



MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN AT RISK NEEDED IN QLD ELECTION

Queensland has witnessed a staggering record number of child concern reports at 106,359 made during 2013-2014¹. With over 8,500 children and young people living in out-of-home care in Queensland today, CREATE Foundation calls for all political parties to make a commitment to protecting and supporting our community's most vulnerable children.

CREATE supports the shift in government investment to early intervention and prevention programs for families and children at risk of entering the children protection system. However, CREATE warns that government and community need to keep up the focus on helping those children and young people who do come into out of home care overcome the effects of trauma and abuse.

"A significant number of young people in care experience a disrupted childhood, where they are moved between numerous homes and can struggle to build trusting relationships with adults. These young people need considerable support from both the government and the broader community, to achieve positive mental health and address social isolation," said CREATE QLD Coordinator, Mr Lucas Moore.

"We would like to see more programs like the current government's Get Started Initiative – which supports Carers, and meet the costs of sports and recreational club membership fees for children in their care. "

Consultations with young people with a care experience² highlighted the urgent need for post-care services. CREATE found that not only were 64% of care leavers without a leaving care plan, but 35% experienced homelessness within the first year of leaving care.

Yet, this dire situation can potentially be turned around and an enormous step in the right direction, applauded by CREATE, is the \$3million in *After Care Service* funding (announced in the 2013 budget) with services to be implemented early 2015.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics³ the most common living arrangement for 20-24 year olds was living at home with family.

"Many young people who have transitioned from care to independent living may be without some of the family support networks others have to fall back on," said Mr Moore.

"To address this imbalance of opportunity in our community, urgent attention and focus from government is needed to implement the Carmody Inquiry recommendations relating to

different government departments to providing priority access to young people transitioning from care up to the age of 25.”

To establish more coherent frameworks for post-care service delivery across Queensland CREATE calls for a strengthening of legislative requirement for the *Chief Executive of the Department of Communities* to provide support for young people with respect to their unique independent living needs.

Click [here](#) to visit the website displaying the *CREATE Report Card 2009 – Transitioning from Care: Tracking Progress*

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Background information

CREATE Foundation regularly consults with young people and through this consultation in 2009 revealed a truthful yet somewhat bleak portrait of the reduced life outcomes experienced by children and young people growing up in the care system. The [Report Card](#) revealed that if you've been in out of home care, you are more likely to be undereducated, unemployed, to earn less, become a parent at a younger age, be involved in the juvenile justice system, become homeless, be dependent on social assistance, have mental health issues, attempt suicide, and be at a higher risk of substance abuse².

- 64% do not have a leaving care plan (leaving care plans are a strategy for life after being in the state care system)
- 35% are homeless in the first year of leaving care
- 46% of boys are involved in the juvenile justice system
- 35% completed Year 12 (compared to that of the general population)
- 29% are unemployed (compared to the national average which is 9.7%)
- 28% were already parents themselves

Data source: McDowall, J.J. (2009). *CREATE Report Card 2009 – Transitioning from Care: Tracking Progress*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation

Sources:

1. <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance/summary-statistics>
2. McDowall, J.J. (2009). *CREATE Report Card 2009 – Transitioning from Care: Tracking Progress*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation
3. ABS: Link to Aus Bureau of Statistics Home and Away the Living Arrangements of Young People; ABS Australian Social Trends 4102.0 June 2009