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## Leaving Care Plans for Foster Kids

**Leaving Care Plans Campaign brief**  
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The Minister has a legislated obligation as per the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) 1998 Act* to ensure that all eligible young foster care leavers have a leaving care plan.

Jan Barham MLC has a Motion on the Notice Paper ([http://bulletin/Prod/LC/lcpaper.nsf/0/7555E3B9F62C3F3CCA25795200485647/\\$file/D120214P.59.pdf](http://bulletin/Prod/LC/lcpaper.nsf/0/7555E3B9F62C3F3CCA25795200485647/$file/D120214P.59.pdf)) which will be debated in 2012's first parliamentary session.

The motion is an important acknowledgement for the benefits of supporting young people who are leaving foster care. Young people leaving care are one of the most socially disadvantaged groups in our society. One of the major gaps in existing services for children and young people is the absence of after-care supports for young care leavers.

NSW has the highest rate of children in Out of Home Care (OOHC) in Australia -and one of the fastest growth rates. Currently there are approximately 18,000 children and young people in care in NSW.

Out of the 18,000 in care across the state about 1000 each year turn 18 and have to leave out-of home care. This forces them into a situation where they must make important decisions on their own

A leaving care plan is something that should be started well before the young person leaves foster care. The plan sets out what the young person will do when they leave

care, if they will study, where they will live and if they want to meet their birth parents. It's also a great time for caseworkers to discuss other issues like driving lessons and how to get financial aid for this. Young people need to be equipped with information that helps them move through their transition from child to adult.

The CREATE Foundation (2011) found, in its evaluation of the "What's the Plan Campaign", that 31.5 % of young people received a leaving care plan. For NSW this figure becomes only 18%.

Currently Jan is raising awareness of this issue and lobbying the State Government to fulfil its legislated obligation to provide leaving care plans to all eligible young people. We have produced a FAQ/leaflet on Leaving Care Plans, a sticker and petition which we have available to send out. The website (<http://www.janbarham.org.au>) also has more information about the issue and the petition is on the website to download.