

## Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

### INQUIRY INTO OUT OF HOME CARE

Questions taken on notice  
Public Hearing, 16 February 2015, Perth

Ms Patricia Murray, CEO, Wanslea Family Services and Chair, Child and Family Welfare  
Association of Australia

#### ***Question: 1***

***Hansard page reference: 21***

***Hansard extract:***

**Senator REYNOLDS:** It is not unique to this circumstance, but I guess that was the paradigm shift I was referring to. Yes, you can listen to the voice of the child. But it is not just the voice of the child, but the interests of the individual child and how to work together to meet them. I would be interested, even on notice, to hear your thoughts on—as Ms Murray said—some practical, implementable solutions, which are not just nice-sounding words on a piece of paper, that can address some of these barriers. I would be happy for you to take this on notice. If, after this, you have some practical suggestions, that would be very good. Thank you.

#### ***Question: 2***

***Hansard page reference: 24***

***Hansard extract:***

**Senator MOORE:** So that is the kind of thing that needs to be looked at in beefing up the framework. Also, the one thing that you have not mentioned against all those programs in your submission is the funding model. It is my understanding that in some cases, because of the organisation and how long you have been there, that you have built up your own money to fund it. But for some of those programs, can you have a look at what you have told us in your submission and let us know the particular funding base for the services and the costs of those?

**Ms Murray:** Sure.

**Senator MOORE:** That would be very useful.

**Ms Murray:** I can do that. I am not sure if you are aware of it, but in WA a funding project was done some years ago that provided a unit funding for foster care. That funding model is continuing. It has CPI increases. We get state indexation. So most of what we are doing we have been able to fund with that, plus some additional resources ourselves. I can detail that for you.

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#### **Question 1:**

*Hansard page reference: 21*

*Hansard extract:*

Senator **REYNOLDS**

#### **Question 1:**

Tricia Murray response:

My reading of the Hansard transcript indicates that this question is directed to Basil Hanna, CEO Parkerville Children and Youth Care. I understand he has responded.

#### **Question 2:**

*Hansard page reference: 24*

*Hansard extract:*

Senator **MOORE**

#### **Question 2:**

Tricia Murray response:

Funding for Out of Home Care in Western Australia is based on a unit cost report commissioned by the then Department of Child Protection in 2008. BDO Kendall was contracted to consult with the non-government sector service providers and departmental staff and produced a model on which funding has been based since 2009. WA also has an agreed indexation formula that is applied to all service agreements on an annual basis that ensures that funding value remains commensurate with rising costs, particularly salaries. Wanslea provides two additional programs over and above its foster care program that are designed to value add to the supports offered to carers and children:

- **Foster Friends**

##### **Our Model**

Wanslea Foster Care recruits and supports foster carers who provide therapeutic, safe and thriving homes for children who are unable to live with their parents. We aim to provide these families with a community of support to equip them to succeed. Foster Friends are volunteers who provide back up support to foster families by: preparing meals, running errands, mentoring, tutoring, babysitting, donating clothes, furniture, toys, books, helping with transport, preparing first night bags for children entering foster care, and helping with recreational and holiday activities.

Providing this kind of support is critical if we want to encourage caring families to become and remain foster families. The Foster Friends program ensures that foster families have the help they need, when they need it, within their community.

**How it works**

Our vision is that each Foster Friend network will provide a range of supports and services to foster families and the children they care for. We aim to surround foster families by a team of volunteers in their community who are in turn supported by their organisation in partnership with Wanslea Foster Care.

The Foster Friends project has been costed at \$31,500pa for overall management.

- **VIKs – Very Important Kids**

Very Important Kids are the children of our foster carers. Each school holiday social events are held for this group that include an opportunity to discuss what fostering is like for them.

In 2013 Wanslea initiated a project, Fostering Together with Edith Cowan University and funded by Lotterywest to produce resources for families considering fostering to introduce the concept to their children. Two books with DVDs for children aged 4-6 years and 6-9 years and a book including a DVD explaining fostering more generally were produced.

These were distributed free of charge to all foster carers in WA. We are now selling them to enable a reprint and wider distribution.

The VIKs program is supported by Family Support Workers and costs \$10,000 pa.

Many of the additional supports for the project are provided by donations from various groups within the community.