

## MEDIA RELEASE

6 August 2020

creating a better life  
for children and young  
people in care

### **CREATE CALLS FOR ACTION TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND REDUCE OVER-REPRESENTATION IN CARE**

All Australian governments recently committed to a range of specific targets designed to reduce disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, following the ongoing failure of the Closing the Gap strategy. The new strategy will, for the first time, include targets for addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care.

As the national consumer body representing the voices of children and young people in out-of-home care, CREATE Foundation welcomes the focus and priority placed around reducing disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly those with a care experience.

Governments calling to leave old ways behind and focus on self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being central to the solution is vital to enable significant and lasting change. CREATE Foundation is pleased by Prime Minister Morrison calling for the end of government-led change which CREATE agrees was “wrong-headed” and “not the right way to do it” as reported by Fairfax media.

The new report’s target number 12 states: “By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.”

CREATE Foundation’s Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, shared that, “*CREATE is appalled by the ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children and young people in out-of-home care.*”

*“There is no quick-fix and the strategy must include strengthening families first as a path to strengthening and supporting families, to reduce the need for formal child protection intervention,”* said Ms Reed.

One of the focus area indicators CREATE is pleased to note is: “The proportion of children aged 0-17 in out-of-home care that are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander who have current documented and approved cultural support plans.”

CREATE’s consultations with children and young people with a care experience revealed that fewer than one in five (18%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care were aware of their cultural support plans.

*“This statistic is one we hear consistently from young people, and its alarming and must be addressed. If we bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people into the care system we must ensure that their cultural connection remains strong to get the best outcome possible”* said Ms Reed.

*“We are calling for urgent action to equip services with the support and resources to reduce the number of children and young people entering the care system. CREATE welcomes the renewed commitment to address the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the care system.*

Listen to CREATE’s interview with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island young people in care during COVID-19 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4bkivWIRR8>

CREATE’s statement in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: <https://create.org.au/create-statement-in-solidarity-with-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/>

For more information please visit the CREATE website at [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

CREATE Foundation is the national 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 develops policy and research to report on and advocate for a better care system.

**For further comment from CREATE’s Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, and/or a young person with care experience contact Leigh White, CREATE Communications Advisor, via (m) 0431 932 122 or [leigh.white@create.org.au](mailto:leigh.white@create.org.au)**

Read more about the 12<sup>th</sup> Closing the Gap Target Report here: <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/national-agreement-ctg.pdf?q=0720>

#### **Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:**

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1. 44,906 children were in out-of-home care across Australia at 30 June 2019, of these 17,979 children identified as being Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander
2. The ratio of Indigenous/non-Indigenous children in OOHC is 10.6
3. Young people in out-of-home care are 16 times more likely to be under a youth justice order than the general population
4. 35% of young people experience homelessness within the first year of leaving care
5. 46% of males have been involved with the justice system since leaving care
6. 29% of young people who have left care or preparing to leave care are unemployed
7. 36% children and young people in care do not live with any of their siblings
8. 35% of young people in care have five or more caseworkers during their time in care
9. 67% of young people in care over the age of 15 are not aware of having a leaving care plan

AIHW. (2020). Data tables: Child protection Australia 2018–19. Child Welfare series no. 72. Cat no. CWS 74. Canberra: AIHW.

McDowall, J. J. (2015). Sibling placement and contact in out-of-home care. Sydney: CREATE Foundation

McDowall, J.J. (2018). Out of home care in Australia: Children and young People’s Views after 5 years of National Standards. Sydney: CREATE Foundation

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