RCLDS Residential Care Awards 2026

Residential Care Learning and Development Strategy (RCLDS) Residential Care Awards recognise exceptional work carried out in the field by Residential Carers. The awards are part of the annual Resi ROCKS celebration event, to be held on Thursday 6th August 2026.

The RCLDS Residential Care Awards recognise, celebrate and encourage work of the highest standard in the provision of therapeutic residential care provided in Victoria that contributes to positive outcomes for children and young people living in residential care.

Nominating an individual or team is a great way to publicly spotlight their outstanding achievements in working with children and young people in care.

There are 7 awards open to individuals or groups working in DFFH Out of Home Care funded residential care units in Victoria who contribute to positive and professional experiences and outcomes for children and young people residing in residential care, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to continuing to upskill, learn and develop.

The award categories are:

1. Residential Carer Award
2. Residential Team Award
3. Leadership Award
4. RCLDS Learning Award
5. Education Award
6. Hall of Fame Award
7. First Nations Cultural Engagement Award





RCLDS
RESIDENTIAL CARE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Nomination Process

Nominations this year will be submitted through an online platform called **Launchpad**. Please note there are two separate steps, both of which MUST be completed.

Step 1: Use the offline form in this Information Pack to identify and prepare the information and documentation required within your organisation, including CEO approval.

Step 2: Copy and paste the information prepared in Step 1 into the Launchpad platform and upload the required documentation, including the CEO Authorisation form, via the RCLDS Residential Care Awards Launchpad portal.

How to Submit a Nomination (Launchpad Process)

All nominations must be submitted via the RCLDS Residential Care Awards online platform, Launchpad.

Step 1 – Prepare Your Responses

- Download the nomination template(s) and CEO Authorisation form from **Dropbox**.
- Draft your responses offline using the template for your chosen award(s).
- Ensure all sections are completed, including:
    - Story of practice
    - Criteria responses
    - Any additional required fields
- Ensure the nomination is reviewed internally by your organisation and that the CEO Authorisation form is completed and signed for upload to Launchpad.

Step 2 – Submit via Launchpad

- Go to the Launchpad platform: **https://cfecfw.us.launchpad6.com/RCLDS-Awards-2026**
- Select the relevant award category.
- Copy and paste the information gathered in the Award Nomination form completed offline into the Launchpad Platform online form fields.
- Complete all required fields.
- Upload all of the below supporting documents:
    - At least two pieces of supporting material (e.g. photos, videos, quotes/feedback, short reflections). **Ensure files do not exceed the below limits:**
        - Photo or Video files max 1000Mb
        - PDF files max 100Mb
        - Other (eg, doc, docx, ppt, pptx) 20MB
- Two references
- CEO Authorisation form

Award Categories

Awards will be offered in 7 categories:

Residential Carer Award

This award recognises a residential carer who has demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to their role, which has led to positive changes to the lives of children and young people in residential care.

Residential Team Award

This award recognises a residential team that has made a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of children and young people living in residential care.

Leadership Award

This award recognises a leader who has made a meaningful and lasting impact on residential care practice and outcomes for children and young people.

RCLDS Learning Award

This award recognises a residential care worker who demonstrates a strong commitment to learning and development, including active participation in RCLDS training.

Hall of Fame Award

This award recognises an individual who has made a significant and sustained contribution to residential care over 10 years or more.

Education Award

This award recognises an individual or team who has made a meaningful difference to the educational engagement and outcomes of children and young people living in residential care.

First Nations Cultural Engagement Award

This award recognises an individual or team who demonstrates strong commitment to culturally safe, responsive and respectful care for First Nations children and young people.

Award Criteria

The criteria the judging panel will use to make decisions are:

Residential Carer Award

For a Residential Care Worker who has demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to their role, which has led to positive changes to the lives of children and young people in residential care. Such a Carer demonstrates:

1. A high standard of therapeutic residential work, which has had a positive impact on the quality of life of children, young people and families.
2. A direct contribution to maintaining a safe, supportive and nurturing living environment for children and young people in their care.
3. An outstanding contribution to supporting their team and peers.
4. Commitment to learning and development and using this to model best practice and/or innovation.

Residential Team Award

For a residential team that has worked collaboratively and therapeutically to achieve significant and positive outcomes for children and young people whilst living in residential care. Such a team demonstrates:

1. Cohesive and collaborative team culture focused on achieving positive outcomes for staff, children, young people, and families.
2. Maintains a safe, supportive and nurturing living environment for children and young people in their care.
3. A commitment to learning and development and reflective practice.
4. Innovative, collaborative practice with the wider community and sector partners
5. Consideration and promotion of young peoples' voices in the delivery of individualised care.

Leadership Award

For a Residential Care Supervisor/Manager who has demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities in bringing about better outcomes for children and young people living in residential care and for staff. Such a leader demonstrates:

1. Outstanding achievement in their leadership role with positive outcomes for staff, children, young people, and families
2. Significant commitment towards a culture that embraces learning and skills development for staff
3. Collaborative sector and community partnerships

RCLDS Learning Award

For a residential carer who has proven a commitment to ongoing learning and development through active participation in a range of learning opportunities, including RCLDS training. Such a person demonstrates:

1. Application of learning to practice
2. Active sharing of new learnings with team members and colleagues
3. Promotion of learning opportunities within the organisation as avenues to improve practice and act as a learning 'champion'.

Hall of Fame Award

For an individual who has made a significant and sustained contribution to residential care over 10 years or more. Such a person demonstrates:

1. A true commitment to the work of therapeutic residential care
2. An ability to form strong meaningful relationships with young people and often acts as an advocate for young people
3. Commitment to mentoring other residential care staff including new recruits.
4. A reliable and adaptive approach to therapeutic residential care
5. Adaptability and flexibility in approach to meet the ever-changing needs of residential care and the young people.

Education Award

For a team or individual that has made a meaningful difference to the educational engagement and outcomes of children and young people living in residential care, demonstrating creative, inclusive and child centred approaches. Such a person/team demonstrates:

1. Advocacy for the young people in their care, throughout their education journey.
2. Seeks to provide opportunities for learning outside of the traditional structures of education.
3. Champions the children and young people, ensuring their voice is heard in decision-making.
4. Actively seeks opportunities for collaboration in the young peoples' best interests.

First Nations Cultural Engagement Award

For an individual or team who demonstrates strong commitment to culturally safe, responsive and respectful care for First Nations children and young people. Such a person/team demonstrates:

1. Provision of culturally appropriate care to First Nations children and young people within the home
2. Actively supporting First Nations young people with opportunities to connect, explore and learn about their culture and participate in cultural activities
3. Consultation and partnership with First Nations services to ensure appropriate responses and best practice care

4. Active collaboration with First Nations community elders and organisations to ensure best practice care
5. Role modelling of a continual learning journey of building cultural awareness and competency within the home and/or team

Applications must address all the above criteria in their category to be eligible.

Nomination Information

Supporting Documents

- All nominations must include a minimum of two supporting documents, with at least one provided by an external organisation or person.
- Supporting documents should enhance the nomination and help tell the story of the nominee's impact. These may include letters from young people, families, colleagues or partner organisations, photos of a residential home or practice setting, or short videos of carers or teams reflecting on their work.
- Supporting documents must be relevant to the award criteria and clearly referred to in the written nomination.
- By submitting a nomination, nominators acknowledge that all submissions and supporting documents become the property of the RCLDS, will not be returned, and may be used to promote RCLDS awards and events. Permission must be obtained from all individuals featured in submitted materials.

References

Each nomination must include two references, one internal and one external to the nominee's workplace. References will be checked for shortlisted nominees only.

CEO Endorsement

All nominations must be endorsed by the organisation's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Nominations submitted without CEO endorsement will not be accepted.

Judging Panel

The RCLDS Awards Judging Panel will include senior representatives from the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO), and a person with lived experience. No panel member may assess nominations submitted by their own agency.

Finalist Notification

Finalists will be announced three weeks prior to the ResiROCKS Forum via The Centre's social media channels. Finalists must attend the ResiROCKS Forum on Thursday 6 August 2026 or nominate a proxy. Residential Team Award finalists will receive two tickets for nominated representatives.

The Awards

The 7 major award category winners will each receive an engraved award and a framed certificate for display at the winner's Community Service Organisation.

The Decision

The Judging Panel will assess nominations based on the information provided and may request additional information. All decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Privacy

Personal information will be handled in accordance with Victorian Government legislation and relevant privacy policies. Information will be used only for judging purposes unless otherwise required by law. By applying, nominees consent to being photographed and to the use of images for RCLDS-related promotion.

How to Apply

Nominations must be submitted via the RCLDS Residential Care Awards portal on Launchpad. All nominations must be received by the closing date **Friday 26 June 2026**.

To enter your nominations, head to: cfecfw.org.au/residentialcareawards





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