Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

Media release

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Celebrate foster dads this Fathers' Day

When we celebrate the contribution of all fathers this Fathers' Day, we should also acknowledge as a community the 1200 men of all ages and from all walks of life who are foster dads for children and young people who can't live with their families, according to the peak organisation for child and family services in Victoria.

"Foster dads are there as important male figures – whether they be young or old, single or partnered, whether they already have children or not, and whether they be gay or straight. There's no stereotype, but they all share the common characteristic of being good blokes," said chief executive of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Dr Lynette Buoy, today.

Dr Buoy said that in Victoria there was an estimated shortfall across all forms of out-of-home care of more than 1000 placements by 2013–2014. For foster care, that meant an extra 500 foster care households would be needed to help meet the increased demand. She said Father's Day was a good opportunity for men to think about what they could bring to the life of a child or young person as a foster parent.

Kim Rea has fostered thirty children over the years. This Sunday he will be joined by three foster sons and a son of his own for Fathers' Day lunch. The event would swell further with his daughter and her family but for an overseas holiday.

"When we sit down on Sunday, my foster sons will see themselves very much as part of the family, even if they don't call me dad," Kim said today.

Katie Hooper, Executive Officer of the Foster Care Association of Victoria, said the benefits to children and young people could also bring joy and enrichment to the lives of carers, whether through shorter or longer-term foster placements.

Father's Day begins a month-long drive to recruit more foster carers, with the Rainbow Hair for Foster Care campaign to be launched next Wednesday 7 September by Community Services Minister, Mary Wooldridge. The campaign will encourage Victorians to wear rainbow hair to show their support for foster care in Victoria.

Anyone interested in becoming a foster carer can ring the Foster Care Hotline:

1800 013 088

For further information they can also visit:

www.fosterabrighterfuture.com.au

watch real foster carers speak about their experiences at:

www.cfecfw.asn.au/act/programs/home-based-care/foster-care

or read the FCAV factsheets about becoming a carer:

www.fcav.org.au/carerresources/information-sheets

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