MEDIA ALERT

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CREATE SAYS GOV REDRESS FOR INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE VICTIMS IS A STRONG STEP FORWARD

The Australian Government's announcement of a compensation scheme for victims of institutional child sexual abuse is a solid step forward says Ms Jacqui Reed, CEO of CREATE Foundation. The impact of childhood abuse is well reported as having traumatic and permanent effects. It is crucial that this scheme addresses both past, present and future survivors of sexual abuse to ensure they are equipped with resources to enable therapeutic support as a starting point to the healing process

A key concern for CREATE is that the proposed scheme is only for 10 years and focusses on past abuse and fails to acknowledge and plan for current and future claims of abuse. For this redress scheme to be effective it should not be time limited to allow all children and young people in care to access the resources provided.

"*The Royal Commission's research shows that it takes an average of 22 years for someone to come forward and share their story. Any scheme developed now should have the capacity to provide redress to a young person who is currently in the care of the system. As it stands the scheme has an end date, and many children and young people currently in the system would not be able to apply as they too come to terms with their abuse and seek compensation.*"

CREATE supports the Commission's proposal for guidelines to guide both government and non-government institutions in responding to claims for compensation in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse.

We hope that such guidelines would encourage an environment less adversarial and more empathic to the complexities involved in dealing with child sexual abuse; especially from the perspective of the child that suffered the abuse including issues of power imbalance, individual capacity to understand what has happened and to seek help.

The true impact of traumatic abuse is different for each individual and challenging to measure, but a known key element in recovery is the recognition of abuse by the offending institution.

"*It is very encouraging to see this specific recommendation from the Royal Commission being implemented nationally. A united approach is needed and CREATE calls for each and every government to take the lead address this as a national and current issue in out-of-home care.*"

"*In essence CREATE urges states and territories to engage with this recognition of the abuse and financial redress, and make the scheme a top priority for today's young people who are affected by this issue as well as those who were previously victims of this form of abuse,*" said Ms Jacqui Reed, CREATE Foundation Chief Executive.

"Over my two decades in the child protection field and on numerous advisory panels, the voices of children and young people have delivered the greatest expert insight of all. CREATE calls for young people's voices to be part of the scheme's advisory council groups."

About the scheme: One of last year's key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse was to implement a national redress scheme, which would offer compensation, counselling and psychological care, and a response from the institution if requested. The commission proposed the redress would be funded by the institutions where the abuse occurred, or by governments if the abuse happened in a state-run facility or where a non-government institution no longer exists.

It is reported that the scheme will allow victims of sexual abuse in an institutional setting to access $150,000 each.

CREATE Foundation is hopeful that young people's voices will be heard and that each state and territory will support and engage with this vital scheme.

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 children and young people in care.

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