

## CREATE FOUNDATION

## ACT GOVERNMENT BUDGET SUBMISSION

2019 - 2020

**CREATE Foundation (ACT)**  
**Cnr Cooyong St and Scotts Crossing**  
**Canberra City, ACT**

**australian capital territory office**

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## About CREATE Foundation

CREATE Foundation (CREATE) is a national peak consumer body for over 48,000 children and young people in care across Australia. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people are at the centre of what we do, and that their voices inform our advocacy through evidence based consultation and research. Our mission is to create a better life for children and young people in care. To do this we;

- **Connect** children and young people to each other, CREATE and their Community **to**
- **Empower** children and young people to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and skills that enable them to have a voice and be heard **to**
- **Change** the care system, in consultation with children and young people, through advocacy to improve policies, practices and services, and increase community awareness.

## Priorities for Children and Young People with a Care Experience in the ACT

CREATE Foundation has captured the voices of children and young people with a care experience to identify key priorities to influence systemic change in the ACT to ensure the out of home care sector is reflective of their needs.

### Key priorities include:

#### *Expansion of core services to meet the growing demand from children and young people:*


The current core funding in the ACT provides for 1.3 FTE staff. These staff are entrusted with responsibility to develop connections with children and young people; provide opportunities which empower young people through our established programs; and promote the issues raised by the care population in the ACT. Currently, there is disparity with the level of funding offered in ACT to ensure that CREATE, the funded consumer body (peak) is adequately funded to deliver commensurate services to those offered in other jurisdictions. This disparity is due to the number of children and young people that CREATE supports increasing by 55% over the last two years (from 168 ClubCREATE members at 30th June 2016 to 261 ClubCREATE members at 30th June 2018), which is far greater than the annual CPI increase. Additionally, it is evident that the number of children and young people in care in the ACT continues to grow each year, which is not reflected within CREATEs Service Agreement.

#### **Investment to Support 2 FTE Positions within Current Contract: \$30,000**

#### *Children and young people are placed at the centre of decision making to inform decision makers*

For many years, CREATE in the ACT has been a conduit of information from children and young people through to decision-makers, and vice versa. CREATE has a proven track record working with the sector to ensure children and young people are provided with opportunities to participate in crucial discussions to ensure that their views are respected and heard.

To facilitate this communication, CREATE provides support and training for children and young people up to 25 years of age to feel confident to express their views and understand mechanisms for briefing and de-briefing post participation in research, speaking engagements and presentations. Our advocacy is informed by the express views of children and young people, which and forms CREATEs evidence base. CREATE also works alongside government as a critical partner to provide a valuable evidence base determined through our direct research with children and young people.



CREATE, and the children and young people who we represent, see an opportunity to provide a greater level of formal feedback, on a more regular basis to the ACT government. There is an opportunity for CREATE to develop and facilitate territory-wide consultations to capture the responses and feedback of children and young people to positively influence the work of departments under the Community Services Directorate. This is a critical opportunity for the ACT Government to develop initiatives in partnership with children and young people, to ensure a responsive and sustainable system into the future.

**Investment in Two Territory-wide Consultations with 50 Children and Young People in Out of Home Care: \$20,000**

*Young people have the right to have a placement supported within the care system until 21 and the ACT has provision of transition support to 25 years.*

CREATE commends the ACT Government Child and Youth Protection Services for implementing Extended Continuum of Care to 21 years for eligible young people in a foster care or kinship care placement as well as Aftercare Support for care leavers to 25 years. We believe that this is a step in the right direction to achieving this key priority that young people have identified.

However, CREATE is concerned that young people in residential care are exempt from being eligible for Extended Continuum of Care support. To establish equity in support for all young people, we also believe that resources need to be allocated to ensure Extended Continuum of Care support is made available to young people in residential care. We are particularly concerned for this vulnerable cohort and believe that financial support will prevent further marginalisation. CREATE encourages the development of transition supports and services that are tailored to meet the needs of young people in residential care.

To complement transition support until 25 years, CREATE has developed and produced “Go Your Own Way” (GYOW) Kits that are a practical tool that service providers and young people can use in planning to make the transition from the child protection system to adulthood. Over the last three years we have received positive feedback from caseworkers and young people from across the nation who value the GYOW Kits as key resource to improve the transition outcomes of young care leavers. CREATE would like to encourage the government to provide an opportunity for young people in care aged between 16-17 years to receive GYOW Kits to support their transition planning during the 2019 – 2020 financial year.

**Investment for 50 Young People to Receive GYOW Kits to Support Independence: \$2,250**



### *CREATEs advocacy contributes to systemic change*

CREATE is in a unique position to support children and young people to advocate for positive system change that reflects their needs and experiences. An opportunity to support change within the out-of-home care sector is for CREATE to be resourced to deliver a Case Worker Training Program in the ACT. Case Worker Training has been successfully implemented in other States and Territories across Australia to build the knowledge and skills of Case Workers so they can better understand the needs of children and young people in care. CREATE staff co-facilitate the training with Young Consultants, who are young people with a care experience, to allow workers to understand the care system from their perspective. It also helps workers to engage in a positive and constructive way to generate new ideas to ensure case planning and case support effectively engages and meets the needs of young people.

**Investment in 10 Case Worker Training Sessions: \$5,000**

### **Conclusion**

CREATE Foundation continues to advocate for inclusive systems that create a better life for children and young people in all out-of-home care settings. Children and young people would like to see positive change during the 2019 – 2020 financial year that provides them with a greater opportunity to participate in system decisions that impact their lives. It's vital that they don't fall through the gaps by being financially supported, especially when leaving residential care, and that Case Workers have time to understand the child protection system from a young person's perspective. These initiatives would be a small investment of \$57,250 to create a lasting impact on the lives of children and young people in the ACT.

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