**MEDIA RELEASE**

21 March 2024

 **three-day out-of-home care conference opens today in adelaide**

Young people who grew up in out-of-home care will open CREATE Foundation’s national conference, [**Voices in Action: Your Stories. Stronger Together**](https://voicesinaction.create.org.au/program/) today alongside leaders and officials.

Over the next three days, Voices in Action will bring together key decision-makers, young people with a lived experience in out-of-home care (including foster care, residential care and kinship care), carers and professionals to find solutions to the toughest problems within the care system.

CREATE CEO Jacqui Reed said this year’s conference will explore several priority issues for children and young people.

“Voices in Action is three days of meaningful collaboration, addressing the most critical issues in the care system identified by young people including **transition from care**, **residential care**, **sibling connection**, **housing**, **cost-of-living** and [more](https://voicesinaction.create.org.au/program/).

We hope that the discussions that come out of Voices in Action will inform the focus areas and priorities of our governments and services.

This will show young people with a care experience that we are listening to their voices and that what they have to say is important,” said CREATE CEO Jacqui Reed.

A young delegate from the 2019 conference spoke to the importance of young people having a say on the issues that affect them and being properly heard by decision-makers.

**“I loved the feeling of involvement and the feeling that I finally had a voice**,” Young Person, Voices in Action 2019.

This year, CREATE has over 150 young people coming from every State and Territory to attend Voices in Action.

These young people will join a diverse range of [speakers](https://voicesinaction.create.org.au/speakers/) and guests including Ministers, Commissioners, international delegates, and other passionate advocates for the rights of children and young people in care. See the Voices in Action [Program](https://voicesinaction.create.org.au/program/) for more information about our speakers, workshops and advocacy in action sessions over the next few days.

Voices in Action would not be possible without our dedicated [partners and supporters](https://voicesinaction.create.org.au/sponsors/) that share CREATE’s drive for effecting positive change in the out-of-home care system across Australia.

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.

For more information, please visit the Voices in Action website at [**voicesinaction.create.org.au**](voicesinaction.create.org.au)

For further comment from CREATE’s Chief Executive, Ms Jacqui Reed, contact Taylor Toovey, Communications and Media Specialist via (m) 0478 814 752 or taylor.toovey@create.org.au

**What:** [Voices in Action: Your Stories. Stronger Together](https://voicesinaction.create.org.au/program/) conference
**When:** Thursday, 21 March – Saturday, 23 March 2024
**Where:** Goyder Pavilion, Adelaide Showgrounds. Goodwood Rd, Wayville, South Australia 5034
**Who:** Professions and people with lived experience in the out-of-home care system
**Tickets:** Online registrations are closed but tickets can be purchased in person at the conference.

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

* 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.
* Young people in out-of-home care are 16 times more likely to be under a youth justice order than the general population.
* About one fifth (21%) of young people with Youth Justice experience have been in out-of-home care in the last five years.

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.