

# Indigenous care crisis

LAUREN NOVAK

MORE than one in every 11 Aboriginal children in South Australia is living in state care, new data shows.

And fewer are being placed with Aboriginal relatives.

The analysis is based on federal Productivity Commission data and released by the guardian for children in state care, Penny Wright, pictured.

As of June 30 last year, there were 4136 children in care, including 1519 Aboriginal young people.

Ms Wright said that rate was "so high that this group



now makes up 36.7 per cent of all children in care, despite making up approximately 5 per cent of the total (child) population".

Her report, released yesterday, shows that 53 per cent of Aboriginal children removed from their parents by authorities are placed with kin, or extended family – but only 31 per cent are placed with an Aboriginal family member.

The national average is 32 per cent.

Authorities are meant to adhere to guidelines which require Aboriginal children to be placed with a member of their family first, followed by a close contact in their community or a person of Aboriginal cultural background. If this cannot be done, the placement should be geographically close to the child's family.

Ms Wright's report notes the Child Protection Department is legally required to keep track of whether the cultural needs of Aboriginal children in its care are being met, such as by providing transport to cultural events or funerals, and

whether they have access to a case worker or relative from their community.

However, the department's latest annual report concedes it is not fully reporting on these obligations.

Over the past five years the rate of Aboriginal children in state care has risen from 62.1 per 1000 to 84.5.

Ms Wright's report shows that rate would have to fall to 46.4 per 1000 to meet a Closing the Gap Target by 2031, but if authorities continue to remove Aboriginal children from their parents at current rates "we will sadly fail".

Child Protection Minister Rachel Sanderson said the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care was "a nationwide issue".

The state government has set up an Aboriginal Family Scoping Unit to identify kin carer options for Aboriginal children who come into care.

It has also committed: \$200,000 to create a peak body to represent the interests of Aboriginal children and families;

\$9.5m to a Resilient Families program which will begin on July 1; \$500,000 for an Aboriginal-

led organisation to develop a service for young people who have experienced family violence and;

\$2.2m to a program for families in Adelaide's west, run by Aboriginal service KWY.

"We need more Aboriginal specialist services to do this work," said KWY chief executive Craig Rigney, "and to have the voice of Aboriginal children at the forefront."

Opposition spokeswoman Katrine Hildyard said the rise in Aboriginal children in care "must be urgently addressed", including by engaging with families and young mothers.

## Rooftop solar sales heating up

CLARE PEDDIE

YATTALUNGA (near One Tree Hill), Salisbury North and Happy Valley topped the list of SA postcodes that contributed to the nation's highest uptake of rooftop solar last year.

Using data from the Clean Energy Regulator, scientists at CSIRO have explored trends in rooftop solar installations.



CSIRO Energy's Michael Ambrose, pictured, said the data showed "year on year growth" across Australia.

"The main reason probably is that PVS have become so cheap, they have come crashing down in price," he said.

"The payback period's pretty quick, because there's lots of sunshine and there's a good raft of rebates and incentives from various levels of government."

In SA there was a total of 35,829 installs in 2020, up from 27,088 in 2019 and 21,894 in 2018. The postcode with the most solar installed last year was 5114 Yattalunga at 838, followed by 5108 Salisbury North with 801 and then 5159 Happy Valley in third place with 633 installs.

Nationally, there were 365,740 installs in 2020, bringing the total to 2.68 million, which equates to about one in every four homes.

"We lead the world in PV capacity on a per capita basis at 591 watts per person, which is almost eight times the worldwide average," Mr Ambrose said yesterday.



## WINE BLENDS TO GET YOU FIZZING

ANTIMO IANNELLA

CLARE Valley SCA Gourmet Week organisers may have found the perfect formula with their "reinvigorated" festival, which kicks off today.

After almost four decades as a weekend event, the beloved food and wine celebration has been extended to a 10-day showcase of the region, allowing for extra patrons and a program that spans

the educational, the high-end gourmet and the family-friendly.

Spokeswoman Marnie Roberts said the cancellation of last year's festival due to COVID-19 had given organisers time to "take a breath".

"We were due for a change and it allowed us to take a step back and look at how we can reinvent the event," she said.

"Now there's more to see and do, and for a wider demographic. If you want to come up as a couple or

a family, you can do so without being swamped and you can go at your own pace."

The expanded program includes long lunches, private dinners, a producer's market, private masterclasses, vintage tastings and guest chefs, including rising Australian star Jake Kellie.

There's also the return of Claymore Wines' popular "Mad Scientist Blending Sessions", an interactive event in which patrons

can learn more about the art of wine blending.

"It's really cool; it gives the consumer the opportunity to become a winemaker for a day and see what goes into making a blend," Ms Roberts said.

"It's very good fun."

Ms Roberts said ticket sales were "very strong" with some events already sold out, and encouraged people to book ahead.

Visit [clarevalley.com.au](http://clarevalley.com.au)

Claymore Wines' Jess Milburn prepares for the Mad Scientist Blending Sessions, part of the region's Gourmet Week. Picture: Tom Huntley

## EXPANSION PRIVACY FEARS

RESIDENTS on Goodwood's Victoria St are concerned about plans for a two-storey, 100-bed nursing home.

Paul Prior said about a dozen residents fear plans for the \$24m facility have been rushed with little thought for stormwater management or it

encroaching on residential properties. "We (the residents) feel that this application is missing vital concerns of residents with properties adjacent to or close by the proposed two-storey building," he said. Construction is due to start in 2022.



## Treasurer steps in - but still backs Lee

GABRIEL POLYCHRONIS

The state government says Assistant Minister to the Premier Jing Lee still has the full support of cabinet, despite the Treasurer stepping in to answer multiple questions on her behalf in parliament.

Ms Lee was asked seven questions by Opposition MPs in the upper house this week – with six relating to multicultural affairs.

On three occasions, Treasurer Rob Lucas stepped in to answer.

When questioned why he stepped in, Mr Lucas said: "As lead-

er of the government ... I have taken responsibility in relation to that question and if on other occasions I choose to do so, I will choose to do so". Mr Lucas later assured parliament Ms Lee had the "absolute confidence" of Premier Steven Marshall and the cabinet.

V1 - ADV01201MA