

MEDIA RELEASE

5 November 2014

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE HEARD IN REPORT ON GRANDPARENTS CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN

The Australian Government released a Senate Committee Inquiry Report on the significant role and contribution of grandparents who take on the primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren. CREATE Foundation enabled young people with a kinship care experience to share their view and voice through submissions and hearings to the report titled *"Grandparents who take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren"*.

Often a grandparent can become a carer for a short period, or this can lead to a longer more formal care arrangement, said CREATE Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed.

"This Report is a marvellous demonstration of commitment by the Australian Government to improve the circumstances and support available to grandparents caring for grandchildren. This in turn may increase the likelihood of grandparents being in a position to continue caring for their grandchildren as they can do so with greater confidence having access to support, training and assistance whilst doing so."

"Many kinship carers may not even be in formal care arrangements, so it is quite challenging to know the full extent of the need amongst grandparents as carers."

Within this Report CREATE Foundation is acknowledged for enabling young people with a care experience to share their wisdom and insights via participating at the Inquiry hearings, and for the contribution from QLD CREATE team member, Miss Kelly Bucknall, on the matter of risks and potential for further traumatisation.

CREATE delivered a submission to the Inquiry being the voice of children and young people with a care experience, which conveyed the message that young people expressed a preference for kinship care, understanding that kinship care may not be an option available universally as in some instances it may not be appropriate or available. Young people also said that there must be ongoing assessment and support for people placed in kinship care.

As reported*, Inquiry chair Rachel Siewart said many grandparents looking after their grandkids were doing it tough and needed more support.

"The recommendations go to critical areas, including the financial support, legal and relationship supports, health, mental health and counselling services that are needed by grandparent raising grandchildren to support themselves and the children in their care," Senator Siewart said.

The Inquiry report is available via: [Link to Committee/Senate Grandparent_Carers Report](#)

Further 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](#) 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, be dependent on social assistance, have mental health issues, attempt suicide, and be at a higher risk of substance abuse¹.

- 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

Media Enquiries: Leigh White 0431 932 122 | leigh@whitemarketing.com.au

List of references:

* media reporting via: <http://www.news.com.au/national/senate-inquiry-recommends-boosting-financial-assistance-to-grandparents-who-care-fulltime-for-their-grandkids/story-fncynjr2-1227106421420> page accessed 3 November 2014

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