

Media Release – 19 August 2026

Independent government review finds shortfall of up to \$402 per week in South Australian foster and kinship carer support

Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers South Australia (CFKC) welcomes the release of the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) [Review of payments for foster, kinship and permanent carers](#), commissioned by federal and state governments as part of the Safe and Supported First Action Plan 2023–2026.

The review outlines key challenges for foster, kinship, permanent and informal carers across Australia, including:

- Payments are not keeping pace with the real cost of care
- Kinship carers can experience different levels of financial support, including lower payments than foster carers in some circumstances.
- Access to support can be inconsistent and may depend on how effectively carers are able to advocate for their needs.
- Financial pressure can affect carer capacity and retention.
- Investing in carers is an effective and more sustainable alternative to greater reliance on residential care.

The report highlights that the shortfall in South Australian carer payments is between \$142 and \$402 per week, depending on household circumstances.

Among the report's 38 recommendations, AIFS recommended that all states and territories to increase the fortnightly care allowance as soon as possible.

This report follows a recent CFKC survey which found that cost of living pressures are affecting carer households

Family based carers regularly support children in their care to attend appointments including counselling, therapeutic supports and occupational therapy – critical supports which aid across their entire lives. This is becoming increasingly challenging for carers, particularly those living in regional areas.

Increased living costs are also placing considerable pressure on carer households, including their ability to pay bills, such as winter heating costs, and maintain the quality of food they can provide.

The next step is to work constructively with government toward a system that better supports family-based carers and the children in their care.

Quotes attributable to Russell Hooper, Chief Executive Officer, Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers South Australia

"Foster and kinship carers open their homes because of their commitment to vulnerable children and young people. Unfortunately, that commitment comes with real costs. We need to recognise the cost of caring for these families, and for the children and young people in their care."

“If we do not support foster and kinship carers to care for children and young people, we risk greater placement instability and further challenges to the wellbeing of some of South Australia’s most vulnerable children and young people.”

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Notes:

- You can find the review here: <https://www.dss.gov.au/child-protection/resource/review-payments-foster-kinship-and-permanent-carers>
- Reference to the level of shortfall is at Table 16 of the report.
- CFKC and AIFS are in no way affiliated, and this media release should not be taken as communication from AIFS.
- This report, commissioned under the Safe and Supported First Action Plan 2023–2026, reviews the adequacy, consistency and accessibility of payments and financial supports for foster, kinship and permanent carers across Australia.
- More information on CFKC’s recent cost of living survey is available online: <https://cfc-sa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Member-survey-Cost-of-Living-May-2026.pdf>

About Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers South Australia

Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA (CFKC) is the independent, peak representative body for foster and kinship carers across South Australia.

We provide direct advocacy when carers experience an issue or conflict with a member of their child or young person’s care team.

Drawing on these experiences, as well as research and consultation, we undertake systemic advocacy to improve outcomes for carers and the children in their care. A well-supported carer means a well-supported young person.