

MEDIA RELEASE

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creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

CREATE WELCOMES NSW BUDGET AS STEPS TO STRENGTHEN MAJOR REFORM

Over a third of all Australian children and young people in out-of-home care live in New South Wales (38.8%)*. CREATE Foundation welcomes the NSW government funding announcement as a path to significant reforms in out-of-home care, child protection, and social housing.

Jacqui Reed, Chief Executive of CREATE Foundation, indicated that CREATE's research (McDowall, 2009) showed 35% of care leavers experience homelessness in their first year of leaving care and this 2016-17 budget can enable continued reform in child protection and out-of-home care, in early intervention and strengthening of families.

"The housing objectives within this initiative align with one of CREATE's election priorities being that young people with a care experience are eligible for priority access to services, including housing."

CREATE's other key election priorities are a call for robust independent monitoring of services, and post-care support to be available nationally to the age of 25.

CREATE Foundation is the national peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience, providing programs and services to create a better life for children and young people in care. The number of children and young people removed from families and placed in out-of-home care continues to rise and has now reached 43,339*.

CREATE's State Coordinator, Lisa Townshend, heads the NSW team who work closely with children and young people in care on a daily basis. Ms Townshend was encouraged to hear about the focus on stability in families and placements and she stated that young people in care have told CREATE that placement stability is one of their most important priorities.

"CREATE is encouraged to see the needs of vulnerable children and young people being made a priority and it is very pleasing that the 2016-17 budget funding is focused on child protection and out-of-home care," stated Ms Townshend.

"That said, it remains to be seen in practice how this funding will result in better outcomes for children and young people in care. The NSW child protection reform is much needed and it is reassuring that Minister Hazzard is open to meaningful consultations with the sector regarding what the reform will look like."

CREATE Foundation regularly consults with young people and through this consultation in 2009 revealed a truthful yet somewhat bleak portrait of the reduced

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life outcomes experienced by children and young people growing up in the care system. The [Report Card](#) revealed that if you've been in out of home care, you are more likely to be **undereducated, unemployed, to earn less, become a parent at a younger age, be involved in the juvenile justice system, become homeless and be dependent on social assistance**¹.

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Join the national conversation on social media this election period, giving a voice to kids in care - [#leavingcarecounts](#)

Data source: *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016. Child protection Australia 2014–15. Child welfare.

Background information

CREATE Foundation regularly consults with young people and through this consultation in 2009 revealed a truthful yet somewhat bleak portrait of the reduced life outcomes experienced by children and young people growing up in the care system. The [Report Card](#) findings referred to in this media release are detailed below:

- 64% do not have a leaving care plan (leaving care plans are a strategy for life after being in the state care system)
- 35% are homeless in the first year of leaving care
- 46% of boys are involved in the juvenile justice system
- 35% completed Year 12 (compared to that of the general population)
- 29% are unemployed (compared to the national average which is 9.7%)
- 28% were already parents themselves

¹ Data source: McDowall, J.J. (2009). *CREATE Report Card 2009 – Transitioning from Care: Tracking Progress*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation

CREATE's 2013 Report Card revealed further insights:

- 36% of children and young people are split from their brothers and sisters in care
- 31% attend 3 or more primary schools and have greater rates of suspension
- 35% have 5 or more caseworkers during their time in care
- 67% are not aware of any official leaving care plan

Data source: McDowall, J. J. (2013). *Experiencing out-of-home care in Australia: The views of children and young people (CREATE Report Card 2013)*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation

