

MEDIA STATEMENT

13 December 2017

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ROYAL COMMISSION

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AMONGST THE MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF THE OUT-OF-HOME CARE POPULATION, ACCORDING TO CREATE CEO JACQUI REED

The findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse are due to be handed down on Friday.

CREATE Foundation actively contributed to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse through the provision of evidence and more than a dozen submissions. CREATE's CEO Jacqui Reed has issued a strong call for better representation of young people with care experience in the report, and has today placed particular emphasis on young people with disabilities, who remain one of the most vulnerable groups of children and young people, and one of the most under-represented in the reform and improvement processes.

According to the Community Affairs References Committee to the Senate (2015), there is little national data on how many children with disabilities are placed into out-of-home care, but evidence suggests they are over represented.

"The voices and experiences of children with disabilities are most often missing from discussions about their wellbeing and the services they need" said Jacqui Reed.
"Children and young people in care with disabilities are often actively excluded and segregated from society, and this makes them especially vulnerable to abuse, as we have seen from the Royal Commission."

Children with disabilities have long been particularly vulnerable. They are often relinquished into care because of their disability, and this is the only option for many families who are unable to provide the care their child needs.

"Families of children with disabilities are especially vulnerable to having their children taken into care, because they often struggle in a range of areas, this means that children are often removed by virtue of their disability alone". Ms Reed said

"According to the Commission's own report on Disability and Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional contexts, most of the legislative reform has focused on adults with disabilities, and **little attention has been focussed on the vulnerable children in out-of-home and institutional care settings**".

“With the Royal Commission being handed down this week, it’s time for bipartisan support for long term positive outcomes” Ms Reed said.

For more information on CREATE, please visit our website at www.create.org.au

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

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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 are unemployed
- 36% of children and young people are split from their brothers and sisters in care
- 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

