

MEDIA RELEASE

5 October 2017

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

SO MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE RESPONSE TO 'NT CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER CALLS FOR ACTION ON UNACCEPTABLE ABUSE IN CARE'

CREATE Foundation is Australia's peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience (including kinship care, foster care and residential care).

CREATE would like to add its voice to issues raised by the media regarding alleged issues of neglect and abuse in the out of home care sector in the Northern Territory.

There are currently around 1,100 children and young people in out of home care in the Northern Territory, over 900 of them are indigenous and just over half of all children and young people in out of home care are under the age of 10 years (AIHW, 2017).

CREATE Foundation remains concerned that it takes the media to highlight an incredible story of injustice to young people in detention and that the system purported to protect them continues to fail.

CREATE continues to call on the NT government and associated agencies to raise and improve the level of care and accountability being paid to these critical issues.

CREATE Foundation was actively involved in the recent Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, provided evidence to the Commission.

CREATE'S CEO Jacqui Reed said today that "more needs to be done in the NT to ensure that young people have access to independent services and are empowered to have a voice. Children and young people in out of home care are among the most vulnerable people in our community. It is critical that we start by listening to the lived experience of children and young people in out of home care."

Ms Reed went on to emphasize that "...we need to do more than listen, we need to respond and take measures to put in place and support young people's voices. After all, a Child Protection system is meant to keep vulnerable children safe from harm. The voices of the young people affected are our first line of information, and our most critical resource in addressing the real issues involved."

There are currently more than 46,000 children and young people in care across Australia. For more information on CREATE, please visit our website at www.create.org.au

ENDS

Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:

- 46,488 children were in out-of-home care across Australia at 30 June, 2016
- 35% of young people experience homelessness within the first year of leaving care
- 46% of boys with care experience have had contact with the juvenile justice system
- 29% of young people who have experienced out-of-home care are unemployed; 36% of children and young people are split from their brothers and sisters in care

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- 35% of young people in care have 5 or more caseworkers during their time in care
- 67% of young people in care are not aware of leaving care plans

For further comment from CREATE's CEO Jacqui Reed and/or a young person with care experience please call Andrea Doney 0402050418 and andrea@admarcoms.com.au

