

# **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

## **In-Care group**

**1. Study Title:** CREATE's National Out-of-Home Care Survey 2017

**2. Investigator:** Dr Joseph J. McDowall

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**Qualifications:** BSc, PhD, MAPS, FQA

**Position:** Executive Director (Research), CREATE Foundation

Dr McDowall has a Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Philosophy (in Social Psychology) from the University Of Queensland. He is a Member of the Australian Psychological Society and a Fellow of the Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences.

### **3. Introduction**

You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are a child or young person who has lived in out-of-home care for at least six months. CREATE is an organisation that ensures the voices of children and young people with a care experience are heard by the people who are making decisions about their lives. To do this, we need to know how you feel about the care you have received, and any thoughts you may have about what might make the care system better for the children and young people who live in it.

This Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form will tell you about the research project. It explains the purpose of the research, what you will be asked to do, and any risks involved. It also describes how your answers will be used, and with whom they might be shared. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about. Talk with your carer, a relative, or friend, or contact CREATE on the numbers listed. Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you are asked to fill out the Consent Form with your carer. Complete the forms by following the set instructions. When the required information has been provided, you will be asked for an email address or other point of contact to which we can send the survey.

By submitting the Consent Form, you are telling us that you;

- Understand what you have read;
- Agree to take part in the research project;
- Agree to our use of your personal information as described.

You may keep this Participant Information Sheet, and print off a copy of the Consent Form if you wish.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The proposed study is a follow-up to the survey CREATE conducted in 2013 looking at possible changes in the care system after the National Standards were introduced. The state and territory governments have provided CREATE with ways to contact all children and young people in care; you have been selected and are invited to participate in the online survey. If you decide to participate, all your personal, identifying information will be removed from the data once the survey is

complete.

Data will be collected from July 2017 through to February 2018, and CREATE would like as many children and young people who have a care experience as possible to be involved in this great opportunity to have a say about what is important to them. The online survey will take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete, depending on how much you want to say. Many questions simply require "ticking a box" to answer, while a few will ask you for your thoughts or opinions.

## **5. Study Procedures**

This study will involve participation in a survey that will require answering a series of questions about different aspects of your life including your health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, emotional and behavioural development, and self-care. The survey will be available online, but if you prefer, you can contact CREATE to talk with a staff member and answer the questions by telephone.

You have been sent a letter inviting you to participate in this study that includes a link to the Consent documents. After you complete these forms, you will be asked for your email address to which we will send the survey.

If you don't have an email, you can provide a postal address; we will send a web link and your unique username by post to that address; you can use that information to access the survey.

If you are accessing the survey from an email link, you will be able to pause and log back in later to complete the survey. If the invitation came in the post, use the web-link in your browser to access the survey. However, in this case, no pausing is possible; the survey must be completed in one session. If this is likely to be difficult, contact CREATE with an email address and we will send you an email version.

If rather than doing the survey online, you can ask your carer to contact CREATE for a telephone interview. When you call CREATE (Free-Call 1800 655 105) and provide a telephone number, CREATE staff will call back to ask the survey questions at no cost to your carer. Responses in the form of digital files will be stored on SurveyMonkey's secure server in the United States with no identifying information connected to that database.

## **6. Risks and Discomforts**

The major risk possible with this study could be some distress caused through the recall of unpleasant events experienced at some stage while you were placed in the care system. Because participation in this study is voluntary, you may stop answering any time if you feel continuing may be unpleasant. If you are doing a face-to-face interview, CREATE staff conducting the sessions are trained in providing appropriate debriefing for children and young people. If you are responding online and issues arise, you can contact CREATE staff to discuss any aspect of the survey and how it has affected you (Free-Call 1800 655 105). Alternatively, other services are available that may be able to assist (e.g., Kid's Help Line: Free-Call 1800 551 800).

In certain circumstances, CREATE staff may be required to disclose personal information of participants. For example, if a CREATE staff member becomes aware that a participant or another young person is at risk of harm, CREATE staff may be obliged to report this to authorities under children's protection legislation.

SurveyMonkey allows data collection to be anonymous. For this project, the IP collection function has been turned off (a capacity available in the more expensive versions of the platform). Therefore, there will be no way of identifying the source

of a response, apart from information provided in answering questions in the survey.

Participants should note that some data derived from their participation in this study will be sent overseas; the regulatory regimes governing data access and use in other countries may not be the same as those that are in place in Australia. Participants are advised that if they have any questions about this direct them to the Principal Investigator.

## **7. Possible Benefits**

The immediate benefit to you for responding is that issues you raise will be brought to the attention of governments and decision-makers so that they learn what needs to be done to improve the care system, if not in time for you personally (because you might be “ageing out”), then for all those involved with the system in the future. From a broader perspective, these data will be useful as an indicator of how child protection is functioning in Australia as a whole, when measured against standards set by the Commonwealth.

## **8. Voluntary Participation/Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

As indicated before, both you and your carer must accept CREATE’s invitation or “opt in” to be involved in this survey. Participation is completely voluntary and if you begin answering questions but then find, for some reason, that you do not wish to continue, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you feel that it would help you in responding to the survey, you can have a support person with you (carer, caseworker, or friend). However, we would like the answers you give to show what *you* think and feel about your life in care.

## **9. Confidentiality**

No identifiable data will be collected in this study. Client information will be used by the researcher to sample respondents. Children and young people (and consequently their carers) who have been selected will be sent a letter from CREATE inviting participation in the survey; following that, all personal information will be removed from stored survey data. Only the Chief Investigator will access the data file; information will not be shared with anyone else. In the final publication of results, if quotes from respondents are used to highlight certain points being made, the young person will be described simply, for example, as “Female, 16 years”.

## **10. Results of Project**

The results of this research project will be published in a major document that will be released early in 2018 at a national launch to which key decision-makers will be invited. A copy of the report will be made available online through CREATE’s web site (see <http://create.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2013-CRE065-F-CREATE-Report-Card-2013-Web-File-web.pdf> for a copy of the report summarizing the 2013 study). In addition, CREATE provides a specially prepared young person’s version of the findings and recommendations sent to all participants who indicate they would like to be informed of the results.

Data will be collected in the form of frequencies and ratings, as well as open responses. These types of results are extremely important in influencing government policy development (given that comparable, accurate information often is unavailable). As well as forming the basis of the national survey report, the data collected may be analysed in different ways and presented in other output. For example, from the previous smaller study, further publications were produced. One paper looked at factors predicting young persons' participation in

meetings where decisions were made about their future, while another analysed sibling placements in out-of-home care. In December 2016, a paper addressing connection to culture by indigenous children and young people was published. With more comprehensive data likely to be collected in this study, similar publications are expected to be forthcoming, dealing with the critical issues identified.

CREATE is providing prizes in each state and territory (\$100.00 gift vouchers) and an overall national prize of an iPad. If you would like to enter the draw for these prizes, you can use the link provided at the conclusion of the survey to leave your details for the draw. These data will be stored separately from your survey responses.

## **11. Consent**

If you do not wish to be involved, you need take no further action. However, if you would like your views to contribute to changing the system for the better, for current and future children and young people, then you need to indicate your willingness to be involved by completing the Consent Form.

## **12. Advice and Information**

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact:

Chief Investigator:

Dr Joseph J. McDowall at [joseph.mcdowall@create.org.au](mailto:joseph.mcdowall@create.org.au) or

Manager, Policy and Advocacy, CREATE Foundation:

Ms Tanya Raineri at [tanya.raineri@create.org.au](mailto:tanya.raineri@create.org.au) (phone:07 3062 4860)

The Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – incorporating all updates. This Statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies. Should you wish to discuss the study or view a copy of the Complaint procedure with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Committee Chair, Bellberry Human Research Ethics Committee on 08 8361 3222.