm still a kid, I'm still a teenager."*

Another young person said, *"It shouldn't be a program. It should be every single person. If you are put into care, you should have this support until you are 21."*

"This commitment from government under the *Your Choice Your Future* program will increase stability for those in care and allow them to continue their education and personal growth as they transition to adulthood," Ms Robinson said.

The NSW Government, under the *Your Choice Your Future* package have committed to:

- An extension of the Care Allowance to support more young people to remain with their carers until 21
- An expansion of the Aftercare Allowance – a fortnightly payment for any young person who does not remain in their carer's home and needs assistance until the age of 21
- An expansion of the Specialist Aftercare Program – increasing the availability and location of targeted supports for young people when they leave care.
- Funding for additional caseworkers to further support young people plan for the transition to leaving care.

ENDS

For more information or to arrange an interview with the Advocate for Children and Young People please contact: Una O'Neill on 0491 224 049.

Read the *Voices of Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care Report* at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/out-of-home-care>