

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 2 June 2016

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

End the Silence. Speak Up and Design a Better Future for Kids in Care.

The number of children and young people removed from families and placed in out-of-home care continues to rise and has now reached 43,339*. CREATE calls for an end to the silencing of the most vulnerable members of our community – children and young people in care – through external monitoring of the system designed to protect them.

CREATE urges the community to speak up and give voice to those in care during this federal election month. Call on the next Australian government to create a better future for the increasing numbers of our nation's most vulnerable children and young people. **Have your say online now and add the hashtag: #leavingcarecounts**

CREATE Foundation is the national peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience. Independent research has revealed that **if you have a care experience you are more likely to be undereducated, unemployed, become a parent at a younger age, become homeless and be dependent on social assistance.**

CREATE works to change all this and our three main election priorities are:

1. External monitoring and reporting of out-of-home care services, including establishing independent channels to advocate for children and young people in out-of-home care.
2. After-care support available to the age of 25, in every state and territory.
3. Priority access to government services for children and young people with a care experience.

Calling for external monitoring and independent complaint mechanisms includes a call for commitment to implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, due in 2017.

Recently CREATE hosted a Think Tank with young people with a care experience to identify issues arising from their care experience and transition to independence. From this consultation CREATE and young people call for the following changes:

Hard Facts On What it Means to Leave Care...	
Young people leaving care are without the support of family networks (compared to others).	CREATE calls for an increase to TILA (Transition to Independence Living Allowance)
35%** of care leavers are homeless in the first year of leaving care.	CREATE calls for better access to housing and more affordable housing models and fully funded after care services in all jurisdictions.
35%** of care leavers completed Year 12 (compared to that of the general population).	CREATE calls for priority access and support to attend and sustain higher education.
67%** of survey respondents are not aware of any official leaving care plan.	CREATE calls for improved Transition to Independence planning processes to ensure young people are involved and aware of these plans.

CREATE has been committed to enabling children and young people to have a voice, direct to those responsible for their care. Since 2009, CREATE's independent consultations with those with a care experience have been a platform to have a voice and to inform positive change in the sector. This external data has revealed the key issues and where support is needed most.

"CREATE is calling for the next Australian government to show their support and design a better future for kids in care," said Ms Jacqui Reed, Chief Executive CREATE Foundation.

"Young people are the experts on the change that is needed. In Queensland there have been successes where children and young people have taken part in having a say, and together as a community sector, positive change has been implemented through the Next Step service. We know a better future for kids in care is within reach."


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.

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Sources:

* Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016. Child protection Australia 2014–15. Child welfare series no. 63. Cat. no. CWS 57. Canberra: AIHW.

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