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Your submission for this review:

In my opinion the NSW government exploits the goodwill of foster carers where remuneration for carers providing care for vulnerable children is concerned. The foster care allowance falls a long way short of covering the cost to carers of providing care to children in OOHC. Whilst the Choosi cost of Kids Report 2023 estimates the average cost of raising a child at \$12,823 per annum this figure does not factor in the loss of earnings many carers experience, loss of superannuation, holiday leave and impact on carer health, particularly mental health. As it stands at the moment my husband and I care for two teen-aged children in our long term care and receive approximately \$1200 per fortnight in carer allowance. This figure equates to an hourly rate of approximately \$3.60, or \$1.80/hour for each of us. There is no holiday loading or sick leave. Nor is there any superannuation. Most children in OOHC have complex needs, both medical and emotional which often makes it unsustainable for both partners to work full-time. Over the 20 years we have been fostering we have raised four children on a long term basis and provided short term and respite care to many, many more. At the beginning of our foster care journey we did not appreciate the demands that raising vulnerable children would place on us and our biological children and viewed the foster care allowance as generous and in line with the financial demands of providing care for those kids who for a multitude of reasons are unable to remain in the care of birth family. Now, 20 years on, I can see that we were naive and believe that the government needs to provide far greater financial resources to the OOHC sector, in particular financial support to carers who sacrifice so much to care for vulnerable children. Perhaps, if financial support was more appropriate, there would be a far greater number of carers WITH CAPACITY willing to provide care for kids in need.