

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 20 August 2015



CREATE CALLS FOR END TO DARK DAYS OF ABUSE & EXPLOITATION IN RESIDENTIAL CARE UNITS

Yesterday the Commission for Children and Young People (Victoria) (CCYP) released a report on an Inquiry into the adequacy of the provision of residential care services to Victorian children and young people who have been subject to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation whilst residing in residential care.

CREATE Foundation commend Commissioner Bearnie Geary (OAM), Andrew Jackomos (PSM) and the CCYP team behind the release of this vital and yet, extremely distressing report titled *"...As a good parent would..."* which reveals appalling practices and outcomes for some of Australia's most vulnerable children.

The report illuminates dire findings including punitive practices which impinge upon basic human rights. These findings include sexual exploitation, poor medical attention, substandard accommodation, invasion of privacy (via closed circuit TV recording in bedrooms), and the cutting-off of electricity supplies.

"In this day and age it is incomprehensible that we are hearing these stories," said Ms Jacqui Reed, CREATE Foundation Chief Executive.

"The report's findings echo evidence given by generations of care leavers at the current Royal Commission highlighting the importance of listening to children and young people. CREATE Foundation calls for the development of independent mechanisms and complaint processes to listen to these voices to end the abuse and exploitation within the care system."

CREATE supports the CCYP's robust recommendations and expressly favours the heightened and increased priority applied to the importance of the voice of the child, along with making the best life outcomes accessible for children and young people placed in residential care.

In spite of the current situation, CREATE holds a positive vision for the potential of these outcomes, and looks forward to working with the CCYP and [Department of Health and Human Services](#) to improve residential care, and respective avenues that will enable more children and young people to access quality care in an environment that feels like home.

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Background

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.

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