

The Homestretch Campaign

Relationships Australia is committed to increasing the services and support available for children and young people, and improving their outcomes. This is why we are proud to announce that, along with over 70 other NGOs, social and charity organisations, we have joined Anglicare's Homestretch campaign, which has the goal of seeing the provision of out of home care and housing extended until the age of 21.

Out-of-home care (OOHC) refers to the care, support and housing that is provided by alternate caregivers to young people who cannot live with their own families.

Across Australia, formal state support and housing for young people in OOHC ceases at the age of 18 years, and sometimes stops as young as 16 years. Yet current trends in Australia reveal a new developmental stage called 'emerging adulthood', whereby increasing amounts of young people are remaining at home with the financial and emotional support of their parents, until well into their twenties.^[1] This inconsistency means that many of the thousands of children who leave state care are significantly underprepared to enter independent adulthood, and face poorer mental and physical health outcomes such as high rates of homelessness, incarceration, and unemployment.^[2]

Relationships Australia provides many services that support children at risk of, or living in, OOHC. These include family support, early intervention services for at-risk families, services to support young adults transitioning from OOHC and therapeutic support for children in OOHC.

Relationships Australia strongly supports a society that prioritises the health and wellbeing of its young people, especially those that are the most vulnerable. We see our commitment to the Homestretch campaign as significant to the role we have in protecting, supporting and providing services to children and young people so that they can have a better start in life, and enjoy happier, healthier and safer lives in the long term.

Use the social media hashtag #makeit21 with us to show your support.

^[1] Create Foundation 2009.

^[2] Monica Campo and Joanne Commerford, 'Supporting young people leaving out-of-home care', *Child Family Community Australia*, 2016.