

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGO APPLIES UNTIL Friday 31 March 2017

“That is NOT how my story will end!” say care leavers

NEW VIDEO & CALL TO BREAK STIGMA CYCLE

Friday, 31 March, 2017, CREATE Foundation will launch a vital resource to address the stigma experienced by young people with an out-of-home care experience (i.e foster, kinship or residential care) for the commencement of National Youth Week.

Over 43, 399⁽²⁾ Australian children and young people currently live in out-of-home care. Evidence has shown that community views of young people who leave care are less emotionally stable, more likely to be involved in petty theft and more likely to live in poverty⁽¹⁾. Young people want the same respect that is granted to others and the statement “**that is not how my story will end!**” symbolises the way that others judge who and what they will become. Everybody is entitled to the same opportunities as others, without stigma.

Children and young people have informed CREATE Foundation that they experience stigma in their daily lives due to their care background. The effects of stigma on children and young people with a care experience can be seen from early years through to when they leave care, and possibly beyond. These include feeling bullied, excluded, and treated differently from their peers⁽³⁾.

“When you are being told that you aren’t worth it, you aren’t worth anyone’s time or energy because you are not going to amount to anything, or worse in gaol, it just stops you in your tracks,” Shannieka, 16, from Western Australia.

“When you stop believing in us, that is when the light goes out.”

In response to this, CREATE Foundation has developed key activities to begin the work towards changing community views and reducing stigma. The first is through inviting the broader community to engage with the topic of stigma through their “Snap that Stigma” social media campaign. To help snap that stigma, people can get involved by sharing a positive story of a child or young person achieving great things over social media, by simply using hashtag **#snaphatstigma** or email to CREATE at create@create.org.au

National Youth Week (31 March - 9 April, 2017) is all about young people expressing their views, and the #snaphatstigma initiative by CREATE Foundation has enabled young people to share their view through a powerful online video telling their stories, now available via: <http://create.org.au/resources/snap-that-stigma/>

19 year old Lily, also from Western Australia, said *“The community’s views need to change by really positive young people’s stories being shared. Young people need to be able to go to school assemblies and educate everyone, the kids, the teachers, and just break that stigma that we are not going to make it in life.”*

“The view that young people with a care experience are receiving handouts overlooks the fact that they have been without the support that others, without a care experience, generally have access to,” said Ms Jacqui Reed, CREATE Foundation Chief Executive Officer.

“As an organisation, CREATE is calling for the sector to collaborate and support the change that people with a care experience are not subjected to stigmatising and stereotyping treatment and language. CREATE’s poster, video and policy positioning statement are the first steps in the right direction and available for all to refer to.”

CREATE’s Policy and Research team developed a Position Paper reflecting the organisation’s view regarding the issue of stigma experienced by children and young people with a care experienced is available from CREATE’s website www.create.org.au/what-we-do/advocacy/position-papers/

CREATE Foundation is the peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people in out-of-home care, providing programs and services to create a better life for them.

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Sources:

- (i) Harvey, McNamara, Andrewartha and Luckman, 2015, p.2
- (ii) (AIHW, 2016)
- (iii) (CREATE, 2006)

