

MEDIA RELEASE

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creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

SAFETY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PRIVACY RESPONSE TO 'NSW GOVERNMENT BID TO PROTECT PRIVACY OF CHILDREN IN CARE'

CREATE Foundation is Australia's peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience (including kinship care, foster care and residential care).

CREATE would like to respond to issues in the media regarding proposed changes to the NSW government's bid to protect privacy of children in care.

CREATE is very concerned that FACS intend to change legislation to increase the privacy of children and young people in care. CREATE strongly believes that children and young people deserve to be protected from harm and not stigmatised from being in care.

CREATE's CEO Jacqui Reed said today that "negative media portrayal of the system affects those within it, and adds to the trauma that these children and young people have experienced. The media needs to accurately portray the system in an open and transparent manner providing insight to the public and holding FACS accountable and allowing natural justice for the child and their family."

CREATE agrees with court decision that it is in the public's best interest to ensuring accuracy of reporting and so that the child protection system is accountable and transparent. Openness and transparency is the key to a robust system. The safety of children and young people in care is more important than the bureaucratic adherence to privacy, and this is where emphasis and effort should be focussed.

"Children and young people in care in NSW are already restricted by a risk averse department that their voices struggle to be heard, a shroud of secrecy is in no one's best interest" – says Jacqui Reed.

There are currently more than 46,000 children and young people in care across Australia. For more information on CREATE, please visit our website at www.create.org.au

ENDS

Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:

- 46,488 children were in out-of-home care across Australia at 30 June, 2014 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Child protection Australia: 2015-16. Canberra: AIHW)
- 35% of young people experience homelessness within the first year of leaving care
- 46% of boys with care experience have had contact with the juvenile justice system
- 29% of young people who have experienced out-of-home are unemployed
- 36% of children and young people are split from their brothers and sisters in care
- 35% of young people in care have 5 or more caseworkers during their time in care
- 67% of young people in care are not aware of leaving care plans

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