

## MEDIA RELEASE

19 January 2018

creating a better life  
for children and young  
people in care

# MOST AUSTRALIAN KIDS DON'T LEAVE HOME AT 18

## WHY SHOULD YOUNG PEOPLE WITH CARE EXPERIENCE BE ASKED TO?

CREATE Foundation is Australia's 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).

Many young people in out-of-home care have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma during their childhoods. On their 18th birthday, their care arrangements end and they 'exit' care, often without supports in place. Young people leaving care face significantly reduced life outcomes compared with their peers who do not have a care history. It's hardly surprising that they're vulnerable to crises including homelessness and health problems and often struggle to find or keep jobs or continue at school.

In 2015-16, 153 young people were discharged from out of home care in Tasmania. While some may have forms of support and somewhere to go, many others find themselves worried, stressed and anxious about what will happen to them.

"Non-care experienced young people are not told to leave their home on their 18th birthday and as many parents will attest, they support their children well beyond 18 years" said Jacqui Reed, CREATE's CEO. "Young people preparing to transition from care are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Extending care to 21 would be beneficial for young Tasmanians and their carers, and would also save the government money".

Tasmania is currently leading the country with bipartisan support for extended care to 21 years of age and CREATE acknowledges the commitment of both parties to this initiative.

CREATE has, for many years, actively encouraged governments to make supported care to 21 an entitlement, but not at the discretion of the department. Some states/territories have supported the increase in age but have complex caveats that make any support discretionary and therefore accessing the support is problematic.

"Priority should be on an opt-in approach so that young people are given the choice not to remain in care if they don't wish to. However, where the young person is in and wishes to remain in a supportive family environment, the carers are financially supported to maintain the placement," said Jacqui Reed today. "This issue is bigger than politics. The future of our young people is the most important factor here. Therefore, the bipartisan support we are seeing emerging on both sides of politics in Tasmania is incredibly pleasing and should be lauded."

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](http://www.create.org.au)

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Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:

### **national new south wales office**

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- 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

**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](mailto:andrea@admarcoms.com.au)**

