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Your submission for this review:

I've been working for DCJ for 19 years and in that time the ability of our agency and others in the OOHC sector to recruit carers has continued to decline. The current lack of availability of carers is harming the children we are meant to be doing better for as they are ending up in unstable staff based placements, and even the best of these causes harm to children's emotional development and relationship building, maintenance and repair skills simply due to the fact that they are cared for by staff on a rotating roster. I believe that one significant factor to the decline in interest to being a foster carer is financial. Unfortunately we now live in a society where stay at home mum's are few and far between and while this is driven by a lot of different factors, one of them certainly is financial. It's near impossible to financially support a household on a single income and the allowance carers get, most would say, barely covers the additional costs of having another child in the home. Additionally the children we bring into care who cannot be safely placed with family have significant trauma. Arguably this means they require more 1:1 time with a carer and a carer in many cases who is available to practically support them to engage in school and other activities and therapies. This is challenging for a parent who works full time when their own children need this extra attention let alone a foster carer who, at least initially, has no emotional connection to the child. This makes foster care an untenable choice for many who might otherwise be suitable for the role. We need a way to fairly compensate carers for the work they do, the skills they possess, and the training they are expected to maintain. Paying carers a wage instead of an allowance is one way to overcome some of the barriers and may attract some truly exceptional people to consider taking on this role