

MEDIA RELEASE

17 August 2022

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

NEW MINISTER, NEW SECRETARY, NEW HOPE?

Minister Natasha Maclaren-Jones, *NSW Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Disability Services* and Mr Michael Tidball, *Secretary, NSW Department Communities* met with CREATE representatives and not only listened to young people with interest, but also agreed to engage further with young people through upcoming Youth Advisory Groups, facilitated by CREATE.

Minister Maclaren-Jones and Mr Tidball are now in the driver's seat to effect change in NSW through advancing the interests of young people transitioning from care and reducing their entry into homelessness.

Risks facing young care leavers won't evaporate overnight. To date, NSW has held an entrenched view of supporting care leavers and remained steadfast in retaining the status quo, effectively, being out of step with other jurisdictions who took the initiative to support young people to remain in current placements to age 21.

Since 2008, CREATE remains the peak organisation representing the voices of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience.

CREATE Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jacqui Reed, shared that Tuesday's meetings with Minister Maclaren and Mr Tidball spelled hope for future young care leavers. The evidence is clear, the voices of young people heard, and now we await the brave decision for NSW to herald a new era where young people are afforded the same rights and benefits as their state and territory counterparts.

"It defies logic that NSW young people, don't have the option to stay with a carer beyond 18. Especially when access to affordable housing has never been more difficult," said Ms Reed.

"When anyone takes the time to stop and review the evidence in published data from Deloitte, the Office of the Children's Guardian and CREATE's reports, the solution is crystal clear is an investment in young people – our future."*

Today was an uplifting and refreshing experience, the momentum of which can serve to propel us forward, and generate discussion.

CREATE looks forward to exploring valuable tools available in other jurisdictions to support young people in NSW such as the 'Sort Your Life Out' app (SORTLI) and 'Go Your Own Way' Kits (GYOW) which CREATE and young people worked together to develop as resources to help young people navigate leaving care.

The current challenges present an opportunity for the NSW government to engage with young people, review the evidence about leaving care experiences and also, invest in a range of technology solutions, including department websites to simplify ways for carers, young people and child protection professionals to find existing support options.

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.

AMPLIFY THE VOICES - Raising the age of support to 21 in NSW is overdue, so the more every person shares the message online, the more we amplify the voice of young people. Speak up, share young people's voices with the hashtags #itsyourturnNSW #makeit21 <https://create.org.au/make-it-21/>

Read CREATE Foundation position papers on support to 21 and other key issues for young people in care <https://create.org.au/position-papers/> or at 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

Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:

- 46,212 children and young people were reported in 2020-21 as living in out-of-home care across Australia (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2022).
- 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, 2020).
- 38% of young people have been involved with the justice system.
- 30% 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*. CREATE Foundation.

McDowall, J. J. (2020). *Transitioning to adulthood from out-of-home care: Independence or interdependence?* CREATE Foundation.

Data report references:

* **Deloitte Access Economics**. (2018). *Extending care to 21 years in New South Wales*.

<https://www.anglicare.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Home-stretch-campaign-NSW-Oct-2018-v3-1.pdf>

* **Office of the Children's Guardian** (2020-21) *Report on the Leaving Care Monitoring Program*.

<https://www.opengov.nsw.gov.au/publications/19551>

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

* **McDowall, J. J.** (2020). *Transitioning to adulthood from out-of-home care: Independence or interdependence?* **CREATE Foundation**.

<https://create.org.au/research-and-publications/>

national new south wales office

CREATE Foundation Limited ABN 69 088 075 058

A 12 Union Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 | T 02 9267 1999

 1800 655 105  www.create.org.au  facebook.com/CREATEfnd  @CREATEfnd