**MEDIA RELEASE**

6 October 2022

 **CREATE APPLAUDs HISTORIC MOMENT**

**AS nsw GOV MAKES IT 21!**

The New South Wales Government’s announcement today of extending care and supports to 21 is being applauded by CREATE Foundation as having significant potential to positively impact the life outcomes of the nation’s largest care population. The years between 18-21 are pivotal in any young person’s life, and in particular, amongst the most vulnerable.

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.

Since 2009, Dr Joseph McDowall, CREATE’s Executive Director of Research, has led consultations and published reports sharing the lived experiences of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience. On hearing the news Dr McDowall said, *“It’s wonderful to see that decision makers do listen to young people and a big thank you is in order, for this exceptional Christmas present for the NSW young people! Now we can all move forward towards maximising the support that young people can receive.”*

CREATE Foundation’s Chief Executive officer, Ms Jacqui Reed, has witnessed first-hand the evolution of the transitioning from care process as each state and territory committed to making care and supports available to 21. On hearing the news of New South Wales announcement, Ms Reed rejoiced that “*Finally all jurisdictions are committed to supporting young people through the transition process, and all Australian young people are afforded the same opportunities!”*

*“Today is a moment that will remain in our collective memory for quite some time as a significant and lasting step forward by the legal guardian of young people in care,”* continued Ms Reed.

*“We are delighted that the needs and voices of young people have been given priority by making housing and supports available to 21 in NSW.”*

*“We are thrilled because the support to 21 gives young people a better chance at a brighter future. We look forward to the joy and delight that this news will bring to young people and their care families.”*

The Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies’ (ACWA) Chief Executive Officer, Steve Kinmond stated: “*We are very pleased that the New South Wales Government has listened to the voices of young people in care who have asked for guaranteed support after they turn 18. This announcement by the Government lets these young people know that during their transition to adulthood, they will have the support they rightly deserve.”*

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**

**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.