

MEDIA RELEASE

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creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

Urgent Action Needed to Address Over-representation of Aboriginal Children in South Australia's Child Protection System

CREATE welcomes the preliminary report of the Inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP) in the removal and placement of Aboriginal children in South Australia.

The Inquiry has shown that the ATSICPP is not being effectively applied through policies, practices and procedures, and as a result, Aboriginal children and young people continue to be over-represented in care. Urgent action is needed to ensure Aboriginal children are able to grow up safely in the care of their kin, community and culture.

In 2022, CREATE made a submission to the Inquiry based on conversations with Aboriginal young people with a care experience. The young people expressed having limited or no access to culture, not being able to participate in cultural events or on-country learning, having limited cultural plans and a lack of representation with no Aboriginal workers or teachers.

Young people told us they wanted more to be done in relation to prevention and early Intervention to keep Aboriginal families together, increased cultural training and resources, Aboriginal cultural workers; and the transferral of child welfare authority to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Overwhelmingly they called for more connection to culture, practices, community expertise, and First Nations knowledge systems and to have more say in the decisions that affect them.

"It's not a want it's a need – it's our culture!" (Young Person, SA Submission Discussion Group)

CREATE Foundation's CEO says: *"We commend the South Australian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, April Lawrie, on this comprehensive Inquiry. The continued over-representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection and out-of-home care system is unacceptable and it is clear that action is required to strengthen implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. We urge the South Australian Government to accept all 17 of the report's recommendations as part of the amendments to the Children and Young People (safety) Act 2017 as a critical step in reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care and towards improving self-determination for Aboriginal children, families and communities."*

South Australia has the second highest national rate of Aboriginal children and young people entering out-of-home care and the lowest rate of reunification of Aboriginal children with family or kin. South Australia also has the second lowest funding record for family support services and third lowest funding record for ACCOs. (AIHW, 2022; Lawrie, 2022)

For further comment from CREATE's Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, and/or a young person with care experience contact: Erin Laing, National Media and Marketing Coordinator: Erin.laing@create.org.au or 0401 880 522

About CREATE Foundation:

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.

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