

MEDIA RELEASE

July 2016

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

CREATE WELCOMES SUPPORT FOR YOUNG WOMEN WITH A CARE EXPERIENCE TO CONTINUE EDUCATION

Tuesday, 12 July, 2016, saw the launch of a first of its kind program to enable eligible women with a care experience to pursue tertiary education. Until 2019, applicants can access \$3,500 to support their higher education studies

CREATE Foundation's independent consultations have revealed that **only 35%¹ of care leavers completed Year 12** (compared to that of the general population). With a lot of room for improvement around education outcomes in this sector, the Queensland Government is working in partnership with The Smith Family to deliver these scholarships.

"CREATE welcomes this new initiative from the Queensland government as it will provide more opportunities for young women transitioning from care to overcome the challenges of childhood trauma and lead positive and meaningful lives," said Mr Lucas Moore, CREATE Foundation QLD Coordinator.

"Many young people in our community would not be able complete higher education without the emotional and financial support of their parents, support that a significant number of young women transitioning from care don't have access to. We acknowledge the active role taken by Minister Fentiman through listening and responding to the issues raised by young people at CREATE Foundation. We are confident that this new program will help to address the current outcomes for this cohort of young women."

Young people with an out-of-home care experience who are aiming to complete their high school or tertiary education are often faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges. They can be taking this on without traditional support networks or a home base.

The Gold Coast's, Caitlin has a care experience and attended the launch event. Caitlin is currently studying a Bachelor of Social Work and was very pleased to hear about the scholarships encouraging others to continue their tertiary education. Caitlin said, *"I was fortunate because my high school had a program which along with my results enabled me to gain entry to Uni, and it gave me a lot of peace of mind."*

"The age when we start Uni, around 18 years, can also mean leaving care so although this won't solve absolutely everything, it is a great step forward for people who want to continue tertiary study."

The scholarships compliment the Queensland Government's after care support program titled "Next Step: The Next Step After Care" and these services enable young people to access support and advice after leaving care, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling or texting 1800NEXTSTEP (1800 639 878). www.nextstepaftercare.org.au

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.

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**. Data source: McDowall, J. J. (2009). *Transitioning from care (CREATE Report Card 2009)*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation. Click [here](#) to visit our website to download the full reports.

In Australia, over 43,000 children and young people live in out-of-home care (i.e. foster, residential, kinship care) increasing every year. Through no fault of their own, children and young people may be placed in care due to neglect or abuse.

Some young people in care experience social isolation, stigma and chronic low self-esteem. They feel unconnected, disempowered and unable to do anything about it. Learn more at www.create.org.au

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MEDIA COVERAGE FROM THE LAUNCH

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-12/foster-children-women-offered-scholarships-queensland/7621982?section=qld>

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](#) 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 abuse**².

- 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

Click [here](#) to visit the website displaying the *CREATE Report Card 2009 – Transitioning from Care: Tracking Progress*

