

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW Election: Tackling Educational Disadvantage So All Young People Can Shine

In the lead up to the March state election, the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) is appealing to all political parties in NSW for a commitment to addressing the educational disadvantage faced by vulnerable children and young people, including those living in out-of-home care.

ACWA CEO Steve Kinmond says those young students who are struggling to deal with the traumatic effects of abuse, neglect or family separation can often miss out on vital learning opportunities that can transform their lives.

For example, a study¹ conducted by ACWA in 2016 showed one in five NSW school aged children and young people in care were absent from school at any given time.

In 2017 the NSW Ombudsman released a report² into behaviour practices in schools, which revealed that 43 per cent of 295 young people living in residential care had missed on average 88 school days in 2016. It is also important to note that a significant number of these young people had a disability.

ACWA wants NSW to be a place where all school students, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to learn, shine and reach their full educational potential.

"The evidence is very clear that education is crucial to raising the lifelong prospects of disadvantaged and trauma affected children and young people," Mr Kinmond said.

"For these reasons, ACWA and our member organisations are eager to work with the NSW Department of Education, the non-government schools sector and other agencies to better support disadvantaged students."

The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies is the NSW peak body representing non-government organisations that provide services to vulnerable children, young people and their families. ACWA is currently lending its voice to the [Building Great Communities campaign](#) which has brought together 18 community sector peaks to urge the next NSW Government to address the concerning spread of disadvantage affecting people and communities in NSW.

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¹ ACWA Snapshot: Educational Engagement of Children and Young People in Out of Home Care in NSW
www.acwa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ACWA_Education_OOHC_Snapshot_Preliminary_Roundtable_For_Release.pdf

² NSW Ombudsman Inquiry into behaviour management in schools
www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/47241/NSW-Ombudsman-Inquiry-into-behaviour-management-in-schools.pdf