



## Out of home care reform

The government will provide \$134.7 million in new funding over four years to commence out-of-home care reform, as part of a 5 year strategy to deliver better outcomes for children in care. This funding will be used to strengthen families so children can stay with their families. At the same time we will also be increasing the capacity of out-of-home care with a range of extra placements, from home based care to specialist care placements. This includes \$10 million to upgrade residential care units.

The priority actions commencing in 2009–10 with the assistance of this funding include:

- Piloting a new program of family mentors to visit struggling parents at home and provide intensive parenting advice to prevent the need for their children to be removed or to help resettle them with their families quickly if the children need to be removed in response to an emergency.
- Recruiting 100 specialised practitioners over the next four years to provide specialist care in their homes for children with the most challenging behaviours. The carers will receive additional educational, psychological, emotional, physical and financial support to undertake this new form of care. The initial target group will be children under 12 who are currently in residential care.
- Securing more foster and kinship care placements for children removed from their families.
- Redesigning our care system to deliver greater placement choice and enable children and young people to be better matched to placements. The Government will also consult with the sector about a proposal to introduce adolescent support packages for highly complex teenage clients.
- Improving the funding to community service organisations providing general residential care to recognise the increased cost of caring for children with complex needs.
- Introducing a new volunteer mentoring program to provide better access to community activities and support for children in residential care.
- Better meeting the needs of Aboriginal children in care with increased support by training community sector organisations to improve their cultural competency.
- Redesigning residential care facilities to create new-generation accommodation with more welcoming and homely environments.