



The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Emergency Services

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Kerry Ferguson
President
Graduate Women Victoria
276 Park Street
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Dear Dr Ferguson

Thank you for your letter in relation to the educational outcomes for Victorian children and young people in out-of-home care. I share your concerns for this vulnerable cohort.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving outcomes for every student, in every classroom, in every community, through the creation of the Education State. We are committed to meeting the particular needs of students in care. This is why \$13.2 million over four years and an ongoing \$4.8 million annually, has been committed to fund LOOKOUT Education Support Centres (LOOKOUT Centres) state-wide. LOOKOUT Centres provide professional supports to schools and education providers, Child Protection Practitioners, case workers and carers in order to lift the educational outcomes of students in care and overcome the challenges they face in education and training.

The launch LOOKOUT Centre was established in early 2016 in the South Western Victoria Region and within eight months dramatically reduced the number of un-enrolled students living in care, increased collaboration among government agencies and community service organisations, and raised awareness about the unique educational needs of children and young people in out-of-home care. Across the region, 366 teachers have been trained to be the Designated Teacher within their school, which is a new responsibility associated with the implementation of LOOKOUT Centres. Designated Teachers are the first point of contact within the school and play a key role in advocating for and supporting students in out-of-home care to achieve their education goals.

As of the beginning of Term 1, 2017, LOOKOUT Centres are operating across the state. Our government understands that education changes lives for the better and we are making sure that students living in care have every opportunity and every resource to achieve their best possible future.

If you would like further information, please contact Nick Beckingsale, Director, Vulnerable Children Branch, Department of Education and Training, on 03 9097 1199 or by email: beckingsale.nick.j@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Merlino'.

7.3.17

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