

## MEDIA RELEASE

20 June 2022

creating a better life  
for children and young  
people in care

# VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE HEARD AS QLD GOV'S HISTORIC STEP DELIVERS CARE & SUPPORT TO 21!

Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2022, young Queenslanders with an out-of-home care experience received life-changing news from the Palaszczuk Government's announcing the option to remain in their current care placements till 21 years of age. Until now, when a young person turns 19, their supports ended and they were left with no alternative but to leave care – which statistically is shown to be fraught with challenges.

Young people in residential care placements have access new and exciting support which will be shaped by the young people (after extensive consultation across the state). This means that the days of young people in QLD being expected to transition to adulthood at 19, with no supports post are gone.

The announcement of the Palaszczuk Government's decision heralds a new era, one that is aligned with the [recent passing of the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021](#) where young people have a right to have a voice, and this new philosophy, now embedded in Legislation, prioritises listening to young people's voices, and providing a supportive future.

CREATE Foundation CEO Jacqui Reed stated that *"This a truly momentous occasion in Queensland's history, leaving a strong legacy for the Palaszczuk government and young people transitioning from care to adulthood."*

*"It's been a long journey, and at times we despaired that we'd ever 'get there', but we knew we had the support of Minister for Children, Leanne Linard, and many dedicated people within the [Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs](#), which galvanised us in knowing one day it would happen."*

In Australia alone, over 45,996 children did not sleep in their own home last night and are presently growing up in out-of-home care. No parent would expect their young adult child to leave home half-way through their final year of high school, nor allow them to become homeless, not finish their education, or be left to fend for themselves without support at 19.

Julia is a CREATE Young Consultant and shared her response to the announcement: *"When I heard about increasing care and support to 21 in Qld I was so excited! I've been sharing my voice and working towards this change for literally half my life [now in her 20's]! No-one is usually ready to be independent at 18, especially if in school, and this change is more than a house, it's a holistic approach including well-being, education, mental health & young people need all of these types of support to become independent."*

## What about other jurisdictions?

Since 2008, CREATE has tirelessly advocated in the out-of-home care sector, and at this point all states and territories **other than NSW** are in agreement on providing essential supports as an option for young care leavers to 21.

It is inconceivable that the NSW government continues to remain markedly out of step with its state counterparts, and with a widely held societal expectations that the measure of a society is its ability to protect its most vulnerable [Ghandi], and in this instance to support young care leavers.

*“Further to being behind the overwhelming consensus, NSW appears to be acting in contrast to the significant evidence supporting the benefits of providing this valuable support to 21 for young people leaving the child protection system,”* said Ms Reed.

Ms Reed shared that CREATE remains determined towards the cause with positive expectation that the very near future news will prevail of young people across Australia being afforded the same rights and support to enable them to reach their full potential.

As an organisation, CREATE asserts that care and support to 21 in QLD just makes sense and expresses gratitude that thankfully Queensland Treasury also saw it this way!

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

**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)**

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

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- 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).
- 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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