



MEDIA RELEASE

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CREATE SAYS DETAINING CHILDREN IN GAOL IS UNACCEPTABLE

CREATE Foundation urges the West Australian Government to review child protection and police practices to ensure detention of children in gaol is avoided at all costs.

CREATE Western Australia Coordinator, Ms Katherine Browne, says in no case is it acceptable for a young person, especially an 11 year-old, to be locked-up in a gaol cell.

"I am extremely concerned that an 11 year old child in the care of the state was kept in a police lock-up for two days, and about the distress that this would cause any child or young person, let alone an 11 year old.

"We must remember that most children and young people in care have already experienced significant trauma, and that the government has a responsibility to protect young people from further harm or distress," continued Ms Browne.

CREATE calls for an immediate improvement in practice through provision of appropriate care and support for children and young people in out-of-home care who come into police custody or are facing legal concerns.

"There is simply no excuse for the one-size fits all approach for children and adults," said Ms Browne.

Children and young people who have been removed from harm or neglect are usually in the child protection system through no fault of their own. They must be provided with safe and appropriate care placements at all times.

"Placement shortage is not a new obstacle within child protection, but being placed in a police lock-up or being kept in detention because no other placements are available is not a valid excuse. The government must do more to prevent this type of placement."

"Whilst I acknowledge the challenges faced in regional areas, often without facilities such as secure care, there is surely scope to explore other more appropriate, child-focused methods of caring for an individual as young as 11," continued Ms Browne.

"In anyone's view an 11 year old is a child - a little girl. Police cell lock-ups or detention should never be deemed as acceptable or suitable placement options for a child or young person – not anywhere or anytime."

CREATE is the national peak body representing the voices of children and young people in out-of-home care and works hard to address the negative stigma faced by care leavers. Learn more at www.create.org.au