

MEDIA RELEASE

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creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

NATIONAL APOLOGY TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEX ABUSE WE NEED TO ENSURE THIS IS NEVER REPEATED

CREATE commends Prime Minister Scott Morrison's apology to victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse today. This is a vital first step in ensuring the abuse experienced by children and young people in Australia over many decades is never repeated.

CREATE Foundation is now calling on government and institutions to ensure that this apology is not seen as the end of the journey, and is advocating for a demonstrated commitment from government and organisations to improve systems to ensure these abuses are never endured by children in Australia again.

The Royal Commission revealed that the out-of-home care sector was the worst source of child sexual abuse in Australia prior to 1990.

CREATE's Chief Executive Officer Jacqui Reed said today "throughout this period in Australian history it was the young people in the care sector who were amongst the most negatively affected, and sadly remain so today. Whilst the Royal Commission focussed attention on an important issue and we must ensure the support needed by survivors is delivered adequately and promptly, we must also turn our attention to the future and to preventing these abuses occurring to vulnerable children and young people again."

"We need a tightening of standards related to the ongoing monitoring of placements to ensure that children and young people in the out-of-home care system are provided the opportunity to have a voice in this monitoring process. We must never again be in the position of ignoring so many children and young people who tried to tell their stories of abuse and were silenced by a flawed and non-accountable system."

CREATE also calls for better training of those in the sector to enable them to appropriately support, guide and care for children who have experienced trauma and abuse. "Many children entering the out-of-home care system have experienced considerable abuse and/or neglect. Ensuring our carers, staff and workers are supported to be able to appropriately support children and young people is the key to stability of placement and the wellbeing for children and young people to move forward positively in life" said Ms Reed.

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CREATE also recommends the prioritisation of strategies that will increase the likelihood of safe and stable placements for children and young people in out-of-home care, and the provision of adequate and ongoing support for young people transitioning from care to adulthood as this is a high risk time for young people.

Prime Minister Morrison's apology, and support of redress are important milestones in the journey forward. "But it is vital that the apology be embedded in a true commitment to learn from our history and ensure that we protect children coming into care from abuse. We must never again see these atrocities repeated" Ms Reed said.

CREATE Foundation is the national 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 actively contributed to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse by supporting young people with a care experience to give evidence and through the provision of more than a dozen submissions. These submissions, with a focus on the need for acknowledgement, apology and access to support, are publicly available on their website.

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:

- 47,915 children were in out-of-home care across Australia at 30 June 2017
- Young people in out-of-home care are 16 times more likely to be under a youth justice order than the general population
- 35% of young people experience homelessness within the first year of leaving care
- 46% of males have been involved with the justice system since leaving care
- 29% of young people who have left care or preparing to leave care are unemployed
- 36% children and young people in care do not live with any of their siblings
- 35% of young people in care have five or more caseworkers during their time in care
- 67% of young people in care over the age of 15 are not aware of having a leaving care plan

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

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