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## MEDIA RELEASE

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# OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT

NSW Ombudsman Bruce Barbour's *"Review of the NSW child protection system - Are things improving Special report to Parliament April 2014"* recent report into child protection reinforces the necessity for independent oversight of the child protection system said CREATE Foundation Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jacqui Reed.

The report states that two-thirds of children and young people reported as at risk of serious harm did not receive face-to-face assessment. *"The findings of this report highlight that children, young people and families are slipping through the cracks,"* said Ms Reed.

*"Since 19.9% of children in care who die are indigenous illuminates the urgent need for work to be done to empower and support indigenous families."*

The report indicates that the department has increased transparency and improved its capacity to monitor, measure and report on issues.

*"Albeit encouraging that a concerted effort appears to be underway, it is imperative that any child protection system is accountable, transparent and responsive to the needs of children and young people in our community,"* said Ms Reed.

It has been well-documented that this system is under strain and it is crucial the focus turns towards urgent delivery of more early intervention supports. Early intervention has the potential to enable and empower families to be safe and strong in our community.

*"Through CREATE's consultations and work with young people we hear time and time again that young people would like their parent/s to have had access to supports,"* said Ms Reed.

*"It's a whole of community responsibility, including through the education system, and when families are facing life's challenges it's about everyone being conscious of asking if someone else needs hand during tough times."*

*"NSW has the largest number of children and young people in out-of-home care nationally and it is important that this government has robust legislation and policies in place to monitor the enormity of the task,"* said Ms Reed.

CREATE Foundation is the peak body representing the voices of all children and young people in out-of-home care. Learn more at [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

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