



**The Hon Jenny Macklin MP**

Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs  
Minister for Disability Reform



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## Media Release

### Liberals attacking foster and grandparent carers in NSW

**Date:**

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**Joint Media Release with:**

**Julie Collins MP**, Minister for Community Services  
Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development  
Minister for the Status of Women

The O'Farrell Government has shown the Liberals' true colours when it comes to dealing with families and vulnerable people.

The New South Wales Liberals have slashed \$213 a fortnight from the already stretched budgets of foster carers of teenagers aged 16 and over.

The Minister for Families, Jenny Macklin, and the Minister for Community Services, Julie Collins, today called on the NSW Government to reinstate these payments to foster carers of older teenagers.

This is an attack on carers, who not only open up their homes to young people in need, but give their time, energy and financial assistance to help them have a better life.

The Liberals cuts come at the same time as the Gillard Labor Government has boosted family payments by up to \$4,200 a year for teenagers aged 16 to 19 in school or training.

Only a Labor Government understands the pressures on families and carers who feel the pinch on their household budget every week.

We recognise that it doesn't get cheaper to raise children as they get older.

That's why we've ensured that eligible foster carers can receive the boost to the Family Tax Benefit, to make sure they've got room in their budget to give the teenagers they are caring for the best chance at a great future.

But the Liberals are putting this at risk. Foster care families will go backwards under the O'Farrell Government's slash and burn policy making.

This attack on foster carers follows the threat from NSW Minister for Community Services, Pru Goward, to grandparent and other kinship carers that they must apply for child support from the child's parents.

The Child Support Scheme is an Australian Government initiative to ensure children from separated families are supported by both their parents.

The NSW Liberals' policy to 'require' grandparent carers to apply for child support is misleading and is not consistent with the Australian Government's policy.

It is unnecessarily putting pressure on the sometimes strained relationships between grandparent carers and the child's parents.

Although the option is available for relative carers in NSW to apply for child support, the Australian Government does not require or compel carers to do so.

The Australian Government also does not support changes to the Child Support Scheme proposed by the NSW Liberals to open up child support arrangements to foster carers.

These are just more cost-cutting exercises from Pru Goward, who is feeling the heavy hand of Barry O'Farrell on her department's budget bottom line.

We do not support these 'policies'. We understand that it is not always in the child's best interests for grandparent carers or foster carers to apply for child support.

A Labor Government will always act in the best interests of children.