**MEDIA RELEASE**

6 September 2022

**child protection week celebration in cairns**

Tonight, CREATE Foundation, the peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with a care experience is hosting a very special dinner event in Cairns.

This year is the first time CREATE has hosted a dinner in Cairns celebrating National Child Protection Week and the 2022 theme is “Every child, in every community, needs a fair go”.

Guests include CREATE Young Consultants, the Hon. Minister Leanne Linard, Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and CREATE Foundation Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jacqui Reed.

CREATE welcomes Minister Linards’ attendance at the dinner and applauds the Queensland government’s recent announcement of increased access to placement options for young care leavers to 21, a wonderful initiative to help keep young Queenslanders safe. A testament to this government’s commitment to genuinely listen to children and young people and collaborate meaningfully to ensure that new resources are developed with young people.

CREATE Foundation’s Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jacqui Reed, said, “*We are excited to host a regional activity and celebrating the sectors work towards improving the lives of children and young people with a care experience.”*

*“This year’s event is CREATE’s first formal dinner to highlight our appreciation and recognise the important work that takes place throughout Far North Queensland.”*

Guest speaker at the dinner, Dee, is a CREATE Young Consultant and will be sharing about her care experience and the change that is needed. Dee said that it is an exciting week because of the fact that young people are being recognised for their hard work.

*“It feels really rewarding having important senior ministers coming here because they want to hear our voices! It is such a big thing to know we are making a difference and change is happening.”*

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.

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

Read about National Child Protection Week <https://www.napcan.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**

**Key statistics on the care sector in Australia:**

* 46,212 children and young people were reported in 2020-21 as living in out-of-home care across Australia (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2022).
* Young people in out-of-home care are 16 times more likely to be under a youth justice order than the general population.
* 30% of young people experience homelessness within the first year of leaving care. (McDowall, 2020).
* 38% of young people have been involved with the justice system.
* 30% 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.

McDowall, J. J. (2018). *Out-of-home care in Australia: Children and young people’s views after five years of National Standards*. CREATE Foundation.

McDowall, J. J. (2020). *Transitioning to adulthood from out-of-home care: Independence or interdependence?* CREATE Foundation.