

MEDIA RELEASE

10 November 2020

creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

CREATE CALLS FOR ACTION TO REDUCE OVER REPRESENTATION

One of the smallest (6%)** cultural populations in Australia make up forty per cent* of children and young people (to age 17) in out-of-home. CREATE believes that the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in statutory care is unacceptable in a developed, prosperous country such as Australia.

The 2020 NAIDOC Week theme is 'Always Was, Always Will Be'. CREATE Foundation's Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, took this opportunity to share that it is unacceptable to see the continuance of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care in Australia.

"Despite years of research and tireless advocacy by the sector, over-representation remains a key issue in out-of-home care." said Ms Reed.

"CREATE urges state and territory governments to set as their highest priority actions for early intervention to curb the increasing number of Indigenous children entering care"

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. Click this bold text to about CREATE's [position paper on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care here](#).

One of the ways CREATE is highlighting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community during NAIDOC is in the latest episode of CREATE's popular [Voices in Action Podcast](#): an interview between an Aboriginal young person who is part of CREATE's community and CEO and Founder of [ID Know Yourself](#), [Isaiah Dawe](#). Isaiah grew up in out-of-home care, and was estranged from his culture from quite a young age. The interview was incredibly insightful and shone a light on a number of issues faced by children and young people in the care sector, including the challenging journey of identity and cultural connection experienced by many First Nations young people with a care experience.

For more information please visit the CREATE website at www.create.org.au

For further comment from CREATE's Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, and/or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young person with care experience contact Leigh White, CREATE Communications Advisor, via (m) 0431 932 122 or leigh.white@create.org.au

Sources:

* Forty per cent of children in out-of-home care (OOHC) in Australia are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (i.e., 17,979 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as at 30 June 2019) (AIHW, 2020).

** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children make up only 5.97% of all Australian children 0-17 years of age (ABS, 2016).

Unicef data states “At least 2.7 million children are living in residential care...”
www.data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/children-alternative-care/ (website accessed 10/02/20)

Key statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out of home care in Australia:

1. 44,906 children were in out-of-home care across Australia at 30 June 2019, of which 17, 979 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (AIHW, 2020).
2. Of the Indigenous participants in OOHC, about one third felt they had little connection to culture, while another third reported strong connection (McDowall, 2018).
3. Only 18% of Indigenous participants claimed to know of the existence of their personal cultural plan (McDowall, 2018).
4. Nationally, at 30 June 2019, the rate of Indigenous children in out-of-home care was nearly 11 times the rate for non-Indigenous children (AIHW, 2020). The rate of Indigenous children admitted into out-of-home care was nearly 9 times the rate for non-Indigenous children (AIHW, 2020).
5. For Indigenous children, the number of children in out-of-home care rose steadily by a total of 16% between 2015 and 2019 (AIHW, 2020).
6. “...The rate of placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with family and kin or other Indigenous carers has continued to drop from 74.8% in 2006 to 64.5% in 2018. The rate of placement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers (excluding non-Indigenous family and kin) has dropped even more steeply. In one years alone, this rate dropped from 49.4% in June 2017 to 45% in June 2018.” (SNAICC, 2019, p.12).

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2020). *Child protection Australia. 2018-19*. Canberra: AIHW.

Lewis, N., Weston, R., Burton, J., Young, J., Jayakody, N., Mastroianni., Tan, W.W., Parolini, A., Shlonsky, A., and Tilbury, C. (2019). *The Family Matters Report 2019. Measuring trends to turn the tide on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in Australia*. SNAICC. https://www.familymatters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/1097_F.M-2019_LR.%C6%92updated.pdf

McDowall, J. (2018). *Out-of-Home Care in Australia: Children and Young People’s Views after Five Years of National Standards*. CREATE Foundation.
<http://create.org.au/publications/2018-create-report/>