



## INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE STAFF

### Who is the Charter for?

The Charter is for all children and young people in out of home care in the Northern Territory.

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* is a Convention in international law that has been agreed to by 191 countries, including Australia, and outlines the basic human rights that apply to all children, across all countries of the world.

The Charter is consistent with the rights outlined in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* and the *National Standards for Out of Home Care*. The Charter draws special attention to and helps to promote the rights of children who live in out of home care.

### What is the purpose of the Charter?

The Charter builds on the work that Caseworkers, Staff and Carers already do to ensure children and young people in out of home care are protected and have opportunities to realise their full potential.

The Charter contains a list of rights that every child in out of home care can expect to have, the things they should be able to do and what they can expect from the people who care for them. Its implementation demonstrates commitment by the Department of Children and Families to ensuring children in out of home care know their rights, understand them and have these promoted by the people that care for them.

The Charter of Rights was developed with input from children and young people who are in care and young people who have left care. Their voices are represented by the words used to explain the rights contained in the Charter.

### What does this mean for staff who work in Residential Care?

Under section 68A of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* it is a requirement that a copy of the Charter of Rights be given to all children and young people as soon as practicable after coming into out of home care and explained to them in age appropriate language. This will usually be the responsibility of the allocated Caseworker.

Residential Care staff play an important role in upholding the rights of children in care. You can uphold a child or young person's rights through how you care for and treat children and young people and the opportunities that are provided for them while in care. For example, ensuring a child or young person is included in decisions about them and given opportunities to meet and discuss important issues.

For a child or young person, rights can be a difficult thing to understand. You can help to explain what rights are in a way that the child you are working with understands and makes sense to them. For example, you might explain 'privacy' to a child by speaking to them about where they keep their things and where they can spend time alone.

The rights in the Charter may be different to the circumstances that a child or young person has come from or experienced before. Discussing rights may bring up sensitive issues and where and when these conversations take place should be planned in advance. Staff will be supported through training to develop skills in engaging children and having conversations about rights.

### Questions?

If you have questions or concerns about the Charter of Rights and what it means for you in your role caring for children and young people you should talk to your Team Leader in the first instance, and then Manager as necessary.

