

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 11 May 2017

Vulnerable Young People Forgotten in Federal Budget Says CREATE

CREATE was staggered to find the Australian Government's 2017 Federal Budget ignores Australia's young people in out-of-home care. Thirty five percent of young people leaving the care system become homeless within the first year due to lack of supports for this cohort who are having a red-hot go at establish themselves independently without the traditional family supports and networks. Ironically, the 2017 Federal Budget provides **no new support** for over 46,448 vulnerable children and young people in care or leaving out-of-home care.

Accessing and sustaining affordable and safe housing, as well as adequate income support could be entirely out of reach for many of the 46,448 young people in out-of-home care currently in Australia who will experience significant housing instability and homelessness when they age out of the care system at 18 years (i.e. foster, kinship or residential care). Growing up without the traditional support networks and guidance can lead to young people to being at risk.

Access to affordable housing is vital for young people as research indicates that almost **35%** of young people who leave care become homeless within the first year of leaving care. Young care leavers are burdened by a lack of transition planning and supports, plus the unique barriers stemming from their backgrounds and histories with the child protection system.

Vulnerable young people are now faced with the Federal Budget's provision of being subjected to random drug testing in order to access welfare support, along with having to jump through even more hoops in order to get a head-start in life.

"CREATE was appalled by the Federal Budget's lack of focus and priority to the issue of vulnerable young people," said Ms Jacqui Reed, CREATE Chief Executive.

"Being without a support network and the new budget provisions undermines young people's capacity for self-sufficiency and ideal wellbeing levels. CREATE calls for a shift towards forward thinking preventative measures to keep young people safe, housed and financially independent."

Youth unemployment at December 2016 stood at 13.3%. This is a significant issue for young people leaving statutory care as it assumes that young people can rely on parents and other support networks that are not a given for this cohort. Longitudinal studies have found lower earnings and higher joblessness rates among aged-out youth compared to young people of a similar age, even when controlling for other important factors, such as socioeconomic status prior to age 18.

CREATE calls for increasing of the leaving care age to 21 nationally and the Australian Government to make vulnerable young Australians a priority in the 2017 budget.

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 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.**

- 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

Data source: McDowall, J. J. (2009). *Transitioning from care (CREATE Report Card 2009)*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation.

CREATE's 2013 Report Card revealed

- 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.

Click [here](#) to visit our website to download the full reports.

Read CREATE Foundation's Position Paper on **Youth Homelessness** by clicking [HERE](#)

CREATE Foundation is the peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people in out-of-home care, providing programs and services to create a better life for them. www.create.org.au

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