

MEDIA RELEASE

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creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

CREATE APPLAUDS ‘DOGGED PERSISTENCE’ IN OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Queensland Parliament passed the Child Protection Amendment Bill last night. Among the reforms, assistance to young people in out of home care will be now provided up to the age of 25 years, whereas previously it ceased at 18.

“For the first time, we will have enshrined in legislation something basic which every child and young person should have – the support of a parent, or corporate parent well beyond the age of 18 years” Jacqui Reed CEO CREATE Foundation said.

“This is a great outcome for young people and shows what years of dogged persistence and partnership between government and advocacy organisations can achieve on a critical issue”.

“Many young people in out-of-home care have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma during their childhoods. This means that as they approach independence they need more support, not less, than the greater community does”.

In 2015-16, around 650 young people aged between 15 -17 were discharged from out-of-home care in Queensland. While some may have some support or somewhere to go, many others find themselves worried stressed and anxious about what will happen to them. “This gives young people a much needed reassurance that the community and the sector want them to know that there is still plenty of time to adjust to the challenges of independent living” said Jacqui Reed.

Lucas Moore, Queensland State Coordinator, CREATE Foundation said today that CREATE young people have been advocating for this for almost 20 years in Queensland. “This represents a massive win for children and young people in our state”, he said. “But it is a first step along the way to securing better outcomes for young people”.

CREATE Foundation made multiple submissions to parliamentary committees and consulted widely and directly with young people in out of home care.

The passing of this Bill coincides with the launch of Transition to Independence month in Queensland starting in November. “T2I month will be launched next month in Rockhampton”, Ms Reed said. “It is vital we make sure that young people feel supported well into adulthood.”

ENDS

Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:

- 46,488 children were in out-of-home care across Australia at 30 June, 2016
- 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

For further comment from CREATE's CEO Jacqui Reed and/or a young person with care experience please call Andrea Doney 0402050418 and andrea@admarcoms.com.au

