Working out the Next Step
Lucas Moore and Julia Hayes
Hello!

• About CREATE

• How young people’s advocacy helped to establish and design targeted post care services in Queensland

• What we have learnt about the processes and challenges of young people advocating for change
The CREATE Foundation is a national non-profit organisation that represent the voices of all Children and young people with a care experience.

We have offices in each state and territory in Australia after a variety of different state organisations promoting the voices of children and young people in care amalgamated under the name CREATE in 1999.
CREATE is all about ..

– **Connecting** children and young people to each other, CREATE and their community.

– **Empowering** children and young people to build self-confidence, self-esteem and skills that enable them to have a voice, and to be heard.

– **Changing** the care system through advocacy, in consultation with children and young people, to improve policies, practices and services, and to increase community awareness.
The Journey

- Prior to February 2015, no service in Queensland specifically targeted at young people transitioning after 18

- Mid 1990s – Transition from Care program established by then Department of Families, eventually amalgamated into intensive personal support program

- Child Protection Act (1999) references Transition from Care in Charter of Rights and Section 75: “As far as practicable, the chief executive must ensure the child or person is provided with help in the transition from being a child in care to independence”
The Journey

- 2003 – CMC Report Protecting Children an Inquiry into the abuse of children in foster care raises community awareness about out of home care

- Mid 2000s - Transition from Care Workgroup established

- 2008 – CREATE launches its first Report Card on Transition from Care: 34.3 percent of respondents reported homelessness, 25 percent had completed Grade 12

Around this time a number of CREATE Young Consultants speak up at public forums about the lack of support they received once turning 18
It was terrible. I was told eight months before I turned 18 that I was leaving care. I had so many issues, even with support I felt like I could barely manage and now there was this massive rush to make me an adult in eight months.

(Annie*, 19)
The Journey

2010 - CREATE also launches What’s the Plan’ campaign

2011 – TFC Workgroup launches ‘Transition to Independence Month’ to raise awareness.

2011 – CREATE meets with Shadow Minister for Communities/Child Safety Tracy Davis – critical point.

2011 – CREATE Report Card showing slight improvement in planning for young people 15-17 but still only around 40 percent report a plan.
2012 – LNP elected to government, Tracy Davis becomes Minister for Communities, Child Safety, Disability Services. LNP Platform to “extend a child in care’s transition period to 21”

2012- Carmody Inquiry opens, Transition from Care specifically mentioned in terms of reference

2012 – November – Opinion in piece in Courier Mail paints negative picture of residential care as a waste of money – CREATE receives a letter from a member who lives in a residential, responding- arguing that young people in care are deserving of government support. Lucas thinks ...this person would make a great advocate!

2012/2013 – CREATE advocacy intensifies during Carmody Inquiry, Commissioner notes lack of programs and vague legislation
Helping our young find wings to soar

Kelly Backnall

TURNING 18 is a joyful occasion for many young people celebrating the right to vote and legally make decisions for themselves and a range of new freedoms.

It is the age of full adulthood, but these days most 18-year-olds are still living at home.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the median age for young people leaving home in Australia is 21 for males and 20 for females.

Even then, most of us would know a young person or two in their 20s who benefits from ongoing financial, physical and emotional support from their parents.

Living at home after 18 is not always a choice if you are one of approximately 8500 young people living in out-of-home care (such as foster, kinship or residential care) in Queensland.

In the current child-protection system, programs are in place for most young people who are transitioning from care to independence when they turn 18.

The State Government reports that transition planning is in place for about 60 per cent of young people over the age of 15 in Queensland.

This is encouraging and important because transition from care plans and support can make or break a young person moving into independent living.

With big plans, she has been in the same loving and stable foster family for five years. “I’ve got that real family feeling,” she says. Jane is a leader at her school and is studying for university entry. “I am the positive story,” she says.

But Jane has a friend whose story is not so positive.

John (not his real name) is 22, has a physical disability and transitioned from care after he had been in multiple placements.

Jane is worried about John’s future and is concerned with the lack of support that John has received since he has transitioned from care. “He has been left alone and he is lonely,” says Jane.

The way the state cares for children and young people in care and who are transitioning from care is being considered at the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, which is holding hearings this month.

The Queensland Child Protection Week Committee comprising a broad cross-section of child protection services, notes that one of the inquiry terms of reference is “the transition of children through, and exiting the child protection system”.

The QCPCW urges the inquiry to recommend extending the leaving age for young people in care from 18 to 21 so that it reflects the current societal standards.
2013 - Julia attended a meeting with Tracy Davis, sharing her apprehension at turning 18

2013, July - The BIG moment – Carmody Inquiry releases final report, Recommendation 9.1:

_The Child Protection Reform Leaders Group develop a coordinated program of post-care support for young people until at least the age of 21, including priority access to government services in the areas of education, health, disability services, housing and employment services, and work with non-government organisations to ensure the program’s delivery._
2014 - Department started co-design process, consultations with young people and service providers around the state coordinated by G-Force – what should this service do?

- A specific phone line would be good
- Having a worker there that you can call if you need advice. It wouldn’t be counselling, just general advice and guidance.
- Someone to help you get your life together, to check in on you and help you navigate your way through the support that’s out there
- Funding to pay for courses and other things like textbooks and other related expenses

2014 – Tender release for approx $3 million funding per year to deliver post care services across Queensland
Designing the Next Step

2015 – Successful partnership announced –Life Without Barriers, UCC, CREATE, YETI, IFYS and CTC. Successful model is focused on flexible support, ranging from one-off brokerage to ongoing individual support. Variety of engagement options- from 24hr phone line to social media

2015 – LWB and CREATE sit down with young people to talk about how the service should be marketed

2015 – April – Next Step After Care Launched! 600 young people assisted and counting...
Darcie’s view

Standing up here today I remember how angry and frustrated we were back then when we stood up and said; ‘this is not good enough – you can’t just dump us at 18’. I am so glad that something has finally happened, that the young people growing up out of the system now have something, somewhere to go... It feels like justice and it brings a tear to my eye. (Darcie, 26)
Questions

1. Julia, what was the highlight of being involved?

2. What were the challenges, what were the barriers to change?

3. What do you think made the difference, made the change?

4. Now that we have arrived, what have we learnt about systemic advocacy?
What we learnt

- Patience!

- Passion!

- Collaboration – building the movement!

- Young people’s truths are powerful