

AUSTRALIAN FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

THE COSTS OF CARING – 2003

A COMPARISON OF WEEKLY STANDARD FOSTER CARE SUBSIDIES AS AT 1 JULY 2003 WITH RESEARCH RECOMMENDED SUBSIDY ADJUSTED FOR CPI

This document has been compiled to update data included in the Costs of Caring Report¹ (2002) relating to subsidies provided to foster carers in each Australian State and Territory.

The Costs of Caring report established a standard care base line figure for certain aged children and young people. This figure has become known as the Foster Care Estimate (FCE).

To enable more accurate assessment of current trends and policies, the FCE has been updated by Ms McHugh to reflect changes in the CPI between December 2000 and July 2003. These updated FCE figures are reflected in the tables appearing below. The Association thanks Ms McHugh for her ongoing support in providing these figures.

Table 1 presents an overview of the standard subsidy payments for all States and Territories compared to the estimated basic, everyday costs specific to fostering as determined by this study. In providing the standard subsidy, States and Territories generally expect this to cover basic living costs associated with housing, food, power and gas, transport to and from daily activities, basic recreation, standard ongoing school requirements and the bulk of ongoing clothing. Some States expect other items to be paid for out of the standard subsidy, for example the NSW standard subsidy is expected to cover health, education and also childcare.

Both current and recommended standard subsidy payments do not cover additional child related costs that are needed to fully provide for the child or young person. These include things such as medicines, disability aids, school functions and camps, tutoring, ongoing sporting and recreational activities, dental, medical and therapeutic work, etc. Currently, in some circumstances, States and Territories may make these additional payments when a cost is incurred. These are known as contingency payments. However, it should be noted that most of these are discretionary payments, and the report found payment to be both arbitrary and slow.

¹ McHugh, Marilyn (2002) *The Costs of Caring: A Study of Appropriate Foster Care Payments for Stable and Adequate Out of Home Care in Australia: A Report prepared for the Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia, the Australian Foster Care Association and the Association of Childrens' Welfare Agencies.* University of New South Wales. Social Policy Research Centre.

TABLE 1

Foster Care Estimates (FCE) compared to the Standard Subsidy Levels for all States by age of the child (\$ per week)

1. These figures are indicative only and must be read with regard to the impact of contingency payments.
2. Increased rates as at 1 July 2003 are in red with the recommended FCE rate increased for CPI similar to Commonwealth indexation process.

Age	TAS	WA	NT	SA	VIC	ACT	QLD	NSW	FCE
0-1	100	82	97	89	110	95	76	175	169
2	100	82	97	89	110	95	93	175	-
3	100	82	97	89	110	95	93	175	168
4	70	82	97	89	110	95	93	175	-
5	70	82	106	96	110	108	93	175	-
6	70	82	106	96	110	108	114	175	181
7	71	82	106	96	110	108	114	175	-
8	71	82	127	103	115	127	114	175	-
9	71	82	127	103	115	127	114	175	-
10	72	82	127	103	115	127	114	175	212
11	72	82	127	103	130	127	147	175	-
12	83	82	143	125	130	145	147	175	-
13	83	124	143	125	175	145	147	175	-
14	90	124	143	125	175	145	147	175	261/267 ¹
15	90	124	172	153	175	176	147	175	-
16	90	124	172	153	175	176	137	175	-
17	90	124	172	153	175	176	137	175	-

Notes:

All dollar amounts rounded.

The FCE is the Foster Care Estimate determined by McHugh, 2001

(1) The amount of \$261 applies to a boy aged 14. The amount of \$267 applies to a girl aged 14.

Source: For all States' subsidy amounts, Bray, 2001:34

TABLE 2
SUBSIDY LEVELS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2000

Age	TAS	WA	NT	SA	VIC	ACT	QLD	NSW	FCE
0-1	70	79	97	85	85	92	76	175	157
2	70	79	97	85	77	92	93	175	-
3	70	79	97	85	77	92	93	175	156
4	70	79	97	85	77	92	93	175	-
5	70	79	101	91	77	105	93	175	-
6	70	79	101	91	77	105	114	175	168
7	71	79	101	91	77	105	114	175	-
8	71	79	120	98	93	123	114	175	-
9	71	79	120	98	93	123	114	175	-
10	72	79	120	98	93	123	114	175	197
11	72	79	120	98	112	123	138	175	-
12	83	79	136	118	112	141	138	175	-
13	83	118	136	118	157	141	138	175	-
14	90	118	136	118	157	141	138	175	242/248 ¹
15	90	118	163	145	157	171	138	175	-
16	90	118	163	145	157	171	129	175	-
17	90	118	163	145	157	171	129	175	-

Notes:

All dollar amounts rounded.

(1) The amount of \$242 applies to a boy aged 14. The amount of \$248 applies to a girl aged 14.

Source: For all States' subsidy amounts, Bray, 2001:34

TABLE 3
TABLE SHOWING INCREASES OVER PERIOD 2000 TO 2003

Age	TAS	WA	NT	SA	VIC	ACT	QLD	NSW	FCE
0-1	30	3		4	25	3			12
2	30	3		4	33	3			-
3	30	3		4	33	3			12
4		3		4	33	3			-
5		3	5	5	33	3			-
6		3	5	5	33	3			13
7		3	5	5	33	3			-
8		3	7	5	22	4			-
9		3	7	5	22	4			-
10		3	7	5	22	4			15
11		3	7	5	18	4	9		-
12		3	7	7	18	4	9		-
13		6	7	7	18	4	9		-
14		6	7	7	18	4	9		19
15		6	9	9	18	5	9		-
16		6	9	9	18	5	8		-
17		6	9	9	18	5	8		-

Notes: All dollar amounts rounded.

No entry means there has been no increase in three year period