Response to Emily Munro by Philip Mendes, 5 December 2013

- Today is an example of global benchmarking whereby we identify effective ideas and initiatives from external jurisdictions and discuss the potential for replicating them here;
- Corporate parenting refers to the responsibility of state authorities to introduce policies, structures and roles that actively compensate children and young people in care for their traumatic pre-care experiences, and offer them the **same ongoing nurturing and support as typically experienced by their peers who are not in care** in order to maximize their ambitions and achievements. It emphasizes a shared responsibility between different departments such as education, health, and child welfare. This means in practice providing them with the best possible placement experiences in terms of stability and supportive relationships until their care order ends, and then continuing to take responsibility for their welfare until they are at least 21 years old. The term 'corporate' refers to the fact that organisations are involved in parenting children and young people in care, and the need to ensure that structures are in place to support the individual carers who parent within that system.
- A **national leaving care framework** similar to that of the UK which could be actioned via the existing national framework for protecting Australia's children. A national framework would arguably address a number of key weaknesses of the existing Australian system such as the wide variation in policy and legislation between the states and territories and even within individual jurisdictions, and the absence of support for young people who shift from one jurisdiction to another. It would also improve opportunities for national benchmarking, and place pressure on poorer services to improve their standards via the introduction of a Guidance and Regulations document that would clarify the obligations of all service providers to care leavers.
- A **National Data Base** similar to that of the UK freely accessible on the internet which would allow us to monitor the progress of care leavers; measure outcomes in key areas such as education, employment, health, housing, parenthood, substance use, social connections, and involvement in crime; and analyse differences in the effectiveness of various states and territories and NGO policies and programs.