

# EUSARF 2021: The Perspective of the Child

Professional development to enhance education outcomes for Australasian children and young people in out-of-home care

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- 1. Introduction:** Dr. Iain Matheson
- 2. Context:** Dr. Patricia McNamara
- 3. Raising Expectations:** Ms. Joanna Humphries

# Context

## What carers and professionals need to know.....

# Stepping-stones to lifelong education outcomes

*The traditional 3Rs of literacy and numeracy ('reading, riting and rithmatic') are still acknowledged as core stepping-stones in formal learning; life and social skills, culture, physicality, self-knowledge, even a 'virtuous' moral code, and more, also need to be developing appropriately by the point of high school transition.*

# Positive reflections on primary school.....

*'School is a place where can **learn different things** that you maybe haven't learned before...Also a place where you can **understand yourself** more.*

*'being in Sunny Hill for seven years now, **we know everyone**. It just feels like I don't really want to leave everyone. . . It feels that **everybody is really kind and they care**.*

*Miss Campbell, she had a lot of faith in me. . . and she like pushed me to what I could do- 'cause I also used to think I couldn't do that well, and she was like '**come on, keep going, you can do it**'. She helped me see I shouldn't keep having low confidence 'cos that's what I had - a lot.*

*(Achieving later on in life) – 'learning – for like a future job' or 'to get a good degree, then some really good jobs when we get older'.*

# Learning builds incrementally on strong foundations: from early years to tertiary education

Pre-school

Primary school

High school

Technical training/apprenticeships

University education

# Reflecting on learning, 'becoming' and belonging

# What do children and young people bring to education during care placements?

- **Trauma** arising from abuse and neglect – family/systemic/other
- Impacts of trauma on the **neurophysiology** of the developing brain –cognitive, social, emotional
- **Fragmented experience** of formal and informal learning – frequent placement changes
- Limited/no access to one-on-one **special education support**



# Common impacts evident by primary years

- **Dysregulation** getting in the way of **focus and learning**
- **Poor interim and long-term outcomes** in literacy and numeracy
- Weak mistrustful relationships and **little sense of belonging**
- **Low aspirations/ expectations regarding what can be achieved** – **by student, carer and professionals!**
- **Negative experience** of and associations with education – often leading to **disengagement**
- **Shaky foundations** on which to build successful achievement of later milestones

# TEACHaR

- TEACHaR support program for vulnerable students delivered by Anglicare Victoria, Australia – a program that manifests the **therapeutic impacts of 1:1 tutoring**; this can contribute to healing trauma, lifting aspirations and improving learning outcomes.
- Growth from **3 to 37 staff** over seven years.

# TEACHaR during the pandemic

- Increased **1:1 Online Teaching Sessions** using Webex.
- Educational **Learning Packs** for students that include IT equipment and desks if required.
- An educational resource **library** that includes specialist **website and podcast** links.
- Students access to free online courses and programs such as **Mathletics, Reading Eggs and Literacy Planet**.
- **Virtual Classrooms** that cover topics such as **art, music, science, literacy, story time and VCE support**.
- **An online support community for carers** schooling young people and children at home.

## Raising Expectations: increasing the number of care experienced young people going onto tertiary education

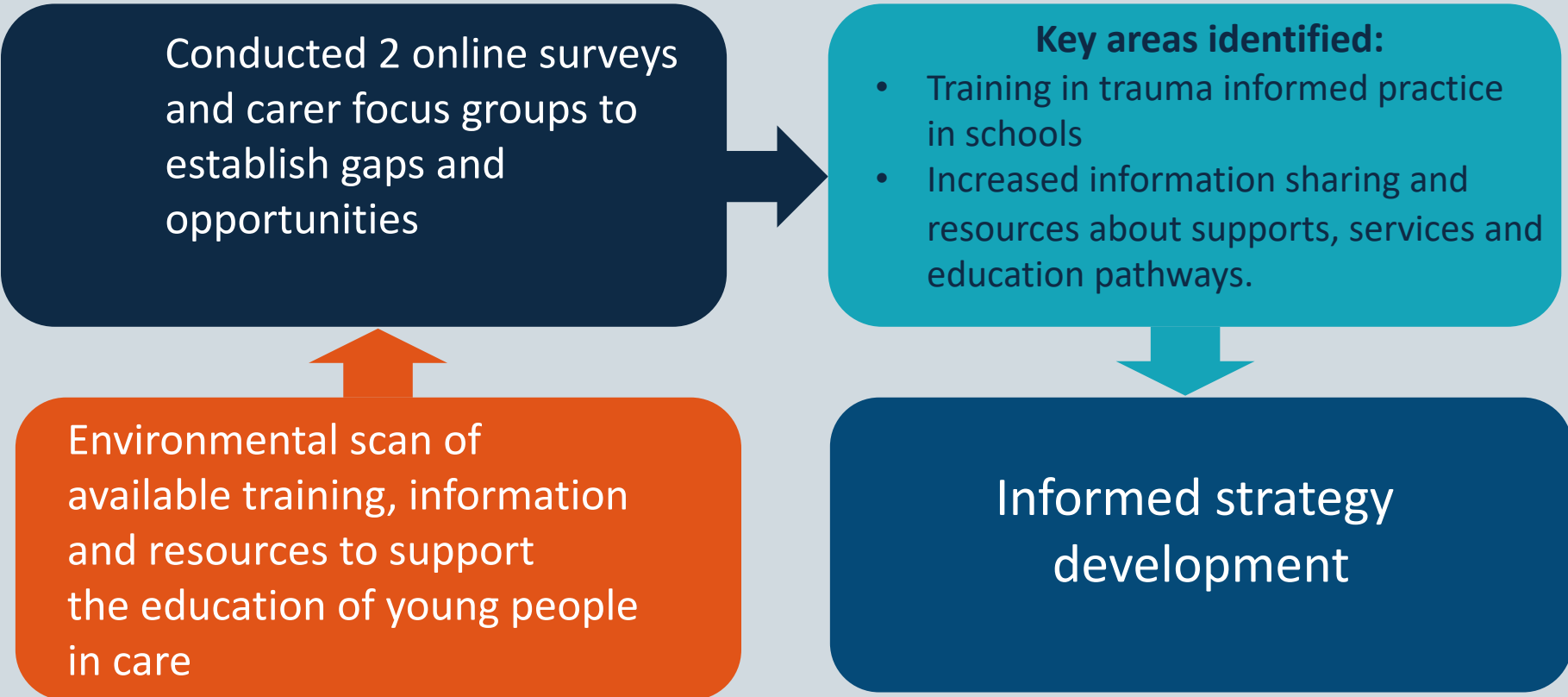
- **Raising Expectations** established late 2015. Funded for 3 years by philanthropy – the Sidney Myer Fund. Multi-year investment by the Victorian Department of Education and Training from 2019 to December 2022.
- Victorian cross-sectoral collaboration: the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (Victoria's peak body for Child and Family Services), La Trobe University and Federation University Australia. Swinburne University of Technology joined the collaboration in late 2019.

## Key objective: to improve the knowledge and skills of carers and professionals to better support young people in their education

Recognised that to be successful – the collaboration needed to:

- Reach, raise awareness and connect with as many carers and professionals who work with and care for care experienced young people
- Identify and establish training, resources and information needed to support carers and professionals
- Shift the culture from deficit to positive and achieving → lift educational aspiration and expectation

# What training, information and resources are needed?



## Taking a multi-pronged approach

- Developing and implementing a range of training, information and resource strategies using different delivery modes and approaches
- Targeting multiple sectors and workforce groups:
  - **Sectors:** community, education, higher education, aligned organisations and community and education based programs, key government departments – Department of Education and Training and Department of Families Fairness and Housing (formerly Health and Human Services)
  - **Workforce groups:** case managers/workers, youth workers, leaving care workers, educators, central, regional and frontline government staff, child protection workers, other community and education and aligned professionals
  - **Carer groups:** home-based care (foster and kinship), residential care and permanent care

## Training, resources and information activities

### Workshops/webinars and forums (examples)

Developed and delivered over 30 workshops to over 700 people – *Strategies to Support Learning of young people affected by trauma (2017/2018)*

- Participants: educators, school staff, residential care workers, case managers, youth workers, carers, other professionals
- Settings: primary schools and community service organisations across Victoria

**Education Forum for Carers (July 2017)** with over 70 carers with a *panel of care experienced students studying at university*

Workshop/webinars:

- (October 2020) with presentations by *care leaver students* to educators and professionals including school social workers, psychologists.
- (May 2021) including *interview with care experienced student* to careers practitioners, school staff, other professionals.
- (July 2021) taking a trauma informed approach to supporting care experienced students in vocational and higher education
- REACH for La Trobe outreach events at a regional campus for mainstream and non-mainstream students (2016 and 2018) and their supporters, including *panels of care experienced students talking about their journey to university*



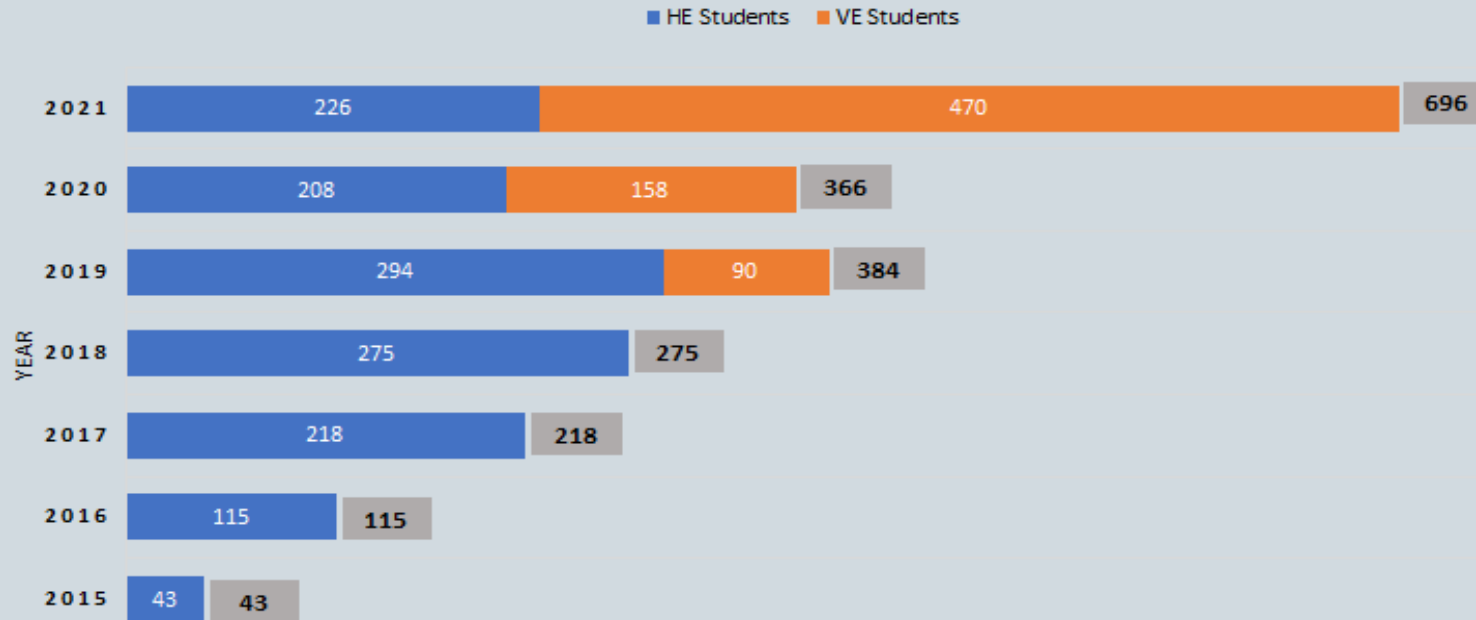
## Training, resources and information activities

### Presentations, resources and media (examples)

- Presenting to different workforce groups (careers practitioners, school staff, government, leaving care workers, case managers, home-based carers, residential care workers, child protection workers, staff with education related programs, higher education institutions, national and Victorian conferences)
- Online Education Guide for Carers of Children in OOHC. (June 2019) to support pre-school to post school ages.
- Online Education and Employment Guide: Life After School (under development)
- Posters, postcards and brochures sent to schools, carers, community organisations
- Flyers: scholarships, fee free tuition for vocational education for eligible young people, pathways to university
- Website, e-newsletter for professionals, peak carer bodies, carers, care leavers, videos, podcast (2020/2021)
- Social, print and digital media, radio interviews
- Increasing the visibility of care leaver students and their success in tertiary education through social, print and digital media, radio interviews, video interviews, feature stories on the [Raising Expectations website](#)

# Growth in student enrolments

## ENROLMENTS GROWTH



■ Higher Education  
■ Vocational Education

Notes:

1. 2015-2018 – data from Federation University and La Trobe University (undergraduates only)
2. 2019 onwards includes enrolments from Swinburne, La Trobe and Federation Universities (vocational and higher education enrolments/undergraduate).
3. 2021 data is to end June only.
4. The data is subject to care experienced people identifying as such.

CARE LEAVER STUDENTS

# Enhancing education outcomes through professional development



- Raising expectations of social workers and carers
- Raising expectations of educators
- Raising expectations of young people

- Pathways
- Information sources
- Application processes
- Pastoral support
- Financial support
- Contacts

- More effective support
- Purposeful, strengths-based, conversations
- Connection and collaboration
- Follow up and follow through

# Thank you

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