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Raising Expectation program supports out of home care leavers to thrive at university



[Rochelle Kirkham](#)

A program helping young people who have grown up in out-of-home care to thrive in higher education will continue having an impact in Ballarat.



Victorian Minister for Training and Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney announced on Thursday more than \$1 million to renew the Raising Expectation program at Federation University, LaTrobe University and Swinburne University.

The program in place at Federation University in Ballarat provides extra support for care leavers and young people in out-of-home care so they can more easily access education and training.

Students are provided with resources, services, financial support and advice.

Data shows young people who have spent time in out-of-home care often face more challenges in life than other children, particularly when it comes to higher education, health and employment outcomes.

It is important we break the cycle of disadvantage that prevents many of our youngest citizens from reaching their full potential and having the same opportunities in life as anyone else.

Jacqueline Wilson, Federation University

Only about three per cent of young people with care backgrounds enrol at a university or TAFE compared to almost 40 per cent of 25 to 35-year-olds.

But numbers are increasing, with more than 200 care leavers now studying at Federation University, LaTrobe University and Swinburne University, since the Raising Expectations program was introduced in 2015.

Federation University Bachelor of Nursing student Ashten, who asked for her last name not to be revealed, spoke to *The Courier* in [September last year](#), saying support through the Raising Expectations program had helped her overcome challenges at university.

"I did have to leave school quite early which is probably why I delayed signing up to uni for as long as I did. I just didn't quite think I had it in me," she said.

"It wasn't until actually signing up and getting involved that I realised there is a lot of support for care leavers here at uni."

Federation University Associate Professor Jacqueline Wilson said it was important to break the cycle of disadvantage that prevented many young people from reaching their full potential and having opportunities in education.

"More young people and care leavers will directly benefit from this extra funding and the extension of the Raising Expectations Program - and for that we should be extremely pleased," she said.

Raising Expectations will continue until the end of 2022 following increased Victorian Government funding of more than \$1 million.

The program is a partnership with Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.