

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
29 November 2018

## **Young carers offered a career kick-start**

Dozens of young carers in Victoria are being given a chance to jumpstart their careers through a business training program called LaunchME for Young Carers as part of the *Skills for micro-enterprise* project.

The free program will offer 90 carers aged 16-25 an opportunity to create, finance and launch their own start-up enterprise.

Run by the non-profit Good Shepherd Microfinance in partnership with Carers Victoria, the two-year \$800,000 program is being funded by the Australian Government.

Federal Minister for Families and Social Services Paul Fletcher said the *Skills for micro-enterprise* project is part of a trial delivered through the Australian Government's \$96.1 million Try, Test and Learn Fund at the Department of Social Services.

"The Try, Test and Learn Fund aims to help young carers to identify and achieve employment goals beyond their caring roles and realise a positive future beyond the welfare system.

"Through *Skills for micro-enterprise*, the Government is trialling practical solutions aimed at helping young carers achieve their own personal and financial goals by building transferrable business skills as a stepping stone to employment," Mr Fletcher said.

Good Shepherd Microfinance CEO Peter McNamara said participants would be able to chase their dreams while still fulfilling their caring role.

"More than 71,600 young Victorians are looking after a relative or partner who is ageing, has a disability, chronic illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem," Mr McNamara said.

"They often don't have the time or resources to develop their own ideas and skills to get into meaningful or flexible employment.

"*Skills for micro-enterprise* will provide them with free business training, mentorship, networking and access to an interest-free business loan, so they can turn their dreams into reality."

Carers Victoria CEO Scott Walker said the program was a great opportunity.

"We're pleased that most of the activities can be done from home and respite care options can be explored to help the participants," Mr Walker said.

"We strongly urge young carers to apply."

The project's first participant, 20-year old Shaan DiRosario, is excited about the support she will receive to start a small business.

"Before I found out about *Skills for micro-enterprise*, I didn't think balancing caring for my mother and pursuing my career goals was possible," Ms DiRosario said.

"With the personal and professional support I will get, my goal is to start my own gift wrapping business – mum is really creative and artistic, so it's something that we will be able to do together."

**To apply or find out more, visit [launchme.org.au/youngcarers](http://launchme.org.au/youngcarers)**

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## ***About Skills for micro-enterprise***

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Visit [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au) for more information.

### **What does the LaunchME for Young Carers program involve?**

- Six months of online and face-to-face sessions covering a range of topics including financial literacy and personal wellbeing.
- Personalised coaching and mentoring.
- Group workshops.
- Option to pursue one of three learning pathways – microenterprise, further study or job readiness.
- The opportunity to pitch their learnings / business ideas to a panel of business experts.
- The chance to meet other young carers and establish networks.

### **Who can apply?**

You can apply for the program if you:

- Live in Victoria.
- Are aged between 16-25.
- Has caring responsibilities for a loved one who is sick, frail or mentally ill.

### **How do I apply?**

If you meet the eligibility criteria, visit [launchme.org.au/youngcarers](http://launchme.org.au/youngcarers) and complete the online application form.