

MEDIA ALERT

10 February 2022

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

CARE DAY 22: MESSAGE FROM CARE LEAVERS

“WE WON’T LET PAST STRUGGLES DEFINE US!”

Taking place on February 18th, 2022, Care Day is the world’s largest celebration of children and young people with a care experience overcoming adversity and recognising their rights.

Never before has it been more important to shine a light on the achievements of over 2.7 million* children who are currently growing up away from their family. In Australia alone, over 45,996¹ children are currently living in out-of-home care and experts state the figures are in fact, much greater.

25-year-old Jake, from Queensland, grew up in care and in spite of the statistics, is now studying at TAFE as well as working full-time. Jake shared that *“Care Day is cool because it is dedicated to ‘us’ and people get surprised how much support and recognition there is with organisations holding events, like at the TAFE I go to.”*



“There is a lot of stigma and people can be too easily labelled (a foster kid) and judged. People assume “they must or mustn’t be able to do this or that.” I love when people breakthrough, in spite of the stigma, because we don’t let our past care experience define who we are. Personally, my experience has made me who I am today. I am proud to own it.”

“The more awareness of young people’s experiences in care, the better and on Care day we get to see the amount of people who defy the odds and push past barriers in their lives,” added Jake.

Now in its’ seventh year, the Care Day initiative is underpinned by a collective of nine global voice of care organisations from across the world, including **EPIC** in Ireland, **VOYPIC** in Northern Ireland, **Who Cares?** Scotland, and **Become in the UK**, **Voices from Care** in Wales, **Fepa** in Spain, **Fice** in Croatia, **Voyce** in New Zealand and **CREATE** in Australia all working together to promote conversations about young people defying the odds and succeeding in their own right.

CREATE Foundation Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, shared that, *“Care Day is a valuable and unique opportunity, bringing together the global community, to elevate and share the voices of young people, who inspire us through their resilience and efforts to achieve in spite of the odds.”*

“CREATE’s approach is founded on connecting, empowering and changing the lives of people within the sector and the sector at large. CREATE is committed to supporting and advocating for the rights of the child and in particular, reducing stigma faced by people with a care experience. Our approach draws on connecting, empowering and changing the lives of people

within the sector and the sector at large. Care Day enables community to come together at all levels and share information and inspiration to effect positive change.”

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.

Read more on stigma in out-of-home care by reading [CREATE's stigma position paper](#), or learn about CREATE's awareness campaign to change out-dated stigma experienced by those with a care experience through our [#SnapthatStigma campaign here](#)

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

Read about Care Day at <https://careday.org/>

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

Sources:

* Unicef data states “At least 2.7 million children are living in residential care...”
<https://data.unicef.org/resources/estimating-number-children-formal-alternative-care-challenges-results-2/> (website accessed 13/1/22)

1. 45,996 children were in out-of-home care across Australia (AIHW 2021)

Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:

- 45,996 children and young people were reported in 2019-20 as living in out-of-home care across Australia (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2021)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children comprise 5% of the total child and young person population up to 17 years of age (ABS 2011).
- Nationally, the rate of Indigenous children in out-of-home care was 10.6 times the rate for non-Indigenous children (AIHW, 2014).
- Young people in out-of-home care are 16 times more likely to be under a youth justice order than the general population
- 30% of young people experience homelessness within the first year of leaving care. (McDowall, J. J. (2020).
- 46% of males have been involved with the justice system since leaving care
- 29% of young people who have left care or preparing to leave care are unemployed
- 36% children and young people in care do not live with any of their siblings
- 35% of young people in care have five or more caseworkers during their time in care
- 67% of young people in care over the age of 15 are not aware of having a leaving care plan

McDowall, J. J. (2018). Out-of-home care in Australia: Children and young people’s views after five years of National Standards. Sydney: CREATE Foundation.

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