

## MEDIA RELEASE

28 April 2020

creating a better life  
for children and young  
people in care

# CREATE APPLAUDS VIC GOV ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR 18 YEAR OLDS IN CARE

CREATE applauds the Victorian government's announcement of a \$77.5 million family services funding boost to support some of the state's most at risk children and young people. The package includes a new model focused on early intervention, linking vulnerable children and young people to staff, resources and services available to them.

## ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

The funding package includes \$46 million for family services, more than \$15 million to support young people in residential care, and more than \$11 million to support carers and children in their care. A further \$4 million will go towards supporting young people currently in care who are due to turn 18 before December.

Over 8,000 children and young people in Victoria are currently living in out-of-home care. CREATE's independent consultations with young people revealed over 35% experience homelessness within the first year of transitioning from care. The current climate makes moving out much more complicated and, in some cases, impossible.

CREATE Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jacqui Reed says this is timely show of support as during the current global pandemic, CREATE's main concern has been on young people in care turning 18, as their struggle to find suitable housing during transitioning to independence is now compounded.

*"The hard fact is that when young people turn 18 and are scheduled to transition to independence, accessing housing is very challenging, even under normal circumstances,"* said Ms Reed.

*"This support is a positive step and our organisation has been corresponding with each state and territory's relevant Department, requesting a minimum of 6 months' extension of the transition process (including all residential, foster and kinship care placements)."*

Internationally it is being reported that young people are likely to bear the economic brunt of covid-19 aftermath by impact on their education and a decline in job opportunities.

Tay is a 21-year-old Victorian woman, raised by her late Nan. When asked about what turning 18 can mean for young people turning transitioning from care, Tay said:

*"At 18, most people are still at school and it would be really hard to move out, impossible. Trying to finish school or even working and trying to support yourself. Young people have really limited options when leaving care and it would be really hard and they are going to struggle."*

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 develops policy and research to report on and advocate for a better care system.

CREATE sees the Victorian support announcement as a positive move, translating to all young people who are turning 18 before December, 2020, will be able to access support until June 2021.

Victorian State Coordinator, Ms Cathy Carnovale shared that prior to COVID-19, Victoria's "Homestretch program" was limited to only 50 young people being eligible each year. The new funding includes a component known as "COVID-19 Funding" and is available for all eligible 18-year-olds.

*"The announcement from the Andrews government means that young people in care (excluding those in residential care) will now have the option to remain in their current homes over the next 6 months and maybe beyond that, which is great if they and their Carers are in agreement," shared Ms Carnovale.*

Young people turning 18 who live in residential care will not have an extension of their placement, and instead have a support worker and financial assistance in trying to obtain independent housing. There will be added strain on government and affordable housing options, and this could potentially place this cohort of young people at risk.

There is however an injection into housing funding and homelessness services the impact of which is yet to be seen as to how this impacting people on the ground.

Read more the relevant official site via [Victorian Government information-covid-19](#)

CREATE Foundation is sustaining its effort in key advocacy areas and providing young people at risk with up-to-date, reliable information and supports to ensure they can be empowered, safe and well.

CREATE Foundation continues its support for the national advocacy campaign titled Make it 21. Join the conversation and support this hashtag campaign #makeit21

Read more on young people's experiences in care via CREATE's extensive independent consultations in [our research reports library link](#)

For more information please visit the CREATE website at [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

**For further comment from CREATE's Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, and/or a young person with care experience contact Leigh White, CREATE Communications Advisor, via (m) 0431 932 122 or [leigh.white@create.org.au](mailto:leigh.white@create.org.au)**

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