

MEDIA STATEMENT

12 December 2017

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ROYAL COMMISSION

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CARE SECTOR AMONGST THE MOST FORGOTTEN OF THE FORGOTTEN

The findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse are due to be handed down on Friday. In the light of this, CREATE Foundation CEO Jacqui Reed is reminding the Australian public that child sexual abuse is not just an historical issue, it remains a significant issue today.

“Many Australian young people have been affected by appalling experiences. But young people in the care sector remain amongst the most vulnerable. The Royal Commission has focussed attention on this issue at last, but we need to make sure it doesn’t end with just more words on a page. Children and young people with a care experience remain highly vulnerable to exploitation and sexual abuse and will continue to be placed at risk without systemic and dedicated intervention,” she said.

CREATE Foundation actively contributed to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse through the provision of evidence and more than a dozen submissions.

Despite the attention of the Royal Commission, there remain limited services and resources to support victims of child sexual assault and their families. “State Governments will need to make firm and thorough commitments to increasing training for workers in out of home care on responding to child sexual abuse”, Ms Reed said.

Whilst applauding the work of the Royal Commission and its focus on the issues of vulnerable children and young people being sexually abused in institutional care, Ms Reed says “the courage of survivors must be acknowledged. It takes tremendous courage to come forward and give evidence and speak up about their personal experiences and they must be commended for the drive for change this has evoked,” she said. “We would not be where we are today without the bravery of these voices.”

Ms Reed is calling for additional funding, training and resources to assist institutions to implement the Child Safe Organisations principles, one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

“Child safe organisations will make a huge difference to protecting children and young people. We cannot keep putting more and more regulations onto a stretched

NGO sector without acknowledging that becoming “child safe” will take additional resources, expertise, training and dedicated funding” she said.

“The Royal Commission has underscored a historical paucity in Australian attitudes to young people. We need to take stock of that, and to prioritise our efforts to ensure that children and young people are safe, well and protected”.

“These young people are our resources and our future. We must do more to uphold and fulfil the rights of all children, and in particular young people in care, through improved systems, laws, policies, and practices”.

For more information on CREATE, please visit our website at www.create.org.au

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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

