

MEDIA RELEASE

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More resources for regional youth voices New CREATE Foundation Office in Townsville

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

North Queensland's children and young people in the child protection system will have access to better and brighter futures with the national body that represents the voices of children and young people in care opening a local office in Townsville next week.

The new CREATE Foundation Office celebrates its opening on Thursday 8 February at Riverway Arts Centre from 4.00-6.00 pm. At the celebration will be CREATE CEO Jacqui Reed and Jayden Hodson, who is a young person who has lived in foster care and knows the first hand challenges of transitioning from this into adulthood. Jayden now works for CREATE Foundation.

Former Minister for Child Safety Shannon Fentiman said late last year that "CREATE Foundation represents the views of children and young people in care, advocates for change to improve the care system and connects kids in care to each other and to their community."

"The opening of this office in Townsville means that CREATE will be better able to increase its reach to children and young people in care across the entire North Queensland region through its programs and events. They will also be better placed to strengthen its partnerships and relationships with the community and local service providers that support and empower children and young people in care" Ms Fentiman said.

CREATE's new regional hub will provide young people with access to support and companionship to help them improve their own life outcomes during what can be a difficult period in their lives. Already the Townsville hub has hosted fun days and training events for over 140 children and young people with a care experience in the Townville area.

CREATE Foundation's CEO Jacqui Reed said that the new office was an important milestone in the collective effort to improve access and relationships with all facets of the care sector, and most importantly with the young people who have experienced it. **"We are working hard to move the needle towards better outcome for people in foster, residential and kinship care" she said. "Townsville and regional Queensland deserve better access and better long term outcomes in all aspects of this. Queensland is taking a proactive approach in recognising and funding this need."**

The new CREATE Foundation office is funded has been made possible by funding received from Queensland's Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

Jacqui Reed said today that "we encourage anyone who is considering becoming a carer, anyone who is living in care, or anyone who wants to get involved with us to get in touch. We offer many connection points and ways to get and stay involved, and we offer plenty of resources too."

"CREATE Foundation and the Queensland Government is in providing access and resources for children and young people from the care sector as navigate their unique challenges in their homes, at school, and in the community," she said.

There are currently more than 46,000 children and young people in care across Australia.

Media wishing to attend the event, or to speak with Jacqui Reed CEO CREATE Foundation or a Queensland based young person with care experience are welcome to get in touch.

national new south wales office

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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

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

