

## MEDIA RELEASE

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creating a better life  
for children and young  
people in care

### LESS STIGMA & MORE SUPPORT

### KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IS THE KEY PRIORITY

In Queensland alone, over 9000 children and young people are removed from their families and live in out-of-home care (i.e. foster, residential, kinship care). Not every family begins their parenting journey with all the help enjoyed by others. CREATE calls for the Queensland government to continue to implement the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (2013), which includes increased support for families who may be at risk, to be able to access appropriate supports.

CREATE's view acknowledges that the child protection system across Australia continues to be under strain and is influenced by inter-dependence on support and co-operation across many central channels of authority. **Through taking a wider view on where change for the better can be achieved, CREATE's consultations inform the sector via uncensored voices. In CREATE's 2013 Report Card research project, 87 percent of the 1069 children and young people in care across Australia surveyed, said that they felt happy and safe in their current placement.**

With often limited access to conventional networks, children and young people can face extraordinary adversity growing up. The Courier Mail recently commented regarding Queensland's 9000 children and young people children "what wretched lives they must lead". CREATE too is concerned about news reports of children in care whose reunification with family goes wrong and they are not safe. CREATE unequivocally calls for the wellbeing of children to be the first priority.

Yet community's opinion must not be based on individual cases of child abuse, often reported in terrifying and graphic detail, overshadowing **the stories of young people with a care experience succeeding**. CREATE Foundation works to eradicate stigma against those with a care experience.

CREATE's experience of speaking with and interacting with thousands of children and young people in care each year is that they are much more resilient and capable than some community views (perpetuated by negative media portrayals) give them credit for.. Stigma impacts young people's lives directly, and let's say you are a young person with a care experience who has a bright outlook and wants to get ahead. What if your efforts are blocked by prejudgement based on broad generalisations? How can you get a job or find a place to live when everyone whose been removed from their family is thrown in the same judgement basket?

21 year old Ben of Brisbane shared that "as soon as people know you have a care experience, they think you are going to be trouble!"

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“Children and young people in care don’t need people in the community feeling sorry for them, they need the community to start thinking outside the normal stereotypes of a ‘foster care kid’ and raise their expectations,” Ben says.

It is vital the community as a whole maintain an open heart and mind, free of pre-judging children and young people who through no fault of their own have been removed from their families.

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 children and young people in care. Learn more at [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

Over 43,000 Australian children and young people live in out-of-home care (i.e. foster, residential, kinship care) after they are removed from their families. CREATE works to improve the lives of children and young people with a care experience, along with eradicating stigma in our community. **Share your voice and hashtag #snaphatstigma**

CREATE’s #snaphatstigma awareness campaign is a platform for people who have experienced discrimination to play a part in working to eradicate this limiting, myopic behaviour from our community. Carlatina grew up in care and she said *“Three years ago I left foster care and was told from someone that I was going to end up either homeless, pregnant or in jail because I was in foster care. I hated this.”*

Carlatina recently graduated with a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and shared *“Last year I didn’t think I was going to pass my diploma at TAFE but I did. I cried when I did. It took me two years. I proved people wrong.”* What an inspiring young woman!

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