



Fostering with pride



Investors In People

In 2011 Core Assets, the parent company of Key Assets, received silver recognition as an Investors in People accredited organisation, demonstrating our commitment to delivering business improvement through people. We pride ourselves on the quality of support we provide to our staff at all levels.



Workplace Equality Index

As an employer committed to LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace and broader community Key Assets has been an active member of Pride in Diversity since 2014. We have been recognised as Small Employer of the Year in the Australian Workplace Equality Index in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. In 2019 we achieved Silver Tier employer status in the Index.



This booklet is aimed at LGBTIQ+ people as it focuses on sexual orientation and gender identity. We are an inclusive organisation and welcome carers from all communities, embracing diversity in our workforce and in our recruitment and selection process.



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Hello...

I'm Rob Ryan, the CEO of Key Assets – The Children's Services Provider. We're an international group that has been operating in Australia since 2007.

During this time we have developed a strong reputation as a leader in the child and family welfare sector. As a not for profit we are passionate about delivering outstanding services that enable children and families to achieve their potential. Our purpose is to achieve positive and lasting outcomes for children, families and communities. We can draw on our group's wealth of knowledge, international safeguarding and child protection practice, therapeutic models of intervention, academic research and qualitative programs to continually improve care options for vulnerable children and their families.

In Australia, we have services in New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. We also provide programs on Norfolk Island and have strong partnerships with our Key Assets service in New Zealand.

I am privileged to meet and talk with carers across Australia, New Zealand and the other jurisdictions Key Assets operates. I am inspired at the stories that bring people to become carers and the impact that our carers have on the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our community. The carer journey is not always easy and I know the

challenges faced by foster and kinship carers in shaping a better future for children and young people.

Good caring is like running a marathon, to do it well requires preparation and training, assistance from a support team, motivation to help you in the tough times when you hit the wall and friends, family and coaches to celebrate the wins. I look forward to hearing about your carer journey and the way in which we can support you in creating positive and lasting outcomes for children, young people and families.

Thank you for taking the first step.

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Rob Ryan
Chief Executive Officer

About fostering with Key Assets

What is fostering?

Fostering is a way of providing family life for someone else's child in your own home when they are unable to live with their birth family. This can be due to many reasons; illness, relationship problems, family breakdown or perhaps a situation where the child's welfare is threatened. Unlike adoption, the child remains the legal responsibility of the relevant government Child Protection Services and/or their birth parents. Foster carers provide a safe, secure and stable environment for these children and young people and in many cases will work towards reuniting the child with their birth family.

Why do children come into care?

Many children who need a new family have experienced some degree of neglect and/or physical, emotional or sexual abuse and all of them will have experienced loss and separation from their birth family. Even if the children present as happy and smiling, their past experiences will have an effect on their behaviour and development.

Could fostering be an option for you?

Fostering can be challenging but also extremely rewarding. Being able to foster isn't about whether you are single, married or cohabiting, your sexuality, your ethnicity, whether you already have children or what your religious beliefs are. It's about the desire to make a positive and lasting difference to a child who needs support. It helps if you have previous fostering or child care experience, but more important is your personality, enthusiasm and your willingness to make a full time commitment to fostering.

There is currently a shortage of carers in the States of Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales. If you can offer a stable, safe and nurturing environment to a child or young person then now is the time for you to find out more.

The law and a bit of background

Since the 1990s, the fostering of children by lesbian and gay people in Australia has gained considerable acceptance in legislation and policy. In Queensland under the Child Protection Act 1999, in New South Wales under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, in South Australia under the Child Protection Act 1993, in Victoria under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, in Western Australia under the Children and Community Services Act 2004 lesbian and gay people can foster a child either as a single carer or as a couple and in Tasmania under the Children, Young Persons and Families Act 1997 (Amended 2009)."

There is currently a shortage of carers in Australia.



What was good about the agency was that being a same sex couple was never an issue.



Mark and Dave's story

“Before coming into fostering we discussed it with our families and started to think about what we had to offer a child. As well as finding our lifestyles had gradually changed over time, a lot of our friends were having children and we were proud godfathers and uncles to nieces and nephews so it felt like a natural movement. We were well aware that there were plenty of children in difficult circumstances who needed help and support and a loving family home. Our friends and family were very supportive and actively encouraged us throughout the process.”

“Dave initially started to do some research on the internet and, after typing ‘fostering’ into Google, he found Key Assets.

The staff at the agency were very supportive and quick to answer all of our questions. What was good about the agency was that being a same sex couple was never an issue. We have been treated with total support and equality from day one. Everyone we have dealt with, from support workers to social workers, have all been fully supportive in what we do.

We also have a lot of support from Dave's family, as well as a lesbian friend who is now approved to babysit for us on the odd time we want to go out to dinner or catch up with friends. Our eight year old boy, who is currently in placement, is very fond of her.

Since we first started fostering, most of the reactions from people at school have been very positive and our relationship has never been an

issue. Sometimes it has been quite funny to see the reactions of other parents at the football matches. Usually they are not sure what to think and avoid the questions of who is who and deal with it well.

The young people we have fostered, 21 in total, have been amazing. The older teenagers at first find it a bit daunting but once they meet us, any reservations about being placed with a same sex couple soon vanish. At present, we also offer respite once a month for a 16 year old; he is great and gets along really well with us and our other foster son.

Naturally some birth parents are shocked, especially those who originally come from countries where being homosexual is illegal and it can be quite a challenging position for the birth parents to find themselves in. Sometimes they look for failures in our care to their children, but these occasions are quite rare and most are in fact not because they are homophobic but because they are

upset that they have lost the right to look after their own children.

We would advise any LGBTQI+TIQ+ single person or couple who are considering fostering to take each day as it comes and remember that you are matched carefully with the needs of the child or young person. Each child is an individual with different needs and we feel that we offer consistency and effective boundaries to facilitate a normal upbringing. We are totally honest and ensure that the children we look after are aware of our expectations.”

Fully supported

We provide the following package to all our foster carers:

- ▲ Support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- ▲ Frequent visits and regular telephone contact from a qualified and suitably experienced Key Assets Social Worker.
- ▲ Available Respite. Respite involves a child you are caring for going to stay with another foster carer so that both you and the child can have a break.
- ▲ Regular support group meetings with other foster carers to share experiences and knowledge.
- ▲ Organised activities for you, your family and the children you look after.
- ▲ A comprehensive pre and post approval/authorisation training programme.
- ▲ Membership of the relevant State Foster Carers Association.
- ▲ Carer Reimbursements are provided to cover the costs of caring for a child or young person.
- ▲ Where applicable, support workers to work with the child/young person.
- ▲ Access to a therapist for consultations and individual therapy for any child placed with you, when needed.

The importance of having Language carers

Carers from all walks of life, backgrounds and sexual orientations are needed to reflect the diverse communities in which we live. Having as large a pool of foster carers as possible ensures we are able to match the right carers with the right child. It is important to Key Assets to recruit carers from diverse backgrounds as this provides young people with positive role models and helps reduce stigma and prejudice.

There are a number of circumstances where children in foster care may benefit from being looked after by

an LGBTQI+ carer. If a child has come from a birth family where the parents or extended family are lesbian, gay or bisexual, LGBTQI+ carers may offer a consistent or familiar environment.

Children who come into care will have experienced a variety of difficulties and LGBTQI+ carers may have had their own challenges enabling them to understand the loss, anxiety and uncertainty a young person may feel. A child or young person may feel safer living with carers who are the same gender because of past experiences.

A child fostered by LGBTQI+ carers may be more confident in championing social justice and if a looked after child or young person is LGBTQI+ themselves, they need support and guidance as any other child does.



Crystal and Katie's story

Crystal (35) and Katie (27) are a foster carer couple who began fostering nearly three years ago and have not looked back since.

Crystal explains: "Being a foster carer isn't always easy but when you see a child grow and improve at something you have helped them with, it makes all the hard work worthwhile. Teaching a child right from wrong is one part of our role and when you actually begin to see them listen and act upon your advice, you feel you have made positive strides forward."

"We are no different from other foster carers when it comes to challenges in fostering. Challenges can come from the child or young person who may harbour complex emotional issues or they can come from simple tasks like getting permission for haircuts, school trips or an overnight stay at a friend's house."

The couple enjoy a happy and active home life with their four cats Tinker, KaCi, Tigra and Tiza. The couple became official civil partners in 2006.

"Being a same sex couple we still have some negative opinions to overcome. We are in the minority and it isn't always easy. On a recent sign language course, we were set

individual tasks of signing a sentence. When I signed Katie is my wife, I was corrected to say Katie is my sister, since this is what they assumed I was trying to sign. There were a few red faces that day," Crystal jokes.

We have to be prepared for what other people's preconceived ideas are of us before they have even met us and that can be tricky."

Crystal and Katie have pursued their fostering careers with determination and commitment. Working with the agency they have the full backing of professionals who are always on hand to offer guidance and advice, day or night. Ongoing training for carers is all part of what the fostering service provides.

Katie explains how training and support has helped keep them on track: "This is a great agency to work with and the many training sessions we have attended have helped to improve our fostering skills and understanding of the emotional or behavioural problems foster children can sometimes display. We attend

training depending on the young person we are looking after and what we feel relates to their needs. Key Assets also holds local foster carer support groups and we meet up regularly with other carers to share experiences and chat about our day to day lives as foster carers."

"Anyone who is considering becoming a foster carer needs to have bags of patience. It can be a long path before it gets easier, but it does. Sometimes it can feel that you have tried everything and that it doesn't seem to be working but if you commit and be consistent, and show the child or young person that you are going to stick by them, then eventually you will start to see those little signs of improvement."

Katie concludes: "As foster carers we aim to provide a safe and happy home environment for foster children and it is that level of stability which is so important to a child's wellbeing. At Key Assets the aim is to deliver quality care in a family setting and that is exactly what we intend to do."



As foster carers we aim to provide a safe and happy home environment for foster children.

Useful contacts

Key Assets WA

Level 1, 1 Puccini Court
Stirling WA 6021
Tel: (08) 9207 5900

Key Assets VIC

Suite 10, Building 3
195 Wellington Rd
Clayton VIC 3168
Tel: (03) 9566 7800

Key Assets TAS

Shop 50,
Channel Court Shopping Centre
Kingston TAS 7050
Tel: (03) 6283 1900

Key Assets NSW

Suite 1, Level 2,
Building 8, Lord Street
Botany NSW 2019
Tel: (02) 8336 5700

Key Assets QLD

Building 7/2728 Logan Road
Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113
Tel: (07) 3452 9900

Key Assets SA

25 Payneham Road
College Park SA 5069
Tel: (08) 8274 5900

What next?

If you'd like to take the next step towards becoming a foster carer, you can speak to one of our specialist fostering advisors by calling:

1800 WE CARE

iwanttofooster.com.au



keyassets

SERVING CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES