**Aboriginal Better Futures program**

Information for carers of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander young people on a:

* **family reunification order,**
* **care by secretary order,**
* **long-term care order in care services or in permanent care**

**About the Program**

The Aboriginal Better Futures program can provide lots of different kinds of support for

Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander young people as they **transition from care** towards independence up to their 21st birthday.

Delivered by Aboriginal organisations for Aboriginal people, Better Futures is a culturally centred and holistic support program that values the strengths that come from **culture, and connection to community.**

Better Futures support ends when the young person turns 21.

Start yarning as early as possible about what working towards independence and connection means for the young person. There are supports and funding available for young mob and their carers through Better Futures.

**Aboriginal Better Futures:** **Here’s what you can expect**

* Referral to Better Futures happens at 15 years and 9 months.
* The Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander young person has a team around them.
* The whole care team has a responsibility to provide guidance for the young person for independent living.

Up to 18 years, an ACCO Case manager can:

* Provide case management whilst the young person is in care
and apply for **HOME STRETCH**

From 16 to 21 years a Better futures Support Worker can**:**

* Support carers apply for Home Stretch funding through the
**“Accommodation Allowance”**. Carers can receive Home Stretch to help with young person’s housing costs after Child Protection or Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care withdraw (generally young person’s 18th birthday), if young person continues to live with carer.
* If the young person isn’t able to live with their carer after Child Protection or Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care withdraw, Home Stretch can be used to help them find a place to live and help with rent or bills.
* Work with young people and their goals for independence.
* Provide support that goes up and down according to need until 21.
* Build rapport, attend care team meetings, provide advice and information.
* Collaborate with the young person to access Better Futures flexible funding.

From 16 to 21 years a Community Connector can:

* Help to find Services linked to young people's hobbies and goals such as community events, clubs and other opportunities

From 16 to 21 years a Mentor can:

* Help to connect the young person with Elders, people who are strong in culture, people who have similar interests to them, who can give career advice, or help in other ways.

Project partners

VACCA: Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency - Connected by culture

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Online: [vacca.org](https://www.vacca.org/)

Email: vacca@vacca.org

and

V A C Y P A: Victorian Aboriginal Children and young people's Alliance

ONLINE: v a c y p alliance.org

and

Victorian State Government