

# Big steps for Finn's Law

## Care for Coorong kids continues

By Claire Campbell

THE fight to bring in Finn's Law and more rights for foster parents is gaining momentum.

Twenty people are walking from Craters to the State's Parliament House on Wednesday, with another 15 joining in from the tollgate, against the current law excluding foster parents from funeral arrangements and being recognised on a death certificate if a child dies in their care.

Murray Bridge foster mother Monica Perrett has been campaigning for Finn's Law to be introduced since her nephew died in May 2014, and she was forbidden from saying goodbye and receiving any information about his death.

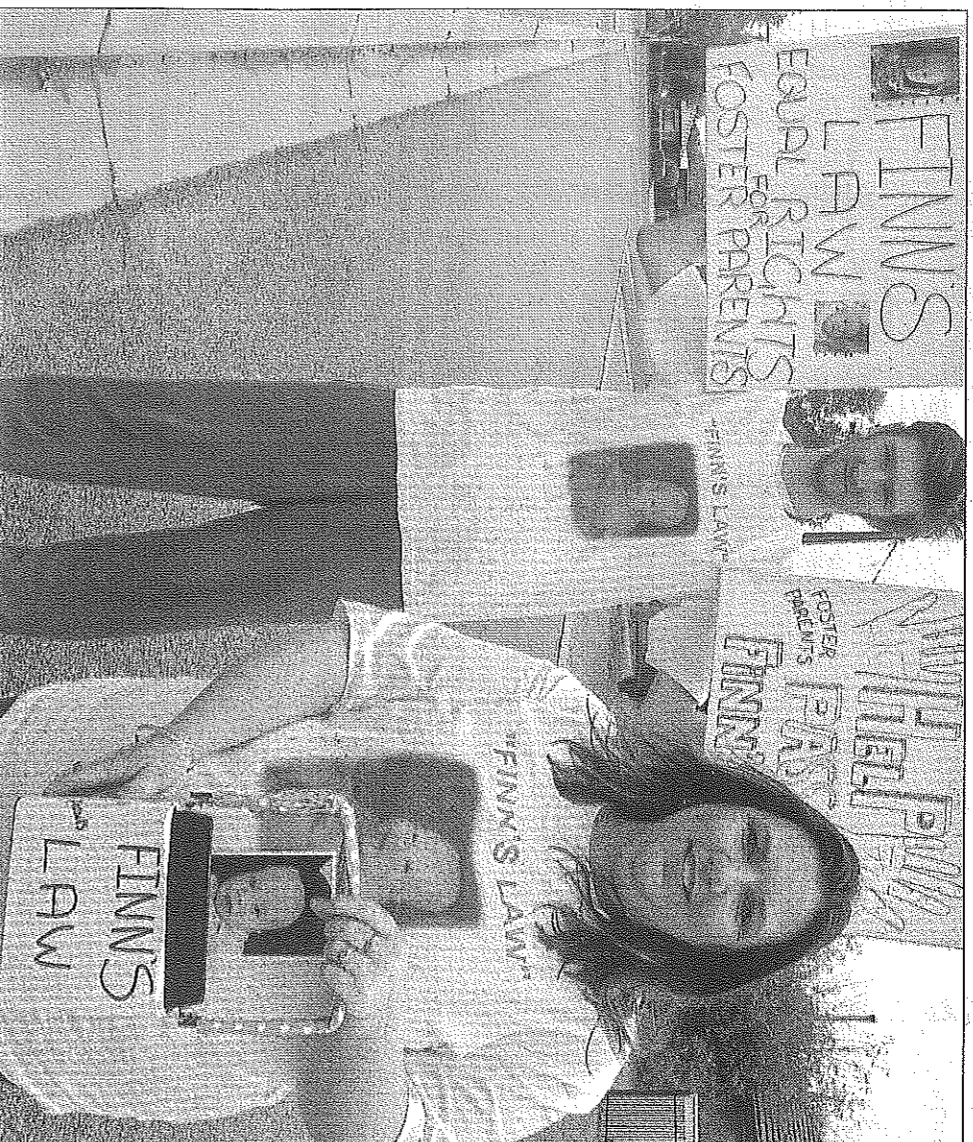
She said all parents, not just biological, deserved the right to say goodbye to their children and help organise the funeral.

"Most of the people walking are foster parents that want the law to go through and some are just parents that think the law is very heartless and needs to be changed," she said.

"The Government doesn't realise just how attached you get to foster children ... to even just give them a kiss on the cheek would be everything, say goodbye and place something in the coffin with them and be involved in the funeral in some way.

"It's not just the foster parents that you're hurting, it's also the children as these are often the only parents these children have known."

Mrs Perrett organised the walk after she met with State Minister for Education and Child Development Susan Close several weeks ago and felt her pleas fell on deaf ears.



**Fight for justice:** Finn's Law advocate Monica Perrett and her son, Josh, will walk with foster parents from across the State from Craters to Parliament House in memory of Finn and to bring in more rights for foster parents.

"It's got to the point now where I just don't understand why the Government aren't getting it, I just don't think it's a law that's hard to change and it's the most heartless law out there," Mrs Perrett said.

"I'm not just this grieving aunty who's lost her nephew with noth-

ing better to do, I'm not going to stop this fight until Finn's Law is through.

"The more they knock it back, the more determined I am to just keep fighting."

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick will join the walk from Victoria Square where he and Mrs

Perrett will make a speech before releasing helium balloons from the steps of Parliament.

Along the way, walkers will collect donations in Finn's name for children in intensive care at the Women's and Children's Hospital, where Finn spent five weeks and underwent three operations.

CHILDREN aged under 12 years

who are living in the Coorong council region will still have access to a range of activities and programs through the Caring 4 Community program.

The program will continue to be funded by the Federal Department of Social Services for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years, allowing children and their families access to family fun days, arts and crafts, and dance and movement activities.

The funding partnership between the Taillem Bend Community Centre and AC.Care's Communities for Children Murraylands has helped kids with literacy, numeracy and social skills, providing integrated services for families, and improve child wellbeing and development, safety, and family functioning.

Learning programs, health advice, family information sessions, and parent and caregiver support groups are all accessible to families through the program.

Taillem Bend Community Centre coordinator Tammy Shepherd said the project benefited the region.

"The board of management are really pleased to be able to continue providing these valuable learning activities to children in our community," she said.

AC.Care's Communities for Children senior program manager Teresa O'Brien said she looked forward to the ongoing success of Caring 4 Community.

"Our collaborative relationship with the Taillem Bend Community Centre has worked very well and successfully delivered services to the community," she said.

Community centre board chair Rhonda Shillabeer said the services for children would be provided with a whole of Coorong approach.

Details: For more information about the project, visit [www.tbcc.org.au](http://www.tbcc.org.au) or call 8572 3513.

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