**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**World care day: Celebrating kids in care and calling for their voices to BE properly heard**

[**World Care Day**](https://create.org.au/world-care-day/)**, the world’s biggest celebration of children who grow up in out-of-home care, is this Friday, 16 February.** While it’s an annual celebration marked with events for children and carers around the country, it’s also a crucial opportunity to hear from young people about their *journey of care* and what needs to happen so that young people in out-of-home care can reach their full potential.

* Young Person, VIC: “It’s not just a day to celebrate the policy change we have won, but also to focus on how much more needs to change.”
* Young person, NSW: “For my entire life I have been told that I have agency [control over my life], but I have actually not been able to do the things that I thought that I would be able to.”
* Young person, ACT: “If kids really participate, they get a better life.”
* Young person, WA: “I guess because you're the one in care and everything is happening to you so it's really important that they listen to you. You're still growing up and your choices should be heard.”
* Young person, QLD: “You don’t get listened to, and when child safety is your guardian they don’t listen to you...”

CREATE Foundation Deputy CEO, Emma Davies says that young people with a care experience are highly engaged and have strong views on where the care system needs to improve.

“We need to ensure all governments are listening to what young people have to say about strengthening care systems in Australia. Their insights and expertise are invaluable, and many young people have a drive to make the *journey of care* better for others.

We’ve learned so much from young people about key issues in the care system. From the importance of sibling connection to challenges with the transition to adulthood when leaving care. It’s really important for governments and organisations to engage meaningfully with children and young people to hear about their experiences and aspirations.

By focusing on what young people tell us about their *journey of care* and how the system needs to change, we can support children and young people in out-of-home care to reach their full potential,” said CREATE Deputy CEO, Emma Davies.

CREATE Foundation is the national consumer body representing the voices of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience. We provide programs to children and young people with a statutory care experience. We listen to what those with a lived experience of the care system tell us, and advocate with and for them to achieve systemic change.

**About the theme, Journey of Care**

This year’s World Care Day theme, *Journey of Care* reminds us that every child’s care experience is different, beginning with the initial entry to the system, adjusting to new caseworkers or placements, and eventually transitioning out of care which comes with its own significant challenges including rushed transitions, upheaval, and a sudden reduction in support. You can find out more about this year’s World Care Day theme on our website: [create.org.au/world-care-day](https://create.org.au/world-care-day)

**History of World Care Day**

Now in its’ eighth year, the World Care Day initiative is underpinned by a collective of nine global voices of care organisations from across the world, including EPIC in Ireland, VOYPIC in Northern Ireland, Who Cares? Scotland, and Become in the UK, Voices from Care in Wales, Fepa in Spain, Fice in Croatia, VOYCE in New Zealand and CREATE in Australia — all working together to promote conversations about young people defying the odds and succeeding in their own right.

**\*ENDS\***

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

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**Key statistics on out-of-home care in Australia**

* There are currently around 45,400 children and young people in out-of-home care nationally.
* Nationwide, only 67.5% of children and young people in care feel they could have a say ‘reasonably often’ and 15.7% reported that they rarely or never had a say.
* 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.
* 30% of young people who have left care or preparing to leave care are unemployed.
* About one fifth (21%) of young people with youth justice experience have been in out-of-home care in the last five years.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). Child protection Australia 2021–22. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/child-protection-australia-2021-22

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