



# 2024 Annual Review





CREATE Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners of the lands, skies and waters where we live and work. We pay deep respect to Elders, knowledge holders and community leaders across all Aboriginal communities.

We acknowledge that Australia is culturally rich with the oldest living cultures on earth. And we acknowledge over 60,000 years of growing kids strong, connected to culture and Country.

# Contents

---

## Introduction 4

Chair Foreword	4
From the CEO	5
Celebrating Jacqui Reed	6
Vision, Mission and Core Principles	8
CREATE's Role	9
Commitment to First Nations Peoples	10
Child Protection Landscape	12

---

## Connect 14

clubCREATE	15
E-Marketing	19
Connection Events	20
State-Wide Connection Event in Tasmania	21
Regional Connection in New South Wales	22
World Care Day	23

---

## Empower 24

Youth Advisory Groups	25
SHIFT Network	28
Northern Territory Round Table	29
South Australia's Practice Guide for Sibling Connection	30
Listen to Me	31
Victoria's Ministerial Youth Advisory Group and Youth Expert Advisory Group	32
Speak Up	34
Western Australia's State-Wide Speak Up	35
Internship Program	36
#SnapthatStigma	37
CREATE Your Future	38
Sortli	41

---

## Change 42

Advocacy and Influencing	43
Advocacy Wrap Ups	46
Consultations	47
CREATE's National Experience to Action Board (Youth)	48
Submissions	50
Voices in Action Conference	52
CREATE in the Media	54
Awards	55

---

## Financials 58

Financial Overview	59
Statement of Financial Performance	60
Statement of Financial Position	61
Statement of Cash Flows	62

---

## Looking Forward 64

Year Ahead	65
Supporters	66
Board of Directors	68
Leadership Committee	69
Locations and Staff	70

---

# Chair Foreword



I am honoured to be stepping into the role of Board Chair at CREATE Foundation. I have been a Board member at CREATE since 2006 and have committed to CREATE's work over many years.

I want to thank outgoing Chairman, Richard Hill, for his valued contribution in the role. I also want to thank Jacqui Reed for her passionate leadership as CEO over 17 years. Over her tenure, Jacqui expanded CREATE's programs and reach, influenced major policy developments in the care system and worked tirelessly to bring young people's voices to the centre of decision-making and reform.

And 2023-24 has been no exception. Over the last year, we have seen the implementation and embedding of transition support packages in all jurisdictions. We have also held another major national conference, bringing together young people, practitioners, advocates and decision makers in meaningful and collaborative ways to share best practice and tackle system issues.

I know young people have a lot to say about rights and participating in decisions that affect their lives. They also have a lot to say about residential care, sibling connections, health and wellbeing, transition supports and many other issues impacting their experiences and life outcomes. Thank you to all the young people who have been involved with CREATE this year.

Thank you also to all the CREATE staff who are working every day to bring our mission to life. I am very pleased with the work of the CREATE team over 2023-24. The team has continued delivering important programs in all states and territories and supporting young people to have a direct say to policy makers on what needs to change to improve the care system.

This is the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. I see CREATE as an organisation with a rich history and a compelling mission, which remains steadfast. I also see an adaptive, creative and agile organisation, responding to new opportunities and challenges, and responding to the emerging needs of children and young people. I want to welcome Imogen Edeson to the role of CEO, as an adaptive leader to carry CREATE forward in a dynamic and evolving contemporary context. We still have a long way to go and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with and for children and young people in our collective efforts to make things better for all kids in care.

Congratulations to the entire CREATE community on another impactful year.

**Jann Skinner**

**Chair and Treasurer  
CREATE Foundation**

---

# From the CEO



Hello CREATE community!

It's been a big year with lots of important developments at CREATE. This includes long-time CEO Jacqui Reed stepping out after 17 years of leadership at CREATE. Jacqui worked tirelessly over many years to elevate young people's voices and influence major reforms, including successfully advocating for all Australian governments to implement extended care packages for young people transitioning from care to independence. I also want to acknowledge the vision and leadership of Emma Davies as our former Deputy CEO, who re-designed CREATE's policy, advocacy and research program to set us up for a strong and strategic impact moving forward.

This last year, we held another national Voices in Action conference, bringing together young people alongside practitioners, carers, policy makers and service leaders to share ideas and define solutions to some of the toughest challenges within the care system. At the conference, we ran a series of Advocacy in Action sessions to collectively map out what needs to change across the care system and what it would take to make these changes. The sessions covered topics such as health and wellbeing, residential care, siblings, transition supports and education. We captured everyone's insights, ideas and innovations in a Delegate Statement, which is a compelling call to action on what needs to change and how.

In another exciting development, following a re-design process, we're delighted to have launched CREATE's National Experience to Action Board (Youth) and we have one young person from every state and territory sitting on the group. NEABY, as we like to call it, will help us define our strategic objectives, policy positions and advocacy priorities, as the national peak representing the voices of young people with a care experience. It will truly be an engine room for CREATE's advocacy.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our staff and teams at CREATE for the positive impact they are making to the lives of children and young people. CREATE's work is uniquely centred around young people's experiences in a system that often centres around adult perspectives and adult-led decision making, a system that can tend to overlook children's perspectives. So, the work we do at CREATE is essential in redressing this balance of power and I see this in practice right across all of CREATE's connection events, empowerment programs and advocacy activities.

Over the next year, we are looking forward to continuing to show up for young people, deliver programs that are tailored and responsive to what young people need and want from CREATE, listening to what young people have to say, and advocating alongside them to improve things.

My message to young people:

The CREATE community is a creative and colourful place. I really want to thank all the young people who bring the CREATE community to life and show us the way forward for system change, based on your lived experience and expertise. Young people are the heart and soul of CREATE. Everything we do is about you, for you and with you.

As incoming CEO, my commitment to young people is that we will listen to you, we will show up for you, and we will find ways to make sure your voices are listened to by others, so we can help make things better for all kids in care. Your voices matter. My wish for you is that you feel seen and heard and supported. That your rights are always respected. That the adults around you listen deeply to you and act on what you say about what you need.

CREATE exists to help you connect with community, feel empowered and influence change to make things better for all kids. To do this, we will listen to you as the leaders who are best placed to define the changes needed to improve things for kids in care. This is CREATE's commitment to you and this is my commitment to you.

**Imogen Edeson**

**Chief Executive Officer  
CREATE Foundation**

---

# Celebrating Jacqui Reed: A Legacy of Dedication and Impact



After 17 years of tireless work and dedicated leadership at CREATE Foundation, our valued Chief Executive Officer, Jacqui Reed, stepped down from the role in July 2024 due to health reasons.

Jacqui's tenure was defined by her passionate advocacy for children and young people in out-of-home care. She has been a committed advocate for young people, and her leadership transformed CREATE into a leading voice for young people with a care experience, ensuring their needs and rights are prioritised in policy decisions. Jacqui has been a cornerstone of CREATE, and her vision ensured that the voices of children and young people were heard at the highest levels, influencing policy changes and securing increased supports.



As CEO of CREATE Foundation since 2007, Jacqui's efforts significantly increased CREATE's capacity, allowing us to expand our programs and reach, and positively impacting the lives of those we serve, amplifying their voices at every level. Her vision and dedication have led to significant improvements in the out-of-home care system, including the extension of support for young care leavers to age 21. Her work with national and international bodies has elevated CREATE's profile and influence, effecting positive changes within the system. Jacqui's tenure at CREATE has been marked by innovative programs and initiatives that have held decision-makers accountable and ensured that the needs and views of children and young people are



prioritised. Her involvement in various boards and working groups, along with her research and advocacy efforts, has driven meaningful change across the sector.

Jacqui's positive impact on CREATE Foundation and the lives of children and young people in out-of-home care has been truly profound. She has been a formidable advocate and a strong leader over many years and she is leaving behind a significant legacy for CREATE to build upon. We extend our deepest thanks to Jacqui for her unwavering commitment and incredible contributions. Her legacy of compassion and advocacy will inspire us as we continue to champion the rights of young people, and will continue to guide us as we move forward, building on the strong foundation she has established. Jacqui offers her deepest gratitude to all the children and young people she has had the pleasure in serving.



# Vision

(what we hope for)

All children and young people with a care experience reach their full potential.

# Mission

(what we do)

Creating a better life for children and young people in care. To do this we;



**Connect** children and young people to each other, CREATE and their community to



**Empower** children and young people to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and skills that enable them to have a voice and be heard to



**Change** the care system, in consultation with children and young people, through advocacy to improve policies, practices, and services, and increase community awareness.

# Core Principles

(what we value)

- Children and young people are the centre of the work we do
- Our practice is inclusive and respectful of culture and diversity
- Our advocacy is independent, non-partisan, evidence based and driven by the voices of children and young people
- We believe that meaningful participation is essential for engaging children and young people
- Partnerships with government, NGOs and individuals are pivotal to success
- We are enthused by creativity and fun
- We invest in our people
- We provide a safe and inclusive environment for children and young people where they are safe, respected and have opportunities to have a say free of judgment and prejudice.

---

## CREATE's Role

CREATE is the only independent, national advocacy body whose policy positions are directly informed by children and young people with a care experience.

To achieve our mission of improving the lives of children and young people in care, CREATE runs connection events and a number of empowerment programs, to support children and young people with an out-of-home care experience to have their say. The insights shared by these young people informs our advocacy to help improve the care system.

Our work is underpinned by our deep and abiding commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable groups of children and young people. As part of this commitment, we prioritise being a child-safe organisation, ensuring that all our activities and practices uphold the highest standards of safety and well-being for children and young people.

In the 2023-2024 period, we continued to drive forward our Strategic Plan, reinforcing our commitment to enhancing the lives of children and young people with a care experience.

We strengthened our partnerships with a wide range of organisations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, to ensure our work remains culturally relevant and to amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who are over-represented in the out-of-home care system.

Our strategic focus at CREATE remains clear: placing children and young people at the centre of everything we do, ensuring their voices are heard, understood and listened to.



---

# Commitment to First Nations Peoples

CREATE Foundation recognises First Nations peoples as the traditional custodians of Australia including its lands and waterways. CREATE supports a just and equitable Australia where respect for First Nations peoples is afforded, and where all Australians can move forward together in the spirit of equity and justice.

CREATE respects the rights of First Nations peoples to maintain their culture and to be involved and participate in decisions that affect their lives and future in a manner consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. CREATE is committed to improving the lives of all children and young people with a care experience and acknowledges the impact of colonisation and the stolen generation in the community and the resulting impact of the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people within the out-of-home care system.

At CREATE, our dedication to improving the lives of First Nations children and young people is deeply embedded in our Strategic Plan. Following a comprehensive review of our capacity and resources, and in consultation with First Nations people and agencies, we explored various ways to express our commitment to these communities. Our commitment is to offer an inclusive service, and range of programs and activities to First Nations children and young people and this is articulated within our Strategic Plan with clear and measurable strategies to ensure our commitments are actioned. Our Strategic Plan includes three pivotal focus areas: relationships, rights and respect.

Recognising the importance of an integrated approach, we have decided to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in collaboration with Reconciliation Australia. The development of our RAP will begin with a reflective process to understand our current relationships, policies, and practices concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is a crucial first step towards creating meaningful change. By integrating our RAP within our broader Strategic Plan, we aim to ensure our commitment is seamless and inclusive.

We believe that RAPs can significantly enhance relationships with Aboriginal communities and sectors, promote diversity and inclusion within the workplace, and contribute to closing the gap. We are excited about this important development and will provide ongoing updates and opportunities for engagement as we progress on this journey.





# Child Protection Landscape

As at 30 June 2023, in Australia there were approximately 60,600 children on care and protection orders, with 45,300 in out-of-home care (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2023). Of these children in care, 19,700 were reported to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – meaning that nearly half of the population of those in out-of-home care were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. These figures are from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's most recent Child Protection reporting data, consistent with the 2022-23 financial year. It is important to note that from 2018, there was a change to data counting rules, where children who are on permanent care orders or guardianship orders to third-parties are not included in out-of-home-care numbers, rendering this population invisible in the current system (SNAICC, 2023).

## Jurisdictions

Figure 1 shows the number of young people in out-of-home care in each jurisdiction during the last three reporting periods.

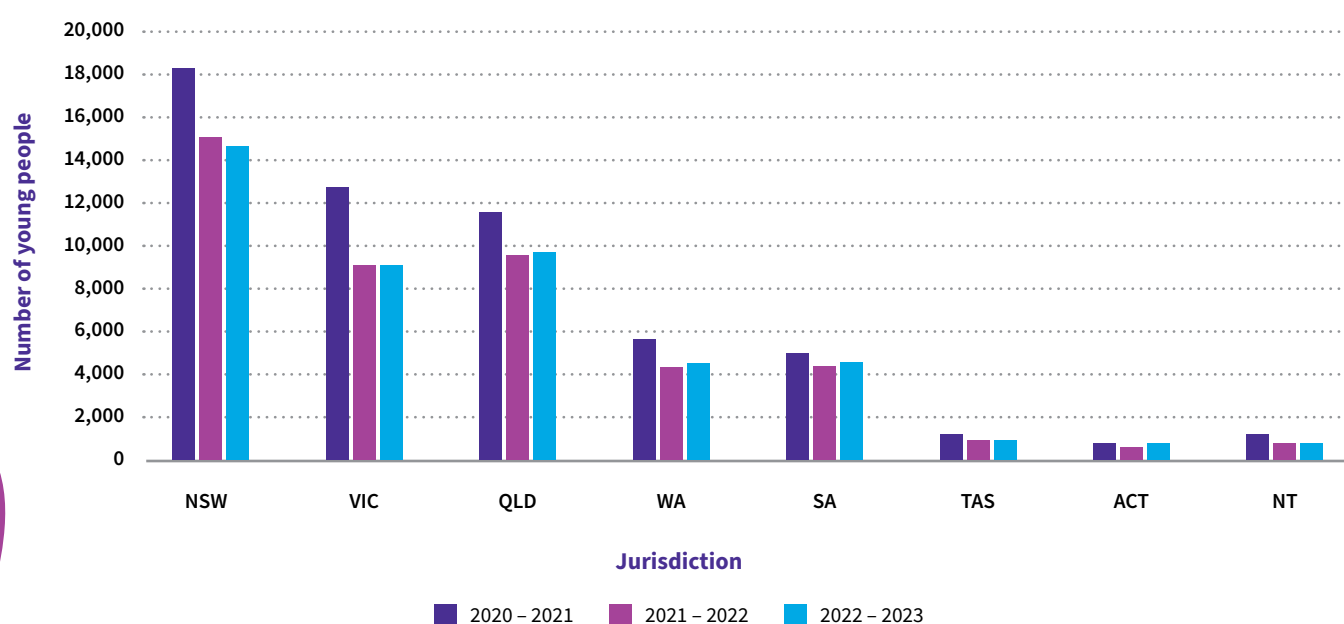
These numbers should be considered in the context of population levels in each state and territory. While the number of children in out-of-home care has generally fluctuated over recent years, the number of Indigenous children in care has increased by 10% between 2019–23.

For children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2023, about 3 in 5 children were aged 5–14 years. Disability status was only known for 72% of children in care and of those, 21% (9,700) reported a disability. In 2022–23, 70% of children in out-of-home care had been in care for two years or more. Concerningly, 1,200 children were subject to a substantiation of abuse in care 2022–23.

## Placements

As at 30 June 2023, approximately 90% (40,388) of young people in out-of-home care were in home-based care making up the majority of the out-of-home care placements for young people across Australia. Of these young people in home-based care, approximately 33% (15,127) were in foster care, 54% (24,556) were in relative/kinship care, and 2% (705) were in other home-based care (AIHW, 2023). Placement with foster carers had the highest rates at 49% (479) in Tasmania\* and 46% (369) in the Northern Territory, where Victoria had the lowest rate at 15% (1,373). In total, approximately 10% (4,310) of young people were in residential care, with Queensland and South Australia having the highest rate of residential care of all jurisdictions at 18% (1,761) and 17% (755) respectively (AIHW, 2023).

\*Tasmanian data may be inaccurate due to inconsistent recording of placement types (AIHW, 2023)



**Figure 1:** Number of young people in out-of-home care by jurisdiction.

## Key Data

- 45,300 children and young people are in out-of-home-care across Australia
- First Nations young people make up 44% of the care population
- Around 90% of young people are in home-based care models
- Queensland and South Australia have the highest rates of residential care at 18% and 17% of their care placements respectively
- All states except for New South Wales, Tasmania, and Northern Territory have seen an increase in the proportion of young people in out-of-home care between 2021-22 and 2022-23 (however some only marginally).

(AIHW, 2023)

Type of placement	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Foster care</b>	5,621	1,373	3,896	1,722	1,451	479	216	369	<b>15,127</b>
<b>Relative/Kinship care</b>	7,920	7,014	4,175	2,354	2,284	423	n.p.	n.p.	<b>24,556</b>
<b>Other home-based care</b>	0	216	0	0	44	0	n.p.	n.p.	<b>705</b>
<b>Total home-based care</b>	13,541	8,603	8,071	4,076	3,779	902	678	738	<b>40,388</b>
<b>Family group homes</b>	n.p.	0	0	139	0	0	0	n.p.	<b>143</b>
<b>Residential care</b>	821	486	1,761	307	755	68	44	68	<b>4,310</b>
<b>Independent living</b>	192	37	0	0	0	n.p.	n.p.	0	<b>233</b>
<b>Other/Unknown</b>	n.p.	6	0	25	0	n.p.	0	0	<b>199</b>

Note: n.p. refers to 'not present'

**Table 1:** Number of children and young people in different placement types by jurisdiction

## References:

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2021). Child protection Australia 2020–21, Summary. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/child-protection-australia-2020-21/contents/summary>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2022). Child protection Australia 2021–22. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/child-protection-australia-2021-22/contents/about>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2023). Child protection Australia 2022–23, Supporting children. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/child-protection-australia-insights/contents/insights/supporting-children>
- SNAICC. (2023). Family Matters Report 2023. <https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Family-Matters-Report-2023.pdf>

# Connect

Connecting children and young people to each other, CREATE and their community through our clubCREATE membership program and Connection Events.



---

# clubCREATE

## clubCREATE membership

clubCREATE is an exclusive club for children and young people aged 0 to 25 who are in care or have a care experience across Australia. It connects children and young people together and links them to CREATE programs and services nationally. It provides members the opportunity to build relationships, engage with their community, and access empowerment programs offered by CREATE. We keep our members connected through magazines, newsletters, events, fun activities and competitions, social media, and our website.

# 29,697

**Total clubCREATE Members**

---

# 11,301

**First Nations Members**

---

## Joining clubCREATE

When a child or young person joins clubCREATE, they receive a Welcome Pack that includes a membership card, sticker pack, wristband, and information on the care system, their rights, and CREATE's programs. As a member of clubCREATE they receive the clubCREATE magazine four times a year, a special birthday message from the CREATE team on their birthday month, and invitations to participate in CREATE's events, activities, and programs.

## clubCREATE in a year

---



# 1,478

**Welcome Packs distributed**

---



# 22,362

**Birthday messages sent**

---



# 88,876

**clubCREATE magazines distributed**

---

# Member Feedback

As part of our engagement and connection with our clubCREATE members, we gather their thoughts and feelings towards CREATE throughout the course of the year through our CREATE survey. By completing the survey, children and young people help us ensure that our programs and activities remain relevant and beneficial. Here are some key highlights on what children and young people had to say on what they love most about CREATE:

"They are extremely kind and respectful."

**"Being able to connect with others who share similar experiences and also being able to tell my story."**

"I love having to do the Connection groups. I enjoy everything about it."

"How supportive they are and how committed they are to help other children in care."

"Keeping up-to-date. It greatly helped my brother to get a traineeship through CREATE and Service NSW."

**"CREATE helps young people to know their rights in the care system and more."**

**"I like the way CREATE does activities for all ages and helps young people to have their voice heard."**

"Being connected in a like-minded community that works together to make CREATE the success it is, all are valued and it shows continuity from the beginning in all that it shares, open honest, fun and creative! Wonderful."

"CREATE enables validation through strong advocacy and supportive work, giving children and young people power behind their wants, needs and desires."

**"I love the fact that I can learn new things, do new things and meet new people in a safe and friendly environment."**

"Learning and knowing that being in foster care isn't something that I should be judged for."

"The connection I have to other young people and the staff. The opportunities I get to be able to advocate and represent other young people in out-of-home care."

"CREATE enables validation through strong advocacy and supportive work, giving children and young people power behind their wants, needs and desires."

**"How we all get along and we always have laughs and always make me feel like I belong."**



**"It give us kids to get to know each other and make friends with other kids going through somewhat of the same situation. Also helps see that's it going to be OK for the future."**

# clubCREATE Magazines

CREATE Foundation publishes and distributes magazines to our clubCREATE members across Australia every quarter. These magazines come in two versions: one for members aged 12 and under, and another for those aged 13 to 25. The magazines are available in both hard copy and digital formats: members aged 12 and under receive a physical copy by mail, while those over 12 get an electronic version.

Before each issue, young people are invited to join an editorial meeting to suggest ideas and contribute to the content, ensuring the magazine reflects the experiences and insights of those within the care system.

The magazines play a crucial role in keeping clubCREATE members informed about CREATE's advocacy efforts and how their voices contribute to improving the care system. They help our members stay connected by sharing stories from other children and young people in care, offer insights about the care system and their rights, and include fun elements like competitions, recipes, jokes and more!

"I like how they make magazines and send them to children and inspire them!"



"I love most about CREATE is the magazines because they are my favourite."

# E-marketing

Young people with a care experience connect with CREATE in many ways, including online. We've been working hard to stay in touch with our online community by regularly sharing advocacy updates, opportunities to have a say and heaps of fun CREATE events.

Follow us @  
CREATEfind

## Social media followers

**f** 10,403

**ig** 2,697

**in** 5,474

**+1,214**  
follower  
growth on  
LinkedIn

## Social media engagements

**f** 22,442

**ig** 22,798

**in** 12,005

## Website visitors

**65,103**

[www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

**31,692**

[www.createyourfuture.org.au](http://www.createyourfuture.org.au)

## National E-newsletters

**41** e-newsletters sent to:

**7,328** clubCREATE members

**3,025** Connect Us members

**3,325** subscribers

Average open rate **36.43%**

**The number  
of national  
e-newsletters  
is up by more  
than 100%**

---

# Connection Events

Connection Events offer children and young people with a care experience the chance to connect with their peers through fun, age-appropriate activities. These events provide clubCREATE members with enjoyable outings while helping them feel less isolated and reducing the stigma often associated with their care experience.



# 60

events were held with

# 1,943

children and young people attending

# 881

identified as First Nations



# State-Wide Connection Event in Tasmania

CREATE in Tasmania hosted a state-wide Connection Event to connect and celebrate children and young people in care, along with their carers, families and clubCREATE community. With over 160 attendees, the day was a huge success, thanks to the collaborative effort and support from the local community.

Hosted at the LexFun Centre in Launceston, CREATE collaborated with the Department of Education, children and young people, as well as the Foster and Kinship Carers Association of Tasmania and out-of-home care providers Key Assets and Life Without Barriers to bring the event to life.

With buses transporting attendees from each region to and from the event, as well as a range of fun activities from face-painting, trampolining, inflatable playgrounds, and a photo-booth for a keepsake of the day, there were smiles all round!

A BBQ lunch was kindly donated and delivered by the Launceston Rotary Club, which served as the cherry on top of what was a fabulous day for everyone!

**"Free event for kids to be with other kids from the same background!" (Young Person)**

"Seeing the kids connect with other children in similar circumstances, and listening to the 11yr old say how nice it was seeing so many other kids who don't live with Mum either. This was such an eye-opening moment for him and he felt less isolated." (Foster Carer)

"I remember coming to these [Connection Events] when I was younger. That's how I started out with CREATE." (Young Consultant)

---

# Regional Connection in New South Wales

CREATE in New South Wales has had the privilege of engaging and building relationships with clubCREATE members on the south coast as part of our regional engagement. We know that the voices and stories of children and young people are stronger together so we have been connecting and engaging with the south coast care community through a series of programs and events.

Our Connection Event at Inflatable World Wollongong introduced CREATE to 80 children and young people with a care experience along with their siblings, care families and friends. Backflips, ninja walls, obstacle courses, you name it, Inflatable World had it and so did all the children and young people that came along. We had such a great time connecting that we came back for our regional Christmas event a couple of months later!

These connections have paved the way for us to continue hearing the voices of all children and young people with a care experience. CREATE can't wait to continue our work connecting and engaging with the care community of the south coast, and all other care communities around New South Wales.

**"It was mad here. I haven't been before but I can't wait to come again." (Young Person)**

**"I liked that there were so many kids here to meet and play with." (Young Person)**



# World Care Day

World Care Day, held annually on 16 February, is the world's biggest celebration of children who grow up in out-of-home care. In 2024 CREATE amplified its focus on the crucial 'journey of care' experienced by these young individuals.

There are pivotal stages within a young person's life in care. From the initial entry into the system to the challenging phases such as adjusting to new caseworkers or placements, and eventually transitioning out of care, these moments are critical.

CREATE's online campaign aimed to strengthen the support structures in these critical moments, ensuring they better cater to the specific needs of young individuals.

CREATE hosted a number of fun events around Australia to celebrate our young people on World Care Day, connect them to each other and listen to what areas needed to improve.



**"It's not just a day to celebrate the policy change we have won, but also to focus on how much more needs to change."  
(Young Person, VIC)**



**"International Care Day is when young people with a care experience can come together and celebrate."  
(Young Person, VIC)**



# Empower

**Empowering children and young people to build self-confidence, self-esteem and skills that enable them to have a voice and be heard.**

Empowerment activities and programs give children and young people the chance to build their self-confidence and self-esteem by connecting with their peers and enabling them to have a voice and be heard. CREATE Foundation's key empowerment programs include **Youth Advisory Groups, Speak Up, CREATE Your Future, Young Person Boards and Committees.**



## CREATE's Youth Advisory Groups

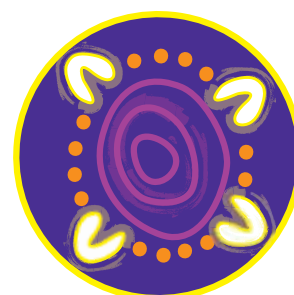
CREATE Foundation's Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs) are a youth empowerment program that provide young people between 10 and 25 with an out-of-home care experience an opportunity to have their voices heard. YAG meetings bring together young people – in care or who have left care – to talk about issues they have faced in the care system. It is the sharing of their experiences that informs CREATE's advocacy and helps us to build our resources, programs and policy developments.

## The year that was

Between July 2023 to June 2024 CREATE hosted over 100 Youth Advisory Groups nationally, with just over 700 young people participating across those sessions. Young people spoke about a range of topics that are important to them including identity, their emotions and wellbeing, connecting with their siblings, engaging in employment, communication, connection to culture, celebrations and special occasions, what it was like to enter care, mental health, stability and permanency in care, residential care, cost of living (and housing), the NDIS, complaints processes, relationships, transition supports, case worker support and much more!

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total
<b>Number of YAGs Held</b>	11	11	18	21	14	11	11	12	<b>109</b>
<b>Total Number of CYP Attending</b>	74	78	147	141	66	79	61	66	<b>712</b>
<b>Total Number of First Nations CYP Attending</b>	24	31	137	83	23	22	22	12	<b>230</b>

Note: CYP refers to 'children and young people'



# Here's a snapshot of what young people had to say at our YAGs:

## On carers and mental health training:

"If you give carers the training on how to support young people with their mental health, it will help them understand mental health a bit better. I feel like a lot of carers often might react negatively or badly or not in the best way for a young person because they don't understand mental ill health." (Young Person, TAS)

## On transition supports:

"I found out what it meant to transition from care when it happened. Didn't know before it." (Young Person, NSW)

"You know what's funny? They took me out of a homeless shelter when I was younger and when I left care they put me back in one." (Young Person, NT)

"DCP [Department of Child Protection] just assumed that my bio [biological] family would take me in when I aged out – it was a toxic environment... I had to find my own private rental – they didn't follow up with a Department of Housing application. I didn't have a leaving care plan." (Young Person, WA)

## On complaints processes:

"Complaints teams don't work, or deal with complaints so I think we need a third party. Like with the Ombudsman they are inefficient because they have too many complaints and they've only gotten back to me about a year ago. Having another one that works more closely with the sector and young people so I think young people should have a [complaints] team that is only focused on residential care." (Young Person, NSW)

## On connecting with their siblings:

"Case managers and the higher ups need to make [sure] the kids are having a good time and having fun." (Young Person, SA)

"Imagine if I took your kids off you and never let you see them again, that's how it feels. Imagine that I took the one thing you care about away from you and never let you see them again." (Young Person, NT)

## On communication and building positive relationships:

"[You could say to the other person that] I don't agree with what you have to say but I will accept what you have to say and I will try and understand your point of view." (Young Person, ACT)

## On identity and connecting with culture:

"I have an Aboriginal background and I used to be very connected to culture and I've lost that a bit... DFFH [Department of Families, Fairness and Housing] randomly texted mum telling her I was Aboriginal... I'm also Maori. I would have liked to have found out via a sit down with a family tree – a presentation. Not a text. They could have come with more information and a spirit of wanting to connect me..." (Young Person, VIC)

"I want to visit my Country, but no one talks to me about it. I know I can't live there but I want to go back." (Young Person, QLD)

## Across the country, we saw young people really hone in and speak strongly about some of the barriers they faced in engaging in their education:

"In year 12, I missed 120 days of school because of bullying and stuff." (Young Person, QLD)

"...some kids are not made to be at school, but it's [program name] made to get you back to mainstream school. You do good in these little programs but why wouldn't they keep you in the space that was working? You lose all your confidence." (Young Person, ACT)

"Teachers don't understand that sometimes school is not a first priority, we don't choose to go there, we are forced to be there. School is not always accepting or stress free, at times can be majorly toxic, sometimes the teachers are not the best." (Young Person, VIC)





**CREATE Foundation would like to extend a big thank you to all the young people who have been involved in our YAGs over the last year. We appreciate the time and effort that young people have dedicated to these sessions, and value the insights shared.**

CREATE wants to make sure we are addressing these concerns in a really focused way, that's why we will be prioritising education as an advocacy priority for the next financial year and will be finding every opportunity we can to elevate young people's voices.

CREATE would also like to extend a thank you to all the state teams for their work in creating safe spaces for young people to share their thoughts and opinions on the issues most important to them.

It is critical that young people with a care experience are supported to meaningfully participate in decisions and policies that affect them, and contribute to conversations around improving the care system.

## How to get involved?

CREATE runs YAGs regularly in each state and territory, and some sessions online to ensure young people in regional areas can also participate.

If you are a young person with a care experience aged 10 to 25 and you're feeling inspired and would like the opportunity to raise your voice and engage with other young people, we encourage you to reach out to our state team and get involved in YAGs. You can also keep an eye out for upcoming events in your state via our events page on the CREATE website.



# SHIFT



## SHIFT – Ministerial Youth Advisory Network in Queensland



Following the release of the Queensland Government's Roadmap for Residential Care, a group of nine young people, aged 18-21, who have lived residential care experience, have been selected to join a new lived experience group called SHIFT (Ministerial Youth Advisory Network).

This network provides advice directly to the Minister for Child Safety and will be involved in co-designing and facilitating transformational changes to the residential care system in Queensland. Already the SHIFT network has shared crucial insights centred around members' lived experiences to advocate for important reforms. Moving forward, SHIFT will be an invaluable voice for young people to inform practice, policy and system changes across Queensland's residential care sector.

Over the coming 12 months, SHIFT will continue meeting with the Minister as thought leaders in addressing critical issues for young people living in the residential care.

# Northern Territory Roundtable

CREATE in the Northern Territory recently hosted a Roundtable that brought together 14 young people and key decision-makers to discuss two critical areas as identified by young people; caseworker support and leaving care supports.

**“Even though I am not 18 yet, I got to hear about the stories of other people who are 18 and everything else at the Roundtable, so I now know what my options are and what I can ask for.”**

A common theme among the young participants was the inadequacy of the leaving care planning process. They expressed concerns that the process was often rushed, the information provided was insufficient, and the plans were difficult to understand.

**“Leaving care plan being left to the last minute. I was homeless because I didn’t know about my leaving care plan.”**

Many young people highlighted the need for comprehensive supports to help them develop independent living skills, such as budgeting, basic life skills (including cooking), and job readiness.

**“Independent living skills before you age out, budgeting, banking and mental health.”**

The final session of the day brought together all Young Consultants and executives from Territory Families, Housing, and Communities to brainstorm solutions to these pressing issues.

We look forward to collaborating closely with Territory Families, Housing, and Communities to implement the recommendations from the Roundtable.

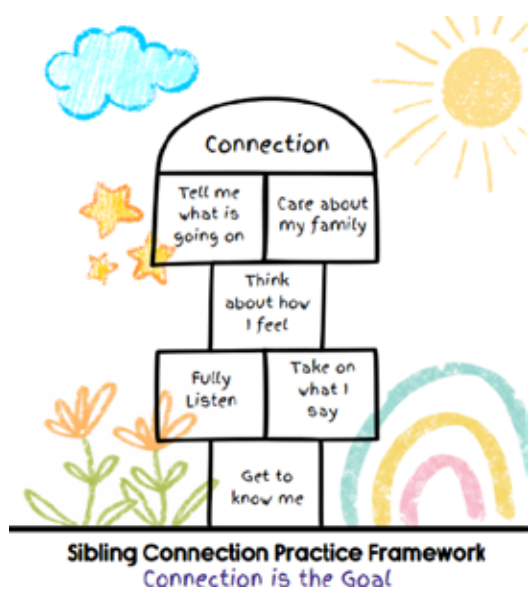


# South Australia's Practice Guide on Sibling Connection

CREATE has developed a Sibling Connection Practice Guide, following consultations with 30 young people aged 11-26 in South Australia, to improve sibling connections for those in out-of-home care.

Young people were engaged through Youth Advisory Groups, Connection Events, and interviews to gather valuable insights, supplemented by input from community stakeholders. Building on previous consultations on sibling connections and feedback from CREATE's Advocacy in Action conference workshop, the project highlights key themes and concerns from young people, emphasising the need for caseworkers and carers to understand their family history and prioritise sibling relationships.

The resulting Sibling Connection Practice Guide outlines a six-step framework designed to foster stronger sibling and family relationships. These steps—Get to know me, Fully listen, Take on what I say, Think about how I feel, Tell me what is going on, and Care about my family—are represented visually through a Hopscotch model, indicating that each step builds on the previous one. The guide stresses the importance of trust, safety, and understanding in practice, and provides strategies for caseworkers and carers to enhance their engagement with young people. The goal is to ensure that young people's voices are central in planning their sibling connections.



South Australia's annual sibling connection event brought more than 100 children, young people and their carers together for a fun day at Inflatable world.

# Listen to Me: A plea from children and young people with an out-of-home care experience to the adults who work with them

Children and young people in care often feel that they are not being listened to. This can be due to a range of factors, most commonly being not being given the chance to speak, actions not taken based on what young people say, not being believed or non-verbal communications not being recognised. To address this, CREATE partnered with the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Children and Young People's Commissioner's (CYPC) Youth Advisor to conduct a Youth Advisory Group exploring what listening feels like and means to young people. Ten young people came together and shared powerful experiences of the difference that being heard, and unheard, has made to their lives, and the actions that adults can and should take to make sure they are both listening and hearing children and young people.

**"When I first got listened to, I felt lost. I was so angry and so used to being... forgotten, so when someone took the time to actually listen, I felt lost because I had never felt that before. It took years before I felt relieved, it boosted my confidence and now I am starting to feel empowered."**



From the insights shared at the Youth Advisory Group, 5 key actions that adults can take to show they are listening to children and young people were identified and collated by CYPC's Youth Advisor. The findings and outcomes of this body of work have been published in a report titled: 'Listen to Me: A plea from children and young people with an Out-Of-Home Care experience'. The report was launched on the 15 August to key decision makers within the out-of-home care sector in ACT. CREATE Young People in ACT have also submitted artworks illustrating each of the 5 actions for inclusion in the publication and sat on a representative panel at the report launch. This body of work personifies the influential and powerful outcomes young people can achieve towards practice change.



## Victoria's Ministerial Youth Advisory Group and Youth Expert Advisory Group

The Victorian Ministerial Youth Advisory Group (MYAG) held a series of meetings with the Victorian Minister for Children this year. The MYAG, comprising 19 members with lived experience in key areas of out-of-home care, provided expert feedback and suggestions to inform the Minister and policymakers on a bimonthly basis.

Following a review, there will be some changes to MYAG going forward, including an expansion of members drawn from a broader pool of young people. The new application process is designed to be more inclusive, and provide a broader range of supports for members when appointed to the group. The outgoing MYAG team celebrated the end of the financial year with a group dinner and axe throwing at Maniax.

Victoria's Youth Expert Advisory Group (YEAG) has been highly active and has seen significant growth in membership

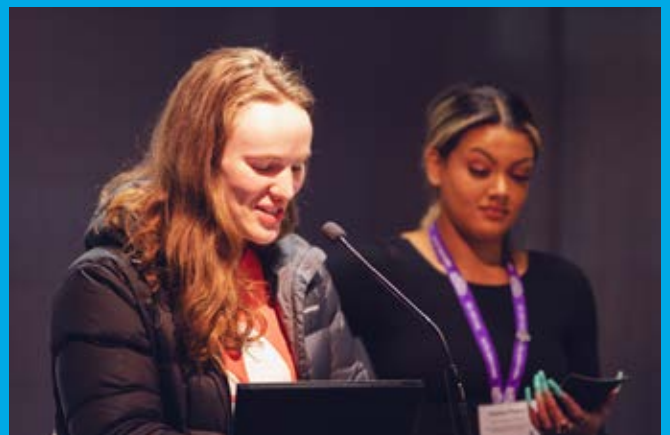
over the past year, now totalling 15 members. Monthly meetings, attended by the majority of members either online or in person, ensure consistent engagement. Additionally, regular Better Futures Working Groups and Communities of Practice provide members with ongoing opportunities to actively participate in the sector.

In the latter part of the year, planning was focused on the inaugural Youth Led Forum, held in June 2024 in partnership with the Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing. With the theme "Exploring Connections: How can YOU shape my tomorrow?", the event brought together community groups and changemakers to network and discuss ideas for creating positive change for young people transitioning from care to independence. The YEAG team did an extraordinary job planning and delivering impactful content to an appreciative audience.

**"I am still in awe at the amazing YEAG young people! Absolutely blown away at their ability to facilitate a forum where they were able to be vulnerable with sharing their story, powerful with their creative pieces and insightful to those supporting young people in out-of-home care reach their potential!"**



**"It was one of the most moving and impactful forums that I have ever been to. It was incredibly brave to share such personal stories and reflections and I had conversations with others who indicated that they were going to change their practice as a result of hearing their experiences."**





## Speak Up

Speak Up (SUP) is an empowerment training program that teaches young people leadership and speaking skills. Over three levels, SUP training aims to build on the advocacy and leadership skills of young people as experts with lived experience of the system, empowering them to become CREATE Young Consultants. As Young Consultants they are able to represent CREATE to effectively voice their opinions into policy, media, and other feedback mechanisms within the out-of-home care system.

**89** Speak Up sessions were held Australia-wide

### Speak Up participation

<b>SPEAK UP</b>	<b>183</b>
Level 1	
First Nations	<b>78</b>

<b>SPEAK UP</b>	<b>95</b>
Level 2	
First Nations	<b>32</b>

<b>SPEAK UP</b>	<b>88</b>
Level 3	
First Nations	<b>30</b>

"I love the Speak Up programs where us as younger children in care can have a day and speak up for ourselves about if there is a problem and it's hard for us to speak but having CREATE gives us children in care so much more confident to have a say about our problems"



## Western Australia's State-wide Speak Up

CREATE in Western Australia ended the financial year with a State-wide Speak Up, which saw young people joining all the way from Albany to Kununurra. This workshop was co-facilitated by an experienced and passionate Young Consultant, who brought their knowledge of the care system and skills in being a strong advocate.

Some young people were introduced to the Western Australia Charter of Rights for the first time, and reflected on ways these rights have been respected by the adults around them during their lives. This sparked some powerful conversation around raising awareness for young people to know their rights.

The group explored the value and strength of young people's individual stories. Speak Up aims to encourage confidence in young people to feel empowered to share their journey in supported ways, and we saw this workshop do exactly that. Young people expressed the important changes they'd like to see happen in the care system, such as communication from caseworkers, stable housing when leaving care, and improved sibling connection. CREATE in Western Australia can't wait to see more of our strong Young Consultants shine and advocate to improve the out-of-home care system.

"The opportunities CREATE has given me to use my experience and voice to help create change within the care system."

**"Not everyone was shown their rights in care."  
(Young Person, 17, Regional)**

# Internship Program

Thanks to the generous support of Hollard Insurance, CREATE was able to develop and run our Internship Program. The CREATE Internship offers participants 3-6 months of on-the-job training, complemented by access to a comprehensive suite of internal staff training. The CREATE Internship Program is designed to empower young people by equipping them with the confidence and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. Developed in consultation with young people, this program addresses the common challenges job seekers face, such as a lack of confidence and the absence of essential workplace skills.

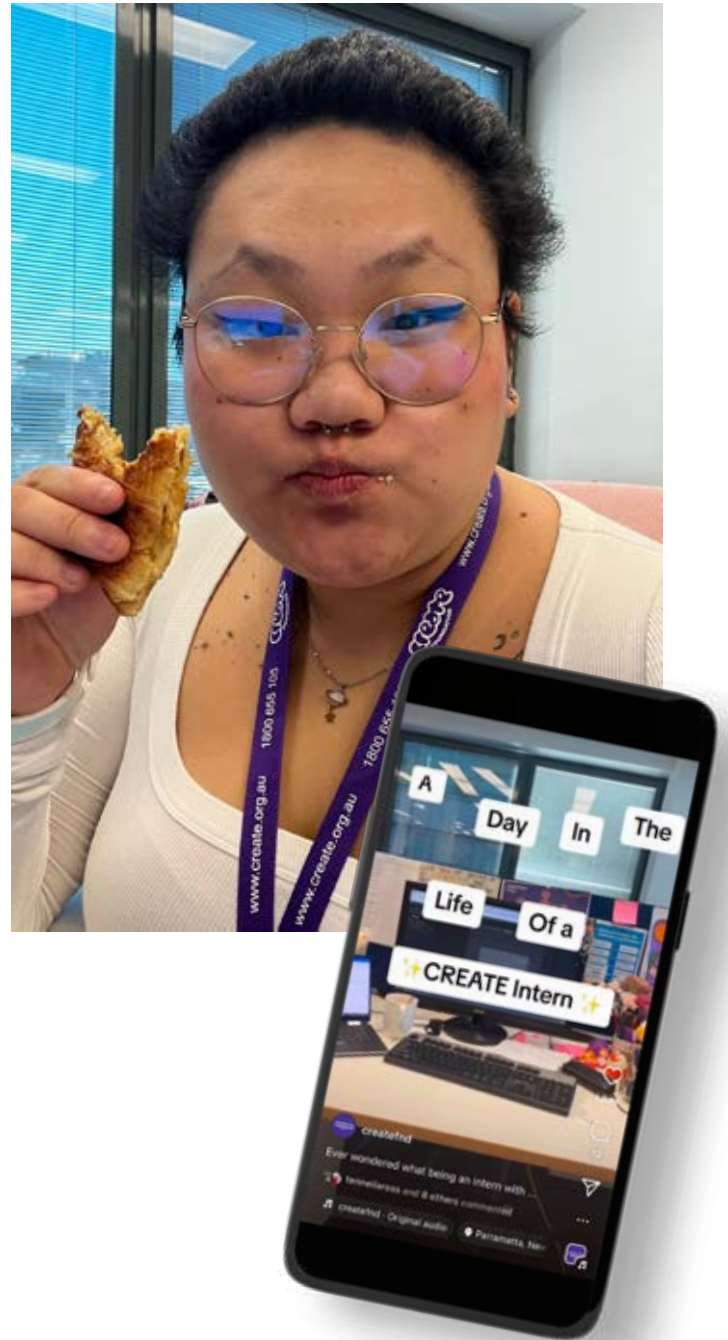
Targeted at young people aged 18-25 with a care experience who have completed Speak Up Level 3, the internship is a flexible, part-time opportunity that takes place within a CREATE state office. Throughout the program, interns gain valuable experience in areas such as job application processes, professional boundaries, employee obligations, team participation, IT skills, and workplace dress code. The CREATE Internship is an invaluable stepping stone for young people preparing to enter the office environment for the first time.

## Spotlight on our Tasmanian Intern, Ella

Over the course of 10 weeks, our Intern in the CREATE Tasmania office, Ella, undertook a range of training opportunities, including first aid training, an extensive office and CREATE induction, Trauma Informed Practice training, as well as Facilitator training. Whilst Ella expressed that she was nervous to begin with, she enjoyed being a part of the CREATE team, and stated that her experiences as an Intern with CREATE worked well alongside her tertiary studies and was able to integrate what she had learnt at CREATE into her student placement working with young people. Throughout her internship, Ella provided insightful feedback into the preparation for various workshops, suggesting activities and timeframes to better suit young people.

## Spotlight on our New South Wales Intern, Alice

Alice completed her internship in the New South Wales office, where she created engaging behind-the-scenes reels of her time with CREATE, which received high engagement on our social media platforms.



Hollard.

# #SnapthatStigma

CREATE's #SnapthatStigma campaign has been running since 2015, providing inspiration to children and young people in care from those who understand the journey best — other young people who have lived in care.

Our #SnapthatStigma stories from all over Australia show us how young people rise above preconceived views about “kids in care” and create their own paths as artists, pilots, amazing parents and even Olympic athletes!

**CREATE featured 8 incredible young people and their stories across our website, social media and magazines for our #SnapthatStigma campaign**



“If a young person is labelled as something, chances are they will become that label. Kids in care deserve to be uplifted and enabled, and they can change the narrative.”  
– Marissa



“I came into care when I was 12, turning 13... I was really lucky in that one of my group homes, I had a really good carer. She taught me that I am someone to be valued. I am not just my casefile.”  
– Cheyenne



“Sometimes there are just so many pressures on you as a young Indigenous person, and distractions.”  
– CJ



“In my artwork I use such bright colours to encourage positivity in people's lives.”  
– Emmarita

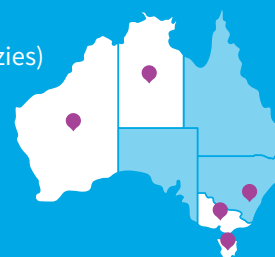


## CREATE Your Future

The CREATE Your Future (CYF) program equips young people aged 15-25 with essential skills and knowledge for a successful transition from care to independence. Through a series of practical workshops focusing on life skills, decision-making, and self-awareness, the CYF program aims to empower young people with the abilities needed to thrive once they leave care. Beyond gaining competencies such as financial management, maintaining health, and navigating the rental housing market, participants are also guided in critical thinking, making informed and independent decisions, and understanding their identity and role within the community.

**CREATE delivered the CREATE Your Future program in five states and territories including:**

- ACT (thanks to the Snow Foundation)
- Northern Territory
- Tasmania
- Victoria (thanks to Menzies)
- Western Australia



**28**

workshops held

**89**

participants

**27**

identified as  
First Nations

## CREATE Your Future Grant Scheme

Each year CREATE Foundation runs the CREATE Your Future Grant Scheme, where young people between 15 and 25 with a care experience can apply for grants that help them in their transition to adulthood. These grants help young people increase their independence, better access to employment, educational opportunities, and support young people through their studies. These grants are made possible through the donations of organisations and individuals.

This year CREATE offered two types of CREATE Your Future grants: Education and IT (pre-selected laptop fitted with Windows 11 Home, and Office Home & Student 2021). Eight young people across Australia were successful in the 2024 CREATE Your Future Grant Scheme. Five young people were granted new laptops. Two of these young people were completing their final year of schooling, and three were going on to higher education at TAFE (Construction, Animal Care, and Fashion). One grant was used to purchase a vlogging camera to assist with a young person's Bachelor in Film and Journalism, one grant was used for partial payment towards schooling fees, and the last grant went towards a carpentry course.

We would like to thank our sponsors, State Trustee Victoria and Territory Families in the Northern Territory who supplemented CREATE's donation for the 2024 CREATE Your Future Grant Scheme.

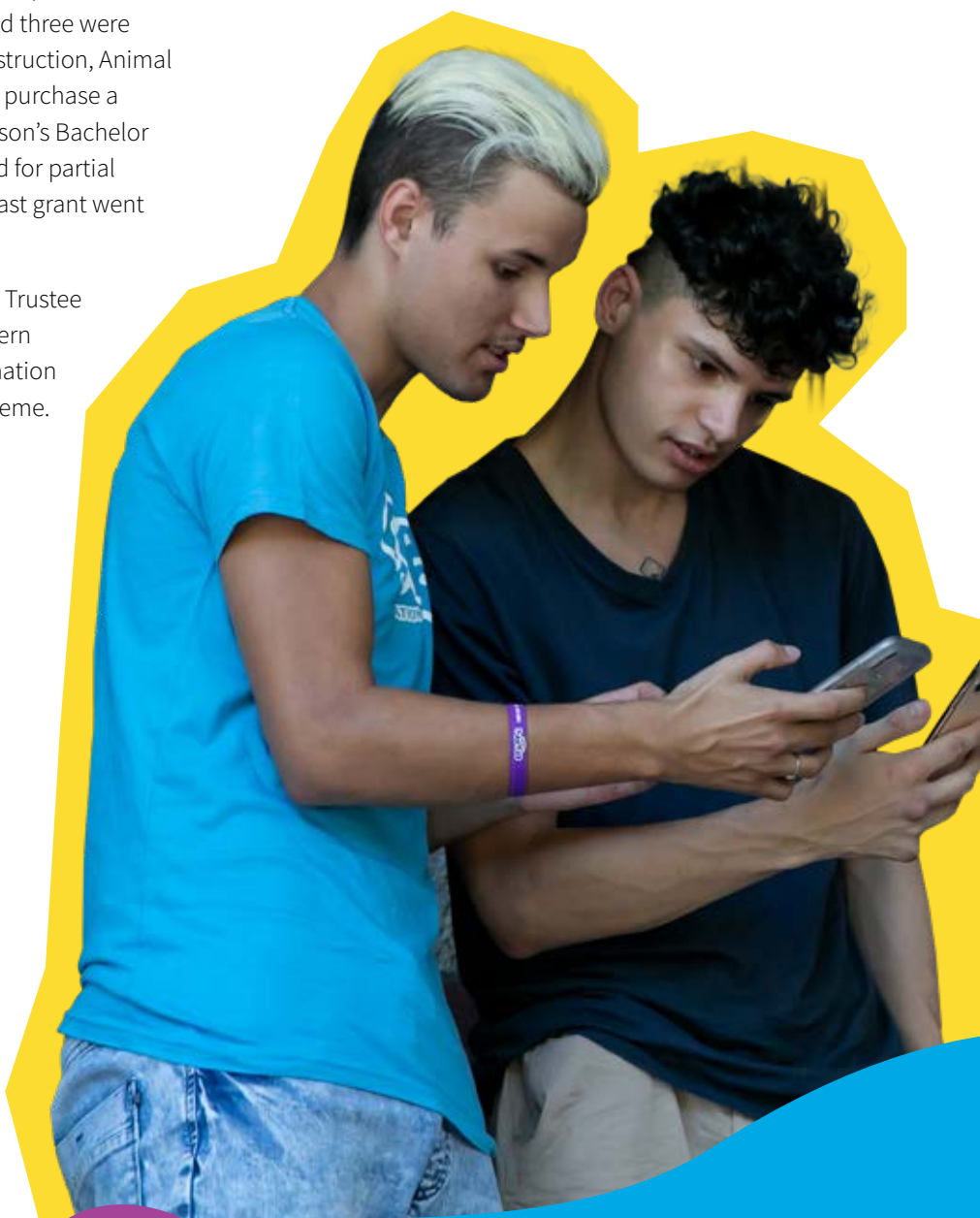
**"We are so grateful for this opportunity. This means that (YP) can remain at their school and finish their final year with all their friends."**

If you would like to become a sponsor for next year's CREATE Your Future Grant Scheme, please get in touch with us at [create@create.org.au](mailto:create@create.org.au). These grants can make a huge positive impact in young people's lives.

"My course fees are already so expensive, getting this means I actually have a good chance at being successful!"

"(YP) will be thrilled! I can't wait to tell him, thank you so much!"

"Thank you so much! I'm so excited to start using it (iPad)!"





## CREATE Your Future Licensing

CREATE is proud to highlight the continued success of our CREATE Your Future (CYF) licensing program. This initiative enables government departments and out-of-home care sector agencies to undergo CYF facilitator training and deliver life skills workshops tailored for young people aged 15 to 25.

These workshops support individuals before, during, and after their transition to adulthood.

By purchasing licensing packages, agencies enhance access to essential independent living skills for young people in out-of-home care. This access facilitates the development of critical life skills across various domains, including education, employment, identity, housing, and healthy relationships.

We value our partnerships with our licence holders; Department for Child Protection South Australia, Key Assets, Life Without Barriers and Mackillop. We look forward to continuing to expand in all states over the coming year.

If you are interested in learning more about our CYF Licensing Program please contact [create@create.org.au](mailto:create@create.org.au)

# Sortli



Sortli (short for Sort Your Life Out) is a mobile app for young people to help them with their transition to independence. The app has been developed in consultation with young people aged 15 to 18 years with a care experience and is designed to engage them to think about their future goals and feel confident to transition from care to adulthood.

The aim of the app is to provide young people with useful information at their fingertips to support big decisions they need to make around the eight key life domains: identity, relationships, housing, education and employment, health, living skills, finances and legal. Each domain includes action orientated prompts, short descriptions, key terms and concepts, step-by-step guides, direct links to forms, and support services.

**"If you need help, it's there."  
(Young Person, QLD)**

CREATE Foundation wants to thank the following departments for making this resource available to young people to help with their transition from out-of-home care.

- Department for Child Protection, South Australia
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Victoria
- Department of Communities, Western Australia

From June 2023 to July 2024,  
Sortli was downloaded

**4,767**

times in Australia.

Users spend an average of

**5 minutes**

at a time exploring Sortli.

The **"Money"** section was the  
most visited part of the Sortli app

**"I found the app helpful and  
easy to navigate when I first  
used it. Information was easy  
to find." (Young Person, SA)**

**"I find it more  
helpful than asking  
questions at places  
like Child Safety."  
(Young Person, QLD)**





# Change

**Change the care system, in consultation with children and young people, through advocacy to improve policies, practices, and services and increase community awareness.**

CREATE Foundation works to provide children and young people with the opportunity to share their experiences and participate in the decisions that shape the delivery of child protection and out-of-home care services throughout Australia.

# Advocacy and Influencing

CREATE's Advocacy and Influencing team connects with young people across Australia in out-of-home care to amplify their voices to drive systemic change. Over the last 12 months, CREATE has engaged with children, young people and others involved in the out-of-home care system

to understand current issues and define the changes needed to make things better for all kids in contact with child protection and care systems.

These are some of the things that young people tell us they are concerned about:



# Advocacy Progress

Over the last year, we have seen progress across some of these advocacy priorities.

## Transitions to independence

The last 12 months has seen all state governments providing some model of extended support for young people leaving care, including implementation of new transition support models in New South Wales and Queensland. However, further investment is urgently needed to ensure transition supports truly meet the needs of young people transitioning to independence.

CREATE's advocacy work in relation to transitions to adulthood involves making sure the voices of young people get heard by decision makers. This includes asking young people about their experiences of new and existing programs to understand how they are working and the extent to which they meet young people's needs. Some states have a lived experience governance group to tap into young people's expertise in relation to transition support, such as the Victorian Youth Expert Advisory Group and the new Queensland Extended Post Care Support Oversight Group (planned to launch in 2024-25). Both of these groups aim to bring young people's voices to the centre of discussions about transition support models.

## Residential Care

This year has seen a significant focus in all jurisdictions on the experiences of young people living in residential care and this has been at the forefront of CREATE's discussions with state child protection departments. CREATE has been involved in ministerial roundtables, live advocacy sessions, governance groups and consultations with young people over the last 12 months in relation to their experiences of residential care. Over this time, there has been a strong acknowledgement by decision-makers that young people's voices are essential to creating environments that support safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Self-Determination

Young people and state governments have also had a significant focus on First Nations self-determination, including increased financial commitments from state governments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations (ATSICCOs). While many states and territories have committed to early intervention support provided by ATSICCOs, only some have made a decisive commitment for these organisations to deliver care under residential, foster or kinship care models. Western Australia has made a directive as part of its out-of-home-care commissioning reforms, which include a focus on more culturally responsive care arrangements for Aboriginal children. And Victoria and Queensland have made significant progress towards delegated authority frameworks to transition decision making to ATSICCOs in relation to the care of Aboriginal children and young people.

## What's Ahead

Over the next 12 months, CREATE's Advocacy and Influencing team are keen to support the ongoing work of lived experience governance groups and to diversify CREATE's advocacy activities in all states and territories – to put young people at the centre of decision making and system reform across the country.





# Advocacy Wrap Ups

CREATE's monthly Advocacy Wrap Ups provide updates on our latest advocacy for improving the lives of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience. They are shared on our digital channels and include:

- News and research
- Submissions by CREATE
- Media statements
- Consultation opportunities
- And a monthly advocacy focus

## Here are some of our advocacy focuses from the last year:

- June 2024, Advocacy win! ACT extends support for care leavers to 21
- May 2024, Victoria YEAG's inaugural Youth-led Forum
- March 2024, Voices in Action conference outcomes
- January 2024, Youth justice and raising the age
- November 2023, Sibling, kin and family connection
- September 2023, Having a say in Queensland's Residential Care Review
- July 2023, Joint statement on raising the age in Tasmania



### May advocacy and what's coming up

Hi there, CREATE's monthly Advocacy Wrap Ups provide regular updates on our latest advocacy for improving the lives of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience. Keep reading for the latest updates.



### Final tickets to YEAG's Youth-led Forum, Melbourne

If you are a Victorian professional working in a service where young people with a care experience regularly interact, don't miss our FREE Youth-led Forum on Thursday, 20 June. Seats are strictly limited. [RSVP today.](#)

### Young people to drive residential care reform in Queensland

CREATE is looking for expressions of interest from young people aged 18-21 years with experience of residential care in Queensland to join the first Ministerial Youth Advisory Board (MYAB). [Apply before Monday, 17 June.](#)



### Advocacy Wrap Up

#### ACT

- ACT has extended support for care leavers to age 21.

#### Queensland

- CREATE provided feedback to the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services and Department of Justice and Attorney-General in relation to the review of Queensland's child protection litigation (CPL) model.

#### Victoria

- Foster Care Association of Victoria's 2024 Foster Carer Snapshot Report is out now!

#### New South Wales

- CREATE joined a coalition of more than 100 organisations and groups to make a joint submission with Raise The Age NSW and the Justice and Equity Centre.

#### Tasmania

- Change for Children, a 10-year Strategy for upholding the rights of children by preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse has been released.
- The Tasmanian Government has released the first progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry.



## Consultations

Consultations are a key component of CREATE's advocacy work, providing a crucial platform for young people to voice their opinions on issues that are important to them. This year, CREATE engaged with 214 young people in consultations across the country, addressing important topics such as health and wellbeing, caseworker support, and accessing records. These consultations offered valuable insights into the challenges and needs faced by young people in care.

The feedback collected from these consultations plays an essential role in shaping CREATE's recommendations to government and key decision-makers. Some of CREATE's key recommendations included:

- **[On caseworker support]** Make a contact/communication agreement with each individual young person to assist in keeping track of and holding child safety officers accountable.

**"Following through with what is promised. If you are going to look into something, do it. Don't over promise and under deliver." (Young Person, QLD)**

- **[On health and wellbeing]** Ensure all children have their physical, developmental, psychosocial, and mental health needs assessed as per the National Standards for out-of-home care.

**"It's a combination of being physically healthy and your wellbeing, like your emotional state, being all good with that and being able to control your emotions and feelings."  
(Young Person, NT)**

- **[On accessing records]** Ensure robust, comprehensive, and consistent records are maintained and regularly reviewed and updated across the life span of the young person in care.

**"I didn't know you could even access your records. When I left care, it was hectic."  
(Young Person, WA)**

---

# CREATE's National Experience to Action Board (Youth) [NEABY]

This year CREATE embarked on a journey to re-vamp our Influencing Committee to incorporate more voices from young people across Australia. At the inaugural meeting in June 2024, we gave our young members the opportunity to help us re-name the Influencing Committee because we want this to be a space that young people can own, and feel safe and supported to express their ideas for change.

CREATE is delighted to introduce the brand-new name chosen by the members of our Youth Advisory Board: 'National Experience to Action Board (Youth)' or NEABY.

NEABY is made up of young representatives from every state and territory who will meet on a regular basis over the next 12-months to share their insights and ideas for improving the care system for children and young people around Australia. This will guide our advocacy program at CREATE. Each of our members have a really clear vision for the role they are hoping to play in NEABY:

We are looking forward to sharing more updates from NEABY over the course of the next year!

**"I would like to create positive change for kids with a background in care."  
(Keely, our member for NT)**

**"It's important to me to be able to speak up and advocate for those who are still in care and feel like they aren't being heard." (Sarah, our member for SA)**

**"It'll provide me with a comfortable space for me to voice out my opinions and concerns about the out-of-home care system and allow me to be able to contribute to the betterment of other young people in out-of-home care."  
(Tommy, our member for NSW)**

**"I am passionate about making meaningful change in the care system and ensuring rights of children in care are upheld."  
(Harper, our member for VIC)**

**"I have a passion for people and want to be able to voice some issues and resolutions to improve areas within the care system." (Ann, our member for TAS)**

**"I am passionate about advocating and making change for children and young people with an out-of-home care experience. Through my journey, I have learned that one of my most powerful tools is my voice." (Tayla, our member for the ACT)**

**"Sharing my experiences to better the out-of-home care sector is a huge passion of mine. Being a part of NEABY will allow me to push my passion further." (Cheyenne, our member for WA)**

---

# CREATE Submissions

Throughout the year, CREATE has actively engaged in shaping policies and reforms through a series of impactful submissions. These submissions, informed by young people with a care experience, focus on a range of advocacy priority areas that young people have told us are most important to them in improving the out-of-home care system.

**“Just because we are kids, it doesn’t mean we don’t know what’s best... A person is a person no matter how small.”  
(Young Person, NSW)**

In January, CREATE made recommendations to the ACT and New South Wales 2024-25 budgets, calling for increased support and resources for young people in care. CREATE also developed a submission to the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People in relation to Alternative Care Arrangements and feedback on the Queensland Residential Care Review.

**“When you are in care you are never able to connect with someone on a deeper level. If you are placed in a resi since you are born is going to be so detrimental. It will last for the rest of your life.”  
(Young Person, QLD)**

In February, CREATE’s submission to the Yoorrook Justice Commission highlighted education, health, and housing injustices affecting First Peoples in Victoria. The submission to the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee emphasised the need for systemic improvements in youth justice.

**“... I would like to be more connected with my culture. I don’t know what that looks like though.” (Young Person, VIC)**

CREATE made notable contributions to housing and homelessness discussions, including a submission to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan. Additionally, CREATE provided critical feedback on disability inclusion through the South Australian Department of Human Services State Disability Inclusion Plan and supported youth justice reforms with our submission to the National Children’s Commissioner.

**“Six years [on the] waiting list for social housing.”  
(Young Person, SA)**

CREATE continues to pursue advocacy opportunities, through elevating the voices of children and young people with a care experience, to create a better life for children and young people in care.



TimeConti  
Stafffield

**create**  
FOUNDATION

creating a better life  
for children and young  
people in care

[www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

1800 655 105

9am-5pm, Mon - Fri

← WHEELCHAIR ACCESS  
VIA REAR OF BUILDING

353

# Conference

**VOICES**  
IN ACTION

**YOUR STORIES.  
STRONGER TOGETHER.**

## Voices in Action Conference

Earlier this year, CREATE hosted our sixth international conference Voices in Action: Your Stories. Stronger Together. CREATE's small but dedicated team worked over the last two years to ensure the conference was a success and to provide a safe space for all to share their voices, stories and ideas.

We extend our sincere thank you to our Young Consultants who assisted in a multitude of tasks from planning, facilitating workshops and presentations, being Roving Reporters and more.

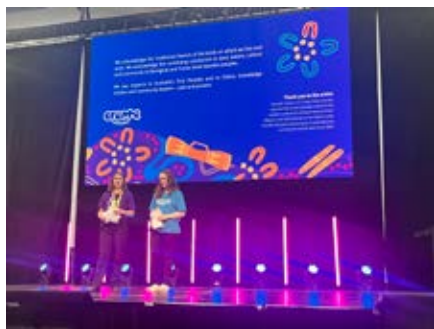
Voices in Action provided a space for young people to share their voices and for key decision-makers to hear them. The work does not stop now. It is just the beginning. CREATE captured young people's voices in our Delegate Statement and will use this document to call on governments all around Australia to better support young people with a care experience and make positive change in the out-of-home care system.

### Delegate Statement



### Young people who attended the conference and other delegates shared what they liked most about #ViA2024

- “Being able to connect with people who share similar experiences and deep diving into problems and solutions with the care system.” (Young Delegate)
- “Young people’s voices are heard, valued and respected, love this!! CREATE team have been amazing and made my son (foster son) feel heard, feel valued and his views were heard.” (Conference Delegate)
- “The connection with others and the opportunity to use our stories and voices to inform others.” (Young Delegate)
- “Hearing from so many brave, resilient, amazing care experienced young people and the fire in the belly that this has given as a professional to do better!!” (Conference Delegate)



# Media

## CREATE in the Media

CREATE Foundation's media team support young people and the leadership team in securing media coverage to inform and influence the community and decision makers about changes needed in the care system.

CREATE has built a reputation as the go-to expert on transitioning from care and connecting journalists with expert insights from Young Consultants.



# 16

Online Articles



# 12

Radio Interviews



# 3

TV Segments



# 1

Print article



# 27

Media Releases sent

**9 CREATE Young Consultants have had the opportunity to share their stories and experiences in the media to create change in the system**

Received 10 October 2004; accepted 12 November 2004



Returned: (REACT) Foundation contributors help to save and call for their voices to be heard

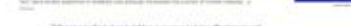
Young people aged 18-21 who have been in residential care in Queensland at some point in their lives are encouraged to apply before Monday, 17 June.

© 2019 by the author. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Cambridge University Press. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.



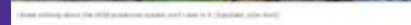
Due to circumstances beyond their control, some children cannot live with their parents. Every child deserves a safe, loving home where their individual needs can be met. Foster care exists on the responsibility of a parent to provide a secure family environment.

Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior written permission from the publisher.



<sup>2</sup> "I didn't know what was going on with me, and I was just very scared. I actually wanted to leave because I didn't know where the bathroom was, assuming it was behind a door that would be better for me."

## By Heather Rose Swadlow, PhD, The Ohio State University



Apart from my twin sister, I didn't know anyone else who was in care or could relate.

At first we weren't allowed to go to care team meetings, but after pushing back, we did.

Provision de services aux clients



\*We're excited for the opportunity to make a small difference for those living with epilepsy. To learn more, visit [www.seizure.org](http://www.seizure.org).



© 2006 The Authors  
Journal compilation © 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

The State Government committed additional funding to CHLATE to improve advocacy and support for children and young people in care and leaving care. This includes providing £200,000 over four years to strengthen the voices of children and young people, with a focus on child protection.

© 2006 The Authors  
Journal compilation © 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

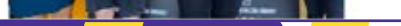
As part of this funding, CREATE Foundation hosts an annual rising connector event and this year issued a report titled Rising Connector 3.0, which included an examination of the current state of strengthening relationships. For additional information:

© 2006 The Authors  
Journal compilation © 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

The report draws on the experiences of 26 young people with a care experience and focuses on areas of practice that can be improved to ensure decisions about children in care are child-centred and a key focus

06-18-4-2-25 05-4-3000

By: BHM 98.71 M. James Urechin



Strengthening the rights of children and young people in care to ensure

they have regular and meaningful connections with their siblings, is a key priority under a partnership between the Department for Child

**Protection (JCCT) and CREATE Foundation.**

*Journal of the Academy of Management* has accepted this manuscript for publication. The manuscript is subject to revision and the final version may differ from this pre-proof.

© 2006 The Authors  
Journal compilation © 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 260: 455–462

<sup>†</sup> Rejection with threshold  $\alpha = 0.05$  and  $\beta = 0.80$ . Sample size for each group is 1000.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the American Association of Colleges of Business*, 46(1), 10. [http://www.aacsb.edu/Portals/0/PDFs/JAACOB\\_Vol46\\_Issue1.pdf](http://www.aacsb.edu/Portals/0/PDFs/JAACOB_Vol46_Issue1.pdf)

- Drawing attention to the importance of the role of the individual in the process of change
- Learning to be more flexible and open to change

© 2019 Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

# Awards



CREATE Young Consultant Tayla Scarcella named Canberra's Young Citizen of the Year.

---

## Canberra's Young Citizen of the Year Award

In December 2023, CREATE Young Consultant Tayla Scarcella was named Canberra's Young Citizen of the Year. Tayla is a fiercely determined advocate for young people in the out-of-home care system and is committed to helping young people who have grown up in care to build better lives.

The award recognised Tayla for her volunteering with CREATE and her tenure on the ACT Youth Advisory Council where she advocates for young people experiencing homelessness and those disengaged with the education system.

Tayla was inducted to the Women's Honour Roll and has recently been appointed to CREATE's National Experience to Action Board (Youth) where she continues her advocacy for children and young people in out-of-home care across Australia.



CREATE Young Consultants Kita and Hayley presenting the CREATE Positive Impact Award to Sajja Naboulsi at the Victorian Protecting Children Awards.

---

## Child Protection Awards

CREATE proudly sponsors the Positive Impact Award for practitioners making a big difference in the lives of children and young people with a care experience. We congratulate Stella Braund, Jeannie Alderson and Julia Popkins on receiving the award in South Australia and Sajja Naboulsi in Victoria.







# Finance

# Financial overview 2024

	2024	2023	2022	2021
<b>Total funding</b>	7,356,951	6,612,164	6,765,061	6,427,617
<b>Percentage increase</b>	11%	(2)%	5%	(15)%
<b>Total expenses</b>	7,357,784	6,524,398	6,407,105	6,620,008
<b>Percentage increase</b>	13%	2%	(3)%	(11)%
<b>Retained earnings</b>	878,324	879,157	791,391	433,435
<b>Percentage increase</b>	0%	11%	83%	(31)%

The table shows an increase of 11% in funding over the past year with CREATE's expenditure on programs and services increasing by 13%.

The increase in funding and in expenditure is due to the CREATE Voices in Action conference held in March 2024. The conference received continued support from Federal and all State and Territory governments providing funding to support travel, accommodation and attendance by children and young people of their state.

Fee for service work and project funding remains integral to state and national budgets, with several projects being funded in ACT, QLD, SA, VIC and WA. The projects ranged from consulting with young people, running workshops and art competitions.

In 2024 there was a deficit of \$833 (2023 surplus of \$87,766) taking retained earnings down to \$878,324. The 2024 budget was a deficit budget with a plan to invest part of the retained earnings to focus on stability and to limit further changes to the staffing structure.

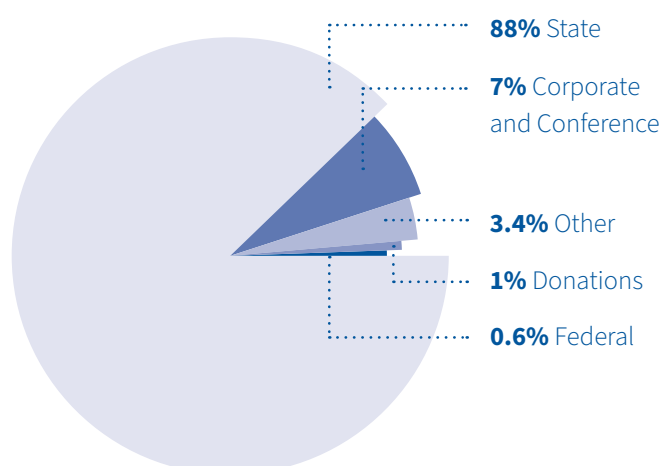
CREATE would like to acknowledge and thank all its supporters during the last financial year. The support received has enabled CREATE to continue to improve the care systems and provide quality services to children and young people with a care experience.

CREATE looks forward to continued support from its corporate partners, the community, government and stakeholders.

**Jecelyn Anjani**

**National Finance Manager**

## Income Stream



# Statement of financial performance

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024\$	2023\$
<b>Services revenue</b>		
State and territory grants	6,387,782	6,191,483
Federal grants	40,000	-
Corporate grants and conference	513,142	41,667
Donations	75,566	106,511
Consultancy and licensing	254,653	212,121
<b>Other revenue</b>		
Interest revenue	50,899	24,469
Profit on sale of plant and equipment	-	5,184
Sundry revenue	34,909	30,729
<b>TOTAL revenue</b>	<b>7,356,951</b>	<b>6,612,164</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Accommodation and travel expense	447,564	259,721
Consultancy fees	301,569	426,677
Depreciation and amortisation	341,036	351,443
Employee benefits expense	4,785,436	4,147,736
Insurance	59,170	53,362
Lease finance charges	79,294	90,648
Payments to young people	119,170	114,046
Postage and courier expense	39,690	51,999
Printing and stationery expense	93,791	83,374
Rent and outgoings	268,579	253,516
Resources	56,592	65,412
Telephone and internet expense	65,380	58,252
Venue and food costs	369,259	171,172
Other expenses	331,254	397,040
<b>TOTAL expenditure</b>	<b>7,357,784</b>	<b>6,524,398</b>
<b>(LOSS)/PROFIT before income tax</b>	<b>(833)</b>	<b>87,766</b>
<b>INCOME tax expense</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>(LOSS)/PROFIT for the year</b>	<b>(833)</b>	<b>87,766</b>

The above information has been extracted from the audited financial statements, a copy of which is available on request.

# Statement of financial position

As at 30 June 2024

	2024\$	2023\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,124,984	2,168,268
Receivables	92,852	40,946
Prepayments	48,230	50,497
	<b>2,266,066</b>	<b>2,259,711</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Cash on deposit	155,388	138,227
Plant and equipment	81,463	120,715
Right-of-use lease assets	708,026	728,172
	<b>944,877</b>	<b>987,114</b>
<b>TOTAL assets</b>	<b>3,210,943</b>	<b>3,246,825</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Payables	1,441,134	1,365,973
Lease liabilities	242,825	229,162
Provisions	26,998	126,243
	<b>1,710,957</b>	<b>1,721,378</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Lease liabilities	583,133	611,803
Provisions	38,529	34,487
	<b>621,662</b>	<b>646,290</b>
<b>TOTAL liabilities</b>	<b>2,332,619</b>	<b>2,367,668</b>
<b>NET assets</b>	<b>878,324</b>	<b>879,157</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained profits	878,324	879,157
<b>TOTAL equity</b>	<b>878,324</b>	<b>879,157</b>

The above information has been extracted from the audited financial statements, a copy of which is available on request.

# Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024\$	2023\$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Receipts from grants and customers	7,888,733	7,334,964
Interest received	51,051	21,201
Finance charges on lease liabilities	(79,294)	(90,648)
Payments to suppliers and employees	(7,585,671)	(6,715,727)
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>	<b>274,819</b>	<b>549,790</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Increase in cash on deposit	(17,161)	(3,235)
Purchases of plant and equipment	(46,162)	(65,680)
Proceeds from disposal of plant and equipment	-	13,635
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>	<b>(63,323)</b>	<b>(55,280)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Payments relating to principal element of lease liabilities	(254,780)	(269,626)
<b>Net cash outflow from financing activities</b>	<b>(254,780)</b>	<b>(269,626)</b>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents	(43,284)	224,884
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	2,168,268	1,943,384
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>2,124,984</b>	<b>2,168,268</b>

The above information has been extracted from the audited financial statements, a copy of which is available on request.





# Looking ahead

What I love about working at CREATE is that we are values-driven in the work we do. I see this come to life all the time in how we privilege the voices of young people and the lengths we go to connect and empower young people, while advocating alongside them for real change.

In this spirit, I am looking forward to supporting CREATE's teams to innovate, collaborate and adapt to emerging needs and opportunities for young people. To do this, we will run a diverse range of activities this year, including design sprints, policy roundtables, advisory panels, lived experience governance groups, regional events and more. We will develop practice guides, contribute to research in the field and continue to bring young people's voices to the centre of conversations on practice, policy and reform.

Over this year, in collaboration with young people, we will also conduct a rapid, mid-term review of our Strategic Plan, to make sure our goals are still relevant and contemporary in an evolving sector context.

We will also be working towards a Reconciliation Action Plan this year, engaging in a reflective process to strengthen our relationships, policies and practices in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, families, carers, staff, organisations and communities. This is part of our deep commitment to self-determination, cultural safety and addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care.



This is going to be a transformative year at CREATE as we diversify our offerings, collaborate deeply with sector partners, strengthen our commitments to self-determination and cultural safety, and work creatively and meaningfully alongside children and young people.

## **Imogen Edeson**

**Chief Executive Officer  
CREATE Foundation**

# Supporters

## Australian Government



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

## State and Territory Governments



**Community Services  
Directorate (ACT)**



**Department of Communities  
and Justice (NSW)**



Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing

**Department of Families,  
Fairness and Housing (VIC)**



**Department of Child Safety,  
Seniors and Disability  
Services (QLD)**



**TERRITORY FAMILIES,  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**

**Department of Territory Families,  
Housing and Communities (NT)**



**Government  
of South Australia**  
Department for  
Child Protection

**Department for Child  
Protection (SA)**



**Department for  
Education, Children  
and Young People (TAS)**



**Government of Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**

**Department of Communities (WA)**

## CREATE Supporters

Andrea O'Loughlin

AON

Blair Harrison

Bradley J Watt

Brittany Hutchens

Catherine Flynn

Centre for Excellence in Child and  
Family Welfare

Charity Hampers

Daniel Conifer

Giles Keay

Hannie Danckaarts

Helen Walters

Hollard Insurance

Jann Skinner

JBWere Charitable Endowment Fund

Joel Rivendell

John Wauchope

Junction Australia

Kate O'Brien

Keesha Tran

Kirstin Hall

Lee Wilson

Menzies

Nat Sommer

Palmquist Circus

Peter Corben

Peter Wedgewood

Queensland Family and Children's  
Commission

Sandrigam Yacht Club

Sarah Andrews

Sarah Benek

Sarah Squire

Simone Davore

Snow Foundation

St Joseph's School Tranmere

Tarnya Wilson

Wallwork Smith Foundation

Will Rogers

WMYC Inc

---

# Voices in Action Conference Supporters

## Diamond Partners



## Platinum Partner

# LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

## Gold Partner



## Silver Partner



## Conference supporters



## With thanks to



---

# Board of Directors



**Jann Skinner**  
Chair and Treasurer



**Imogen Edeson**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Vanessa Knight**  
Company Secretary



**Adina Gunnis**

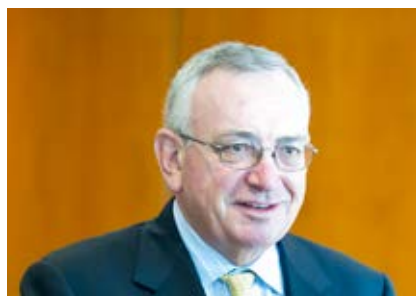


**Andy Parton**

## With thanks to our departing Board members:



**Jacqui Reed**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Richard Hill**  
Chairman



**Dr Joseph McDowall**  
Executive Director of Research



**Kirsten Grey**



**Rob Ryan**



**Catherine Moynihan**

---

# Leadership Committee



**Imogen Edeson**

Chief Executive Officer



**Jacqui Reed**

Former Chief Executive Officer



**Emma Davies**

Deputy CEO



**Jecelyn Anjani**

National Finance Manager



**Linda James**

Operations Manager



**Tameika Joy**

Operations Manager



**Stef Coles**

National Marketing &  
Communications Manager



**Hannah Kelly**

Business Administration Manager

---

## Patron



**Margaret White**

---

# CREATE Locations

## NSW National Office – Burramattagal People

Suite 6.01, Level 6, 80 George Street  
Parramatta, NSW - 2150

## ACT Office – Ngunnawal

Cnr Cooyong Street & Scotts Crossing  
Civic Square, ACT - 2601

## NSW Office – Burramattagal People

Suite 6.01, Level 6, 80 George Street  
Parramatta, NSW - 2150

## NT Office – Larrakia Land

11/16 Malak Crescent  
Malak, NT - 0812

## QLD Brisbane Office – Yuggera & Turrbal Country

15 Lever Street  
Albion, QLD - 4010

## QLD Cairns Office – Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and Yirrganydji Land

Unit 1, 108 Mulgrave Road  
Cairns, QLD - 4870

## SA Office – Kaurna Land

118 West Terrace  
Adelaide, SA - 5000

## TAS Office – Nipaluna

North Hobart, TAS - 7000

## VIC Office – Wurundjeri Land

325-327 Queensbury Street  
North Melbourne, VIC - 3051

## WA Office – Whadjuk

353 Newcastle Street  
Northbridge, WA - 6003

---

# CREATE Staff

Aarthi Sriskandaraja

Alma Signal

Amy Desmet

Angela Baddour

Benjamin McMullin

Blair Struthers

Brenda Sharpe

Caroline Wootton

Cassandra Hardy

Catherine Cussel

Christopher Braddock

Deborah Watson

Dot Foley

Elise Hilder

Emily Roberts

Emma Davies

Erin Laing

Fabian McPhee

Farah Mohammed

Grace Huxtable

Hannah Curtis

Hannah Kelly

Imogen Edeson

Jackline Maina

Jacqui Reed

Jakob Tiivel

Jane Sliwka

Jazmin Ealden

Jecelyn Anjani

Jesse Grigg

Joanna Gibson

Joshua L'Hota

Julie Amos

Karina Denman

Karly Diewald

Kate Clements

Kate Zahnleiter

Katie Creed

Kathryn Burke

Kerry Tully

Kimberley McPhee

Kirsty Jarzabek

Kylie Hampton

Laura Hooper

Linda James

Lisa Gibson

Lucy Watson

MacKenzie

Drummond

Madeline Carney

Martha Hay

Melissa Miras

Melissa Mott

Monia Maamer

Monica Carrer

Patrick Buchanan

Patrick Weiniger

Paul Holgate

Paula Smith

Polly Phillips

Rachel Perinparajah

Rebecca Downes

Ruby Gerrish

Sakun Dissanayake

Samantha Cotton

Sarah Chew

Selina Hooper

Shelley Cook

Stacy Klousia

Stef Coles

Tameika Joy

Taylor Toovey

Tenielle Moore

Tenneil Ross

Vanessa Sheehy





CREATE Foundation Limited  
ABN 69 088 075 058

 [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

 1800 655 105

 /CREATEfnd

 @CREATEfnd

 CREATE Foundation

1800 655 105 is a free-call number  
that young people in care and their  
carers can use. However, there may be  
fees charged if calling from a mobile.